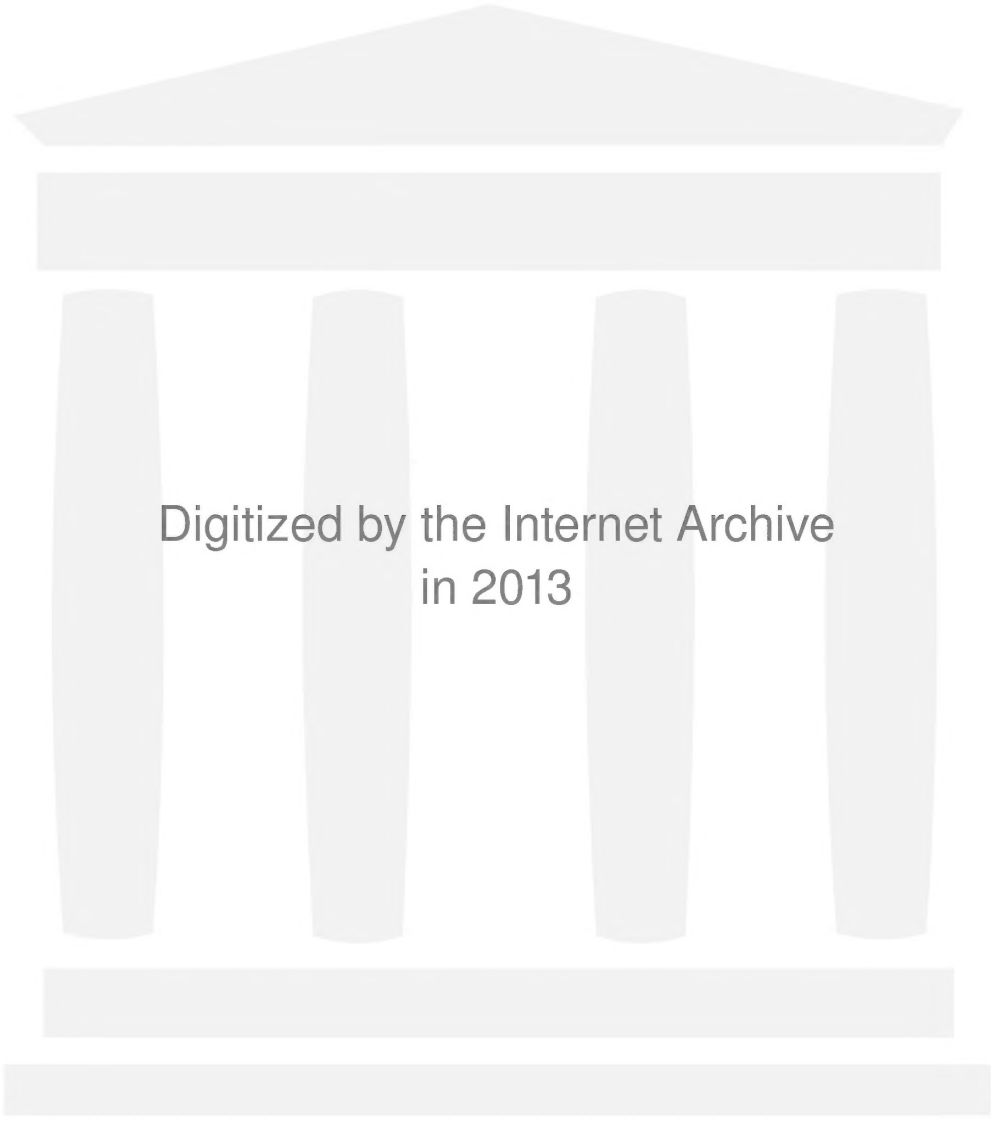

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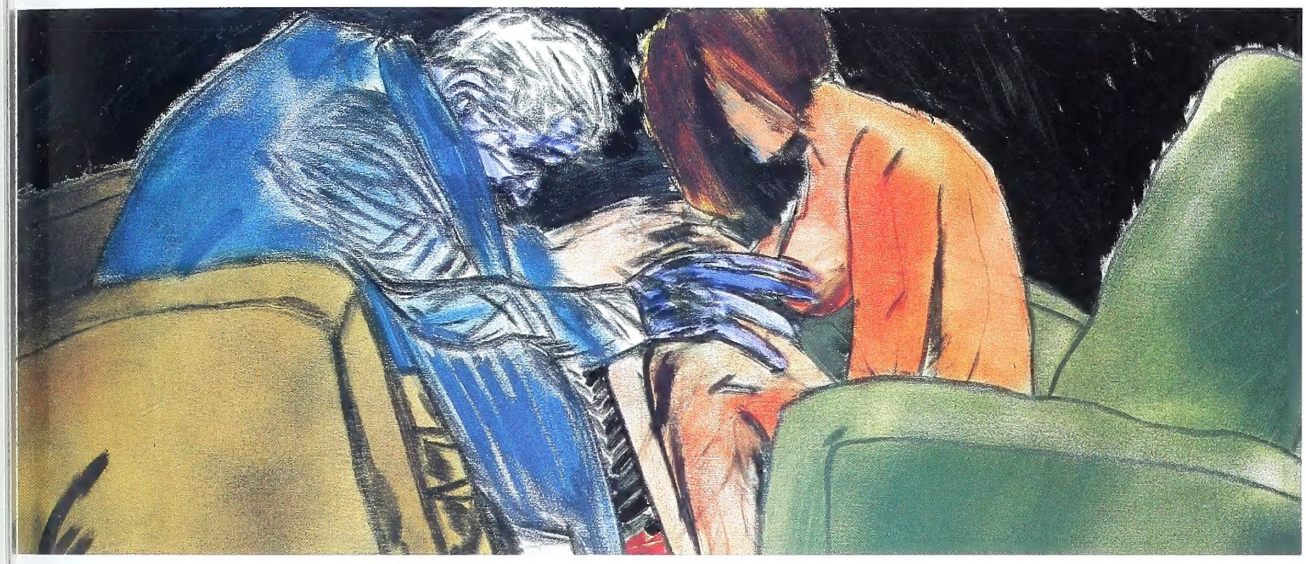
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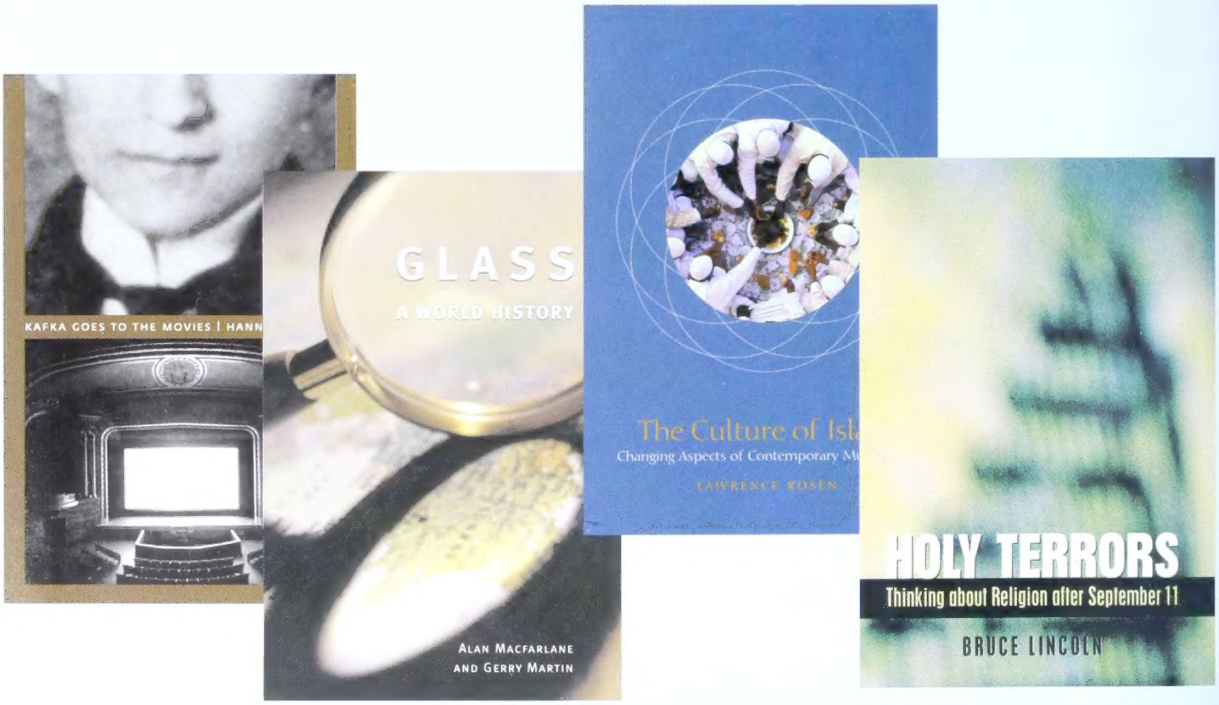
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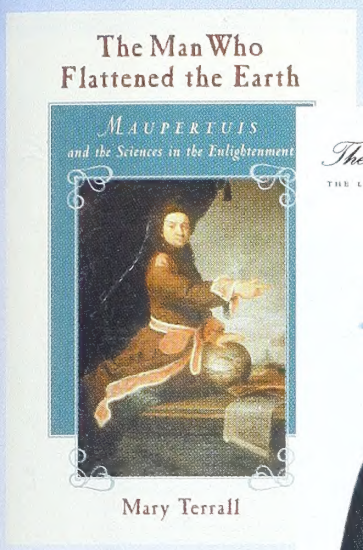
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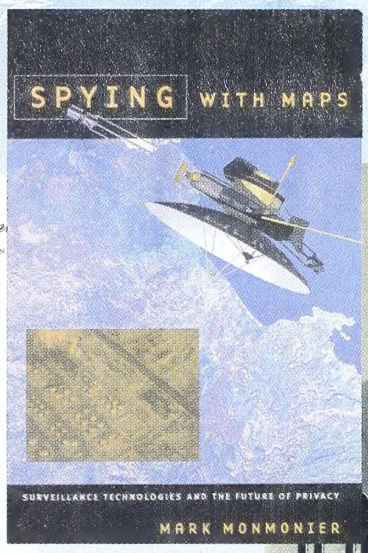
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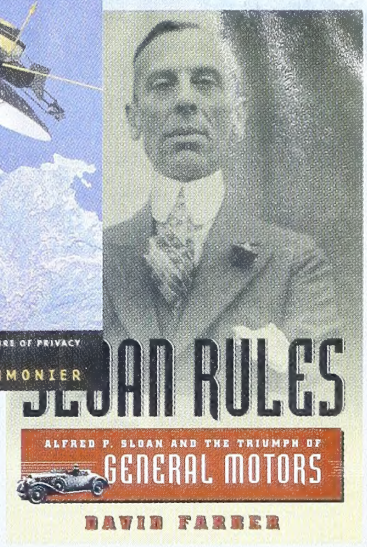


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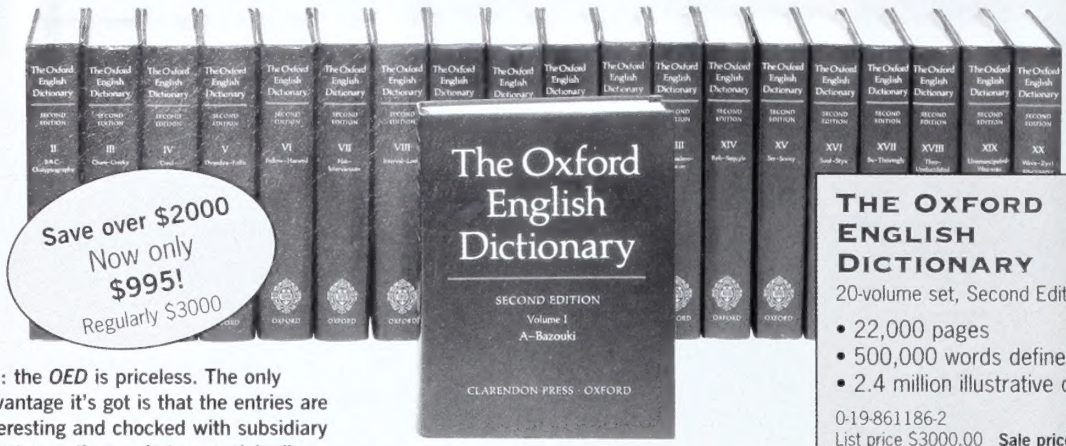
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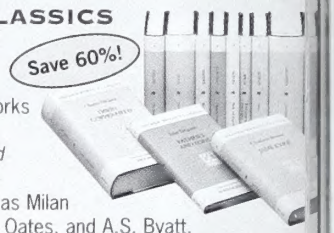
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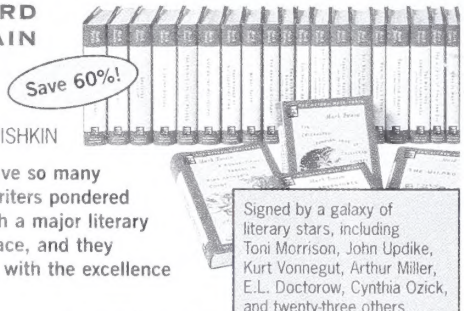
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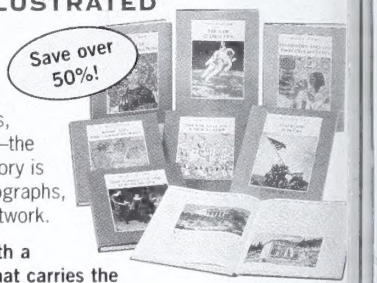
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LETTERS

Inspecting Iraq

It is peculiar that after all of the striking parallels Lewis H. Lapham notes between the ruinous errors of Athens and the errors that the Bush Administration is about to make ["The Road to Babylon," October 2002], he does not see in Iraqi oil reserves the modern-day equivalent of "the harbors of Sicily and the wealth of Carthage." To update a political observation from the time of the first Persian Gulf War: if Iraq's primary export were broccoli, the United States government would not care about Saddam Hussein.

Chris Ronk
Brooklyn

Lewis H. Lapham deconstructed with clarity the Bush-Cheney argument concerning the imminent invasion of Iraq. He also, however, permitted his personal animus to shine through in one comment. He lumps Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon in with unelected or suspiciously elected despots. Although Lapham may not agree with Sharon's policies, the prime minister does not rule with absolute pow[er]; he is answerable to members of [the] Knesset and to the people of his [na]tion. Those who disagree with h[im] do not find themselves lined up [be]fore a firing squad or unaccountably disappearing. This cannot be said [of] others on Lapham's list.

Michael Halperin
Sherman Oaks, Calif.

Lewis H. Lapham suggests th[at] "Saddam doesn't sponsor Al Qae[da] (or any other terrorist brigades th[at] have asked him for money and ex[-]plosives over the last eleven years." On the contrary, over the past tw[o] years Saddam Hussein has distin[-]guished himself as one of the m[ost] committed benefactors of Hamas, [the] Islamic Jihad, and several small[er] Palestinian terrorist organizations. He has trained their operatives, funded their terror missions, and re[-]warded their families (for their "hi[gh] sacrifices") with large sums of mo[-]ney. Clearly, Mr. Lapham is either disingenuous or mistaken.

Yehonatan Cohen
Los Angeles

There are moments up here in [the] chilly north called Canada when some of us wonder if we're not a little too close to the insanity down across the border. But when we are tread[ing]

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such a delightful example of Amer-
n intelligence—Lewis Lapham's
cle, not the CIA—it makes us feel
ure that, yes, there *are* full-fledged,
-notch, functioning brains below
Forty-ninth Parallel. Would that
y were in politics.

kota Hamilton
ncouver, B.C., Canada

udible Sigh

ewis H. Lapham's reflection on
limits of our language and nation
the anniversary of September 11
s entitled "Audible Silence"
otebook, November 2002], but it
uld have been called "Audible
h." The somewhat pious, defeated
gnation that spills from this trea-
and others by Lapham is discour-
ng, perhaps because it is so pre-
ent. More frustrating than the
geted, test-marketed media cover-
of "Yo-Yo Ma Does Ground
o," to which Lapham so skillfully
udes, is the intellectual echo
mber that diagnoses ad nauseum
h nary a cure.

n Sullivan
speth, N.Y.

ew Plan, Old Goal

David Armstrong's examination
the vice president's defense plan
ick Cheney's Song of America,"
tober 2002] fails to mention one
nificant detail. Cheney's plan is
hing more than an updated ver-
n of an old American heresy
led Manifest Destiny. The objec-
of Manifest Destiny has always
n to allow God-fearing Anglo-
con males to monopolize wealth
rule the world as their birth-
ht. Colin Powell is merely an in-
ument to help reach that goal.

ry Boudreau
n Antonio

cognitive Dissonance

llen Ullman, in her quest to
ve the fruitlessness of artificial-
elligence and artificial-life re-
ch ["Programming the Post-Hu-
n," October 2002], gives humans
our mammalian brethren too
ch credit. She writes:





This is the "magical quality"—mutual recognition, the moment when two creatures recognize each other from among all others. This is what we call "presence" in another creature: the fact that it knows us, and knows we know it in turn. If that other being were just a trick, just the product of a set of mechanisms, you would think that snakes could make this recognition, or paramecia, or lizards, or fish.

In fact, many species of birds, fish, and reptiles can recognize specific individuals; this ability is essential to monogamy and a host of other important relationships. Although biology still has much to learn in this arena, we are beginning to understand more about animals' capacity for visual and acoustic recognition. Some birds use ultraviolet vision to distinguish between individuals, and others rely on distinct voices. A few biologists even argue that wasps recognize one another not simply through chemical clues but by the varied patterning on their heads and bodies.

Christopher Reiger
Via email

When I was a student in biology, psychology, and education at Cornell University in the 1980s, it was standard for introductory textbook chapters in each of these disciplines to present a section showing how we have always sought to model the mind after the technology of the day: book, machine, computer. That's what each of the technological parallels were: models—or metaphors, as those from the murkier hallways of the academy might call them. Each model provided another way of looking at the vast complexity of human behavior, and that perspective provided just a little more insight. So it has been with astonishment that I have watched our culture reduce the vast complexity and beauty of human behavior to the limitations of rational thought vis-à-vis our most recent technological model. I join Ellen Ullman in her "round-and-round hum." By mistaking the model for the thing itself, we are indeed missing something: pretty much the whole point, I would say.

Carolyn Altman
Portland, Oreg.

Ellen Ullman could have ... stered her claims about the sta... cognitive science by mentioning ... current dominant research prog... Each year millions of dollars of ... lic funds are spent to isolate ... lous mechanisms within the bra... not only the "God module" and ... "self module" but also the "nam... fruits and vegetables module." ... nitive science has pursued the ... that anything we conceive of ca... found to reside happily in its ... location or collection of locat... inside the brain. There is a puz... aspect to this research, howeve... practitioners widely acknowl... that the available research met... cannot achieve the imagined go...

Guy Van Orden
Program Director
Human Cognition and Percepti...
National Science Foundation
Arlington, Va.

No one who knows Douglas ... stadter or his work will be abl... discern any resemblance to hi... the perverse depiction of a grou... wishful computer scientist u... tached to humanity that Ellen ... man, apparently deaf to humor, ... sents in her "report." An ar... composer, critic, mathematic... philosopher, physicist, and tra... tor (to cite but a few of his o... salient achievements), Hofstadt... one of the most fully human b... imaginable, and perhaps no one ... written more profoundly and b... tifully of what it means to be ... man. Certainly no one is m... aware of how far present efforts ... from creating soulful robots: u... peachably modest about his ... (superb) research, he has long b... critical of huge and overst... claims made by the cognitive ... ences. Indeed, Ullman's insist... on "the centrality of identity ... sentience, on the inseparabili... intelligence from "needs, des... motivations, fears, threats, con... ment, suffering," and even so... her comments on the limitation... present efforts, read as if they ... cribbed from Hofstadter's writin...

Atif Rafay
Seattle

I am not surprised that Ellen Ullan settles on communication as e defining characteristic of humany, considering that she is primarily n author. Computer scientists set-ed on logic. One wonders whether chef would conclude that creation nd appreciation of taste and texture e what separate humans from black ples.

atthew Lohbihler
oronto

Jnnatural Selection

The often subtle forces that are ishing agriculture away from natur ecosystems are highlighted, perips inadvertently, in your fine Ocber issue. Whereas your opening eading, "The Cow Tipping Point," akes a strong case against turning od into an industrial, technologil product, the Reading that follows "Passed By a Hair," does the very posite. It reads as a horror story of ontamination" in our food. Insect rts, larvae, rot, mold, eggs—ugh. But people cannot have it both ways. Those of us who grow food ourselves and harvest nature's wild fare know that food is fully entwined in our ecosystem. Healthy food has bugs in it. Nature is a well-mixed, interconnected riot. Our desire for "pure" food drives the industrialization of agriculture just as much as corporate greed does.

Barry Saxifrage
Cortes Island, B.C., Canada

Right on Track?

As much as I enjoyed reading John Jeremiah Sullivan's article on horse racing ["Horseman, Pass By," October], I was frustrated by his perpetuation of the myth that injured racehorses are "shot between the eyes." I have worked in the racing industry for twenty-five years, the last fifteen of which have been spent as a regulatory veterinarian whose job it is to attend to injured horses, and I can assure you that horses are not shot to death at the racetrack. Rather, an overdose of a barbiturate is administered, just as is done in a veterinarian's office when a dog or cat is put to sleep. If Sullivan had taken the time to speak to any of the veterinarians at Belmont Park, rather than to stablehands and security guards, he could have found this out, as well as the fate of the injured horses he mentioned.

Joan D'Alonzo, DVM
Newark, Del.

There is a misstatement in John Jeremiah Sullivan's superb article. Sullivan writes, "Secretariat ran a few more races after the Belmont, winning all but one." In fact, subsequent to the Belmont, Secretariat ran second to Onion in the Whitney and to Prove Out in the Woodward.

G. W. Helfrich
Brunswick, Maine

Shoo-fly Reply

I chuckled when reading Jeff

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Greenfield's review of *The Forgotten Memoir of John Knox: A Year in the Life of a Supreme Court Clerk in FDR's Washington* ["A Hero to His Valet," November 2002]. My guess would be that Diggs and Parker, Justice McReynolds's African-American employees, actually used the code term "pussy fellow" for McReynolds, not "Pussywillow," and that they referred to Knox himself as "shoo-fly nix," not the unaccountable term "Shoefenicks." A "nix" is a nothing or nobody. When baseball players in the nineteenth century made an error, they used the expression "shoo-fly."

D. W. Brown
Marietta, Ga.

Nowhere Men

I admired Cristina Nehring's essay on Edna St. Vincent Millay's poetry and life, and her assessment of current poetry criticism ["Last the Night," July 2002]. I agree with her view of Milan Kundera's latest novel ["The Unbearable Slightness," November 2002], but less so with her view of Kundera's *oeuvre*. First, Kundera owes his critical and commercial success in the West not to the fact that he is so very different but to the fact that he has always been so familiar and mainstream, delivering all the characteristics commonly equated in the West with novels or prose: fast-paced plots, intriguing characters, love triangles or quadrangles, and, of course, plenty of sex. Kundera adds to these recognizable patterns just the right amount of local color in the shape of different localities, exotic names, "Central European" reflexivity, and now almost mythical references to Communist or post-Communist worlds. More genuinely unique East European writers, such as Yugoslav Danilo Kiš or Czech Bohumil Hrabal or the recent Hungarian Nobel laureate Imre Kertész, who work outside of the categories thought of as appropriate in creative-writing programs, have not achieved anything equivalent to the critical or popular recognition Kundera has. Hrabal's little masterpiece, *Too Loud a Solitude* (1976), for example, is one long, lonely reflection by the operator of a wastepaper-compacting machine and has almost nothing that serves a "purposeful" terms of plot or character revelation." It has only language, voice meaning—and a wholly transformative effect on the reader.

Gordana P. Crnković
Seattle

In making up for the fact that Milan Kundera "has gone unskewered by feminists" in recent literary history, Cristina Nehring ignores all the female characters in his novels who aren't ridiculed or humiliated, or are in humiliating situations but preserve their dignity, and who are much more central to Kundera's themes than Helena, the example Nehring employs from *The Joke*: they include Lucie, the angel of purity in *The Joke;* Sabina the sex goddess and the good-hearted Tereza, both from *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*. Nehring ignores, as well, the male characters who are humiliated or appear ridiculous: Sabina's lover Franz, who is a ridiculous character by nature, and Ludvik, the central character of *The Joke*, on whom the joke is really played and whose pathetic attempt at revenge is the novel's central humiliation.

Boris Knezevic
Portland, Oreg.

I suggest to Cristina Nehring that feminists are not falling short of their duty because "Kundera has gone unskewered." Feminists are doing their job, for Nehring has acquired the intellectual tools to critique him. With a few thousand years of misogyny in literature and politics to discuss, we just hadn't got around to Kundera.

Barb Webb
Toronto

Correction

Guy Davenport's review of Henryk Grynberg's book *Drohobycz, Drohobycz* [New Books, November 2002] contained a factual error. Bruno Schulz was not Grynberg's woodworking teacher but the teacher of Leopold Lustig, on whose life the title story is based. We regret the error.

NOTEBOOK

When in Rome

By Lewis H. Lapham

The road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom.

—William Blake

During the months prior to last November's congressional elections the apostles of American empire tended to confine their enthusiasms to foreign-policy journals funded by the reactionary heirs to handsome beer or real-estate fortunes. It wasn't that the voices in the prophetic wilderness doubted the truth of their revelation. Only a blind Arab could fail to notice the weight of the country's military power or the scale of its economy, but the blunt statement of imperialist purpose risked the raising of alarm among voters still attached to their belief in such a thing as a democratic republic. Although both harmless and naive, the belief retained a sentimental value within the history departments of obscure New England universities, and why bother to disturb people content with their keepsake memories of Thomas Jefferson and the comforts of their colonial pewter?

The election results opened the envelopes of candor. The Republican Party added the capture of the Congress to its possession of the White House and the Supreme Court, thus shifting the de facto imbalance of power further to the evangelical right; soon afterward the United Nations resolved to disarm Saddam Hussein on terms encompassing the submission of the Security Council to the will of the United States. Even the blind Arabs could read the handwriting on the palace wall, and the prophets of the Pax Americana issued forth into the light of the received wisdom. By the time the balloons were in the streets for the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade, they were giving interviews to *Time* magazine, touring the television talk-show circuit with their collection of analogies between the glory of the Bush Administration and the grandeur that was Rome. The good news was not slow in coming to the conference rooms in Washington and the dinner tables of New York. State Department functionaries studying trays of smoked salmon spoke of sending the 82nd Airborne Division to punish insolent barbarians not only in the deserts of Mesopotamia but also in the forests of Illyricum and the mountains of Cyrene; patrician lawyers gazing from high windows into the darkness of Central Park mentioned the imminent passage of new federal regulations (apropos the penal system and the tax code) intended to impose on America's plebeian rabble a long-overdue regime change equivalent to the military occupation of Iraq; trend-setting publishers in Greenwich Village, alert to a revived interest in the Emperor Caesar Augustus, commissioned new biographies amplifying Edward Gibbon's compliment to "the sublime perfections of an Eternal Parent and an Omnipotent Monarch."

Like everybody else with any sense, and never having been one to question the splendor of the Fifth Fleet or to resist the deification of Ronald Reagan and Bill Gates, I was glad to see so many people awakened to the prospect of a noble destiny. Even so, and without meaning to revise (much less disparage or contradict) anybody's hope of an empire worthy of a word from Tacitus, I cannot help but think that we have yet to reach the zenith of our triumph. I don't quarrel with the fact that the country has made steady and impressive progress toward the valor of the Caesars and the piety of the Antonines, but I worry that we might be a trifle early with the distribution of the laurel leaves and the hymn to Capitoline Jupiter. We have done much; we can do more. We understand the technology; we have yet to acquire the proper aesthetic and the preferred habit of mind. Fortunately we are Americans, an inventive and self-improving people, and I know that I can count on the wise and careful reader not to mistake a few helpful suggestions for niggling complaints or unproductive criticism.

Class Distinctions

Certainly we have made a good beginning, and I don't think it too presumptuous to say that no other nation in the history of the world has engineered so massive a transfer of wealth with so little bloodshed in so short a space of time. It's only been twenty years since Ronald Reagan first came to the White House with the promise of a bright new morning in America, and except for a few discredited columnists in the ruins of the leftist press, I know of nobody who can quibble with what has been accomplished—80 percent of the nation's property now securely in the hands of 10 percent of the population, our 13,000 richest families possessed of a net worth equivalent to the assets owned by the country's 20 million poorest families, our ten most highly paid CEOs earning an average of $154 million a year as opposed to the mere pittance of $3.5 million in 1981.

The numbers speak to the presence of what the old Romans would have recognized as an equestrian class composed of individuals sanctified with a

[illegible] worth 1,600,000 sesterces and thus entitled to the privileges of social distinction, political office, and military rank. Accustomed to the standard shows of deference that every decent society awards to the human forms of money (togas made of silk instead of wool, fawning barbers, rooms furnished with sandalwood and fretted ivory), even the most ignoble of the Romans didn't rest content with the meager arts of acquisition. They enjoyed the taste and sight of blood. More theatrical in character than our own corporate optimates, not as anxious as our Hollywood celebrities about the keeping up of bourgeois appearances, they found time in their busy schedules to poison their husbands, banish their wives, torture their slaves. When compelled to display the ornaments of their vanity they didn't sponsor golf tournaments or buy another beachfront house in Florida; they drank wine distilled from pearls, dined on peacocks and flamingos, presented matchless gifts (1,000 captive Gauls, 4,000 singing Christians, 2,000 troubled Jews) to the animals in the Colosseum.

Commerce

Devoted to the theory of free markets but contemptuous of clerks and bored by the dreary shuffling of numbers, the ancient Romans derived their wealth from the honest labor of the imperial legions. Straightforward conquest, summary execution, remorseless plunder.

The recent reports from our own financial frontiers indicate a well-informed appreciation of the classical style, and because our business community seems well on its way to establishing a criminal elite, I hesitate to suggest further refinements when so many capable and intelligent people obviously have been devoting so much of their valuable time and effort to the project. The available evidence seeping into the newspapers over the last twelve months describes a full range of home-delivered fraud—reliable flows of false information (from senior management to the audit committee, from the audit committee to senior management), bogus stock trades, counterfeit balance sheets, off-shore tax shelters, insider trading, systematic theft, generous distributions of interest-free loans and golf-club memberships to favored friends and sycophants; I think we can rely on the assumption that our most innovative and forward-thinking corporations know how to rob an investor, cheat a stockholder, corrupt an orphan. But so did a good many of the merchants known to Alexander Hamilton, as well as most of the speculators synonymous with our happy remembrance of both "The Roaring Twenties" and "The Gilded Age." In other words, and once again without wishing to withhold credit where credit is due, we still stand on the threshold of renown. Our success in the drug and weapons trades has taught us to devalue the commodity of human life; the placing of our health-care services at the disposal of insurance companies has improved our understanding of the profits to be realized from the happy marriage of mortal suffering with immortal avarice. Great strides, magnificent achievements, but well within the tradition of our own commercial history. Not yet the grandeur that was Rome.

Which probably is why I read with heavy heart the newspaper stories about Jack Welch, the former chairman of General Electric, spending $13,000 a month for French wine, flowers, and new shoes, or Tyco's L. Dennis Kozlowski assigning to his conglomerate the cost of a $15,000 umbrella stand, or Winona Ryder stealing a $2,000 dress from a store in Beverly Hills. The sums are paltry, the crimes empty of romance. When the newspapers make a show of moral outrage about Lizzie Grubman dispersing a crowd of vulgar commoners with the assistance of her SUV (killing nobody, merely showing off the beauty of her designer jeans), I think of the Emperor Nero, also costumed in a workman's rags, making his mischievous evening rounds of the Roman taverns, sometimes surprising the company by stabbing to death one or two of the patrons seated incautiously near the door. The emperor also liked to loot the shops below the Palatine and Aventine hills. Bringing the stolen goods back to the palace, he sold them at auction to those of his courtiers carelessly in attendance on his triumphant return, bidding up to 100,000 sesterces the price of a thimble or a comb; to the buyers forced into instant penury, Nero sometimes offered what his [illegible] cle Caligula considered an amu[illegible] but prudent choice—the debt exc[illegible] and half of the courtier's estate allo[illegible] to pass unmolested to his childre[illegible] condition that he promptly com[illegible] suicide. The other half of the e[illegible] the emperor reserved to his own s[illegible] Always short of money and not [illegible] clined to give fund-raising speec[illegible] he adopted the practice of whim[illegible] confiscation, seizing the propert[illegible] wealthy citizens in whom he dis[illegible] ered a flaw of character, an irrita[illegible] mannerism, or an unwillingness t[illegible] ten to him play the flute. To no[illegible] appointed magistrates charged [illegible] the cultivation of the imperial [illegible] enue, Nero condescended to d[illegible] only one sentence of advice, "You [illegible] I must see that nobody is left with [illegible] thing." The Enron Corporation [illegible] plied the same principle to its [illegible] ployees, its stockholders, and [illegible] pensioners, but the interoffice e[illegible] announcing bankruptcy or dism[illegible] lacked Nero's gift for phrase.

Dissent

As compared to the Romans [illegible] ing the reigns of both the Julian [illegible] the Flavian emperors, I'm afraid [illegible] we still have much to learn about [illegible] regulation of seditious speech. Not [illegible] we haven't identified the impedim[illegible] to the tranquillity of government [illegible] to the repose of a virtuous people "[illegible] supplied with luxuries and accusto[illegible] to defeat." Vigilant librarians ev[illegible] where in the country refuse to [illegible] seminate the works of Mark Tw[illegible] the doctrines of political correct[illegible] defend the pages of our better ne[illegible] papers against the advance of inc[illegible] diary adjectives and rebellious no[illegible] the Justice Department's supervisio[illegible] our mail and telephone commun[illegible] tions insures a decent respect, if no[illegible] the opinion of mankind, at least[illegible] the opinion of Attorney General J[illegible] Ashcroft.

All well and good and pointed[illegible] the right direction, but still by wa[illegible] preamble to what remains to[illegible] achieved. So careful were the voice[illegible] the presence of an emperor that n[illegible] of what was said aspired to the sile[illegible] signifying awe. Suetonius mention[illegible] historian who characterized Caes[illegible] assassins, Brutus and Cassius, as "[illegible]

st of the Romans." The historian was xecuted without delay, his books de-royed, his body flung into the Tiber. ompetitions in Latin prose held in ie amphitheater at Lyons required ie losing contestants to erase their riting with their tongues; authors too ow to make the correction were de-apitated and flung into the Rhone.

If our own responsible authorities aven't yet acquired the knack of fling-ig rude journalists into the Hudson the Potomac, at least we can take eart from the servility of the Wash-igton correspondents who submit ieir questions as if on tufted pillows as ell as from the routine courtesy ex-nded to celebrities in all ranks (ac-esses, baseball players, CEOs) wishing decide which of their photographs ould appear on the cover of a news or shion magazine. Another few years id we can expect our boldface names exhibit the refinement of Caligula. he emperor worried about his overly ctive growth of body hair. If in his resence a courtier made the mistake of tting slip the word "goat"—no mat-r what the context, reference, or de-ension—that courtier didn't live long ough to reconsider the remark.

icentiousness

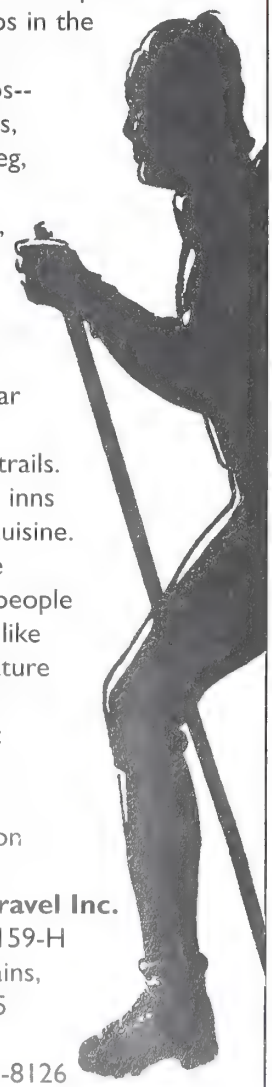
With regard to every other mani-station of an imperial sensibility—lfishness, pride, greed, cruelty, glut-ny, and sloth—we've shown urselves blessed, or proved ourselves quipped, with the right stuff. If we aven't fully exploited all the oppor-nities open to a self-confident ruling lass, at least we've seen the omens nd know them to be favorable.

But toward the lewd and perfumed eights of Roman orgy our progress as been hesitant and slow. Al-ough the tabloid press brings news f scandalous Hollywood divorce, nd the pornographic-film industry upplies the nation's hotel rooms ith previews of the Muslim par-dise, we seem to be losing ground, ecoming as prudish as the Chatti or ie Parthians. From the playgrounds f scented indolence on Capitol Hill nd Manhattan's Upper East Side e hear nothing except occasional eports of small-time lust as ineffec-ual as Jack Welch's pursuit of eter-al adolescence or as clumsy as Pres-ident Clinton's embrace of Monica Lewinsky's blue dress.

Again I don't wish to be critical, but if we seriously aspire to the ancient Roman style, our public schools might want to consider replacing the auditorium portraits of Abraham Lincoln with those of Caligula (who seduced his sisters in the presence of his wife), of Messalina (an empress endowed with so ravenous a sexual appetite that she was capable of welcoming in a single night every member of the Praetorian Guard), of Nero, an emperor for all occasions who never fails to provide the moral of an uplifting tale. Whenever he floated on his barge across the bay at Baiae, or down the Tiber from Rome to Ostia, he found the shoreline brightened with rows of temporary brothels in which noble ladies (wives of senators, jeweled courtesans, occasionally his mother) applauded the music of his voice and solicited the favor of his person.

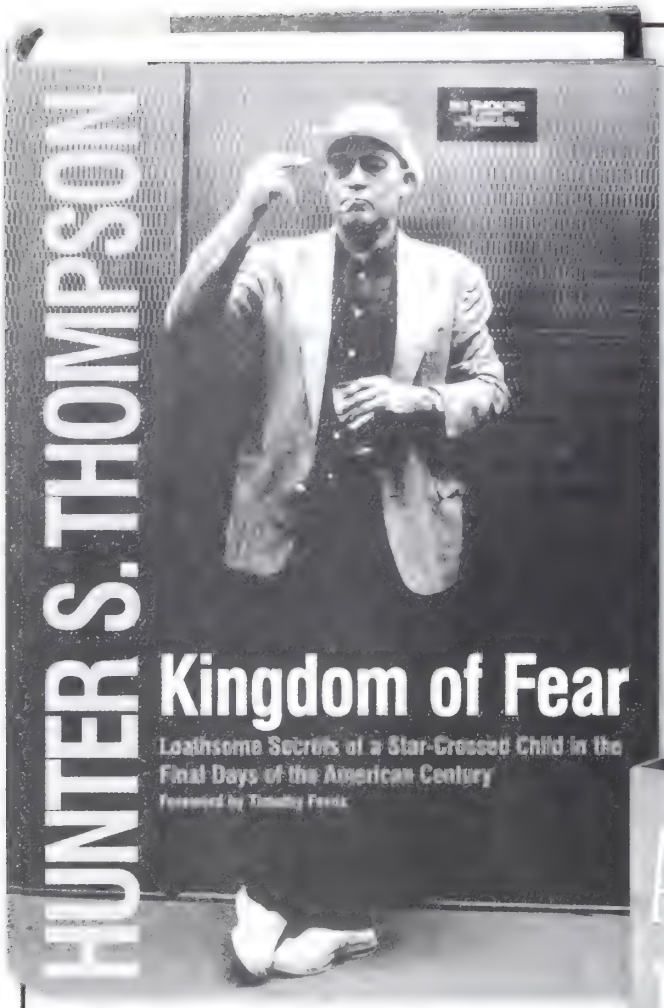
I know that we still harbor skeptics in our midst, people who say that we'll never make the grade, that no matter how many barbarians we slaughter in Iraq, or how many of our citizens we reduce to a complacent mob, we'll never live to see Nero's hospitality tents among the cherry trees beside the blue Potomac. I've heard their arguments and listened to their disappointments—too many of the nation's black people not yet in prison or the army, the oil fields of Central Asia still in the hands of barbarous tribes, the Supreme Court not yet staffed with temple priests, and our president still forced to endure the indignity of election—but I think they speak too soon. They remind me of sullen liberals unwilling to acknowledge the greatness of the American spirit or the wonders of American industry and enterprise. Give us a little time, possibly the guidance of experts assembled by the Kennedy School of Government, and who knows what we might not yet accomplish? In the forecourt of his palace Nero placed an immense statue of himself, 120 feet high, all of it in bronze. Surely we can do better—an immense statue in the open space at Ground Zero, 220 feet high, all of it in gold, dedicated to whichever corporate sponsor or hero of the gossip columns bids the winning price. ■

Hike the Alps.



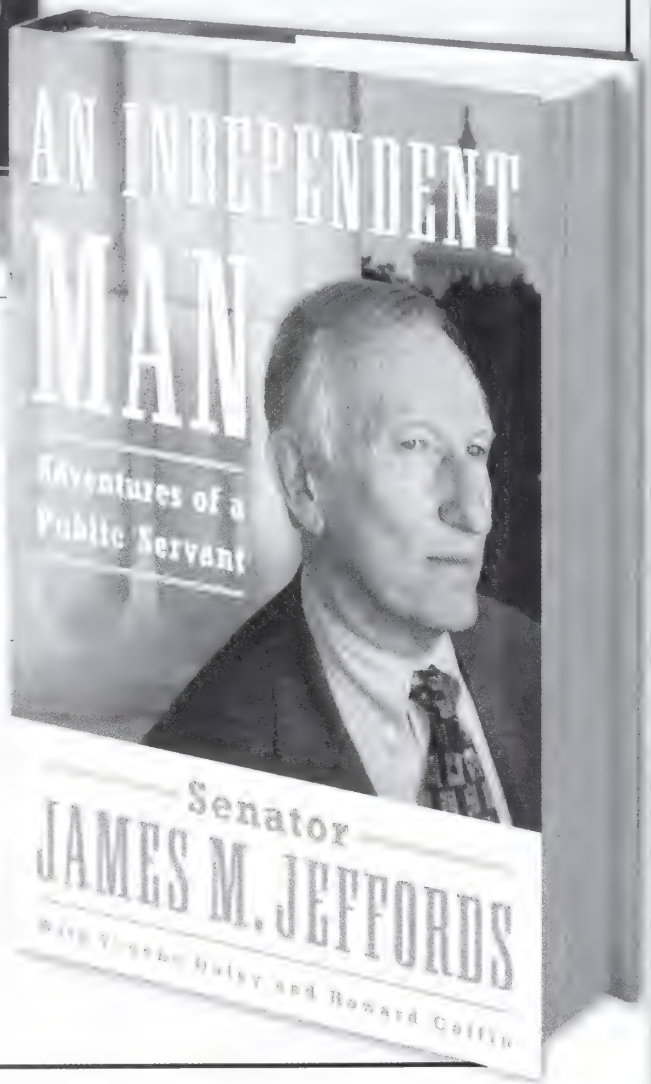
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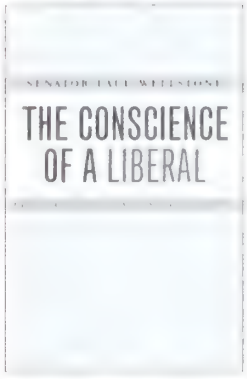
HARPER'S INDEX

Number of U.S. presidents since 1860 whose party controlled both houses of Congress by the third year of their first term : 12
Number of these presidents whose party already controlled both houses : 10
Number whose bid for reelection failed : 1
Chances that a U.S. House or Senate race last year was won by the candidate whose campaign spent the most : 9 in 10
Number of "third" parties whose candidates won state legislative seats last year : 5
Portion of the eight seats they won accounted for by Progressive Party candidates in Vermont : 1/2
Number of states that use nonpartisan commissions to draw new congressional districts : 6
Number of Louisiana's last three elected insurance commissioners convicted of corruption : 3
Percentage change since 1998 in the number of federal convictions for health-care fraud : +43
Chance that a drug dose prescribed to a U.S. hospital patient is either administered improperly or forgotten : 1 in 5
Chances that a Rwandan woman raped during the 1994 genocide is now HIV-positive : 2 in 3
Estimated number of women killed as witches in Tanzania each year : 500
Ratio of Americans killed by Timothy McVeigh and the D.C. snipers to those killed in Gulf War combat : 5:4
Ratio of kilotonnage of U.S. bombs dropped during the Gulf War to that of the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima : 7:1
Number of countries that supplied both sides during the Iran-Iraq war : 10
Number of these that are among the world's five largest arms-manufacturing countries : 4
Percentage of federal discretionary spending in 2001 devoted to "homeland security" or the Department of Defense : 51
Percentage of the $1.1 trillion in Iraqi oil contracts that are held by French or Russian companies : 69
Price charged by a Ukrainian company for a half-day tour of the Chernobyl nuclear-plant site : $460
Number of years that a former Union Carbide factory in Bhopal, India, has been leaking toxic chemicals : 18
Estimated number of people who have died there since then as a result : 20,000
Years since criminal charges were filed against him in 1991 that Union Carbide's former CEO has been in hiding : 11
Ratio of net profit earned by U.S. airlines since 1970 to federal subsidies given the industry since September 2001 : 1:1
Minimum number of box cutters taken from U.S. airline passengers since last February : 34,777
Minutes that a Massachusetts surgeon left a patient with an open incision in July while he went to deposit a check : 35
Chance that a doctor laughs along with a patient's laughter : 1 in 10
Chances that a doctor shows no response : 7 in 10
Percentage of Gulf War veterans reporting chronic postwar symptoms who share a single bacterial infection : 40
Minimum number of locals hired to act as Arabs heckling U.S. troops during an army war game in California last year : 15
Number of Arabic linguists fired by the U.S. Army since August for being gay : 7
Retail price Mattel suggests that toy stores assign its Lingerie Barbie, dressed in "merry widow" or "peek-a-boo" style : $45
Percentage change since 1990 in the number of U.S. schoolchildren labeled "disabled" : +37
Percentage of U.S. high schools receiving federal aid whose students' contact information the army sought last fall : 100
Average amount of aid each school district stands to lose if its schools do not supply the information : $762,083
Page of the No Child Left Behind education law passed last year on which this new requirement is noted : 559
Rank of Michael Moore's *Stupid White Men* among the *New York Times*'s top "business" bestsellers in September : 1
Years after rapper Chuck D called Elvis Presley "straight-out racist" that he claimed "a great deal of respect" for him : 14
Factor by which the number of Americans who have "tried to impersonate Elvis" exceeds the population of Tennessee : 3
Rank of Mom, Dad, and Rudolph Giuliani among those whom recent college graduates say they most wish to emulate : 1, 2, 3
Chances that a U.S. adult does not want to live to be 120 under any circumstances : 2 in 3

Figures cited are adjusted for inflation and are the latest available as of November 2002. Sources are listed on page 88.
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"Never separate the lives you live from the words you speak."

—Senator Paul Wellstone (1944-2002)



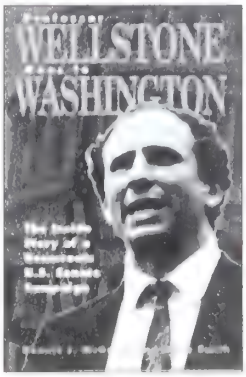
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MINNESOTA

READINGS

[Essay]

FORCE AND CONSENT

From an essay by Perry Anderson in the September/October 2002 issue of the New Left Review *(www.newleftreview.org). Anderson's* Extra Time: World Politics Since 1989 *and* Figures in the Forest *will be published by Verso in June.*

As a countdown to war begins once again in the Middle East, amid high levels of sanctimony and bluster in the Atlantic world, it is the underlying parameters of the current international situation that demand attention, not the spray of rhetoric—whether belligerently official or ostensibly oppositional—surrounding it. They pose three main analytic questions. How far does the line of the Republican administration in Washington today represent a break with previous U.S. policies? To the extent that it does so, what explains the discontinuity? What are the likely consequences of the change? To answer these questions, it seems that a longer perspective than the immediate conjuncture is required.

American policy planners today are the heirs to unbroken traditions of global calculation that go back to the last years of the Second World War. From the start, Washington pursued two integrally connected strategic goals. On the one hand, the United States set out to make the world safe for capitalism. That meant according top priority to containing the U.S.S.R. and halting the spread of revolution beyond its borders. With the onset of the Cold War, the long-term aim of the struggle against Communism became once more—as it had been at the outset of Woodrow Wilson's intervention in 1918—not simply to block but to remove the Soviet antagonist from the map. On the other hand, Washington was determined to ensure uncontested American primacy within world capitalism. That meant, in the first instance, reducing Britain to economic dependency, a process that had begun with the Lend-Lease itself, and establishing a postwar military regency in West Germany and Japan. Once this framework was in place, the wartime boom of American capitalism was successfully extended to allied and defeated powers alike, to the common benefit of all.

During the years of the Cold War, there was little or no tension between these two fundamental objectives of U.S. policy. The danger of Communism to capitalist classes everywhere meant that virtually all were happy to be protected, assisted, and invigilated by Washington. With the brief exception of France under De Gaulle, the entire advanced-capitalist zone was integrated, without much strain, into an informal American imperium, whose landmarks were Bretton Woods, the Marshall and Dodge plans, NATO, and the U.S.-Japan security pact. In due course, Japanese and German capitalism recovered to a point where they became serious economic competitors of the United States, while the Bretton Woods system gave way under the pressures of the Vietnam War in the early seventies. But the political and ideological unity of the Free World was scarcely affected. The Soviet bloc, always weaker, smaller, and poorer, held out for another twenty years of declining growth and an escalating arms race but

eventually collapsed at the turn of the nineties.

The disappearance of the U.S.S.R. marked complete U.S. victory in the Cold War. But, by the same token, the knot tying the basic objectives of American global strategy together became looser. The same logic no longer integrated its two goals into a single hegemonic system, for once the Communist danger was taken off the table, American primacy ceased to be an automatic requirement of the security of the established order *tout court*. European and East Asian regimes could now contemplate degrees of independence unthinkable during the time of totalitarian peril. But if the consensual structure of American dominion now lacked the same external girders, its coercive superiority was, at a single stroke, abruptly and massively enhanced. For with the erasure of the U.S.S.R., there was no longer any countervailing force on earth capable of withstanding U.S. military might. These interrelated changes were eventually bound to alter the role of the United States in the world. The chemical formula of power was in solution.

In practice, however, the effects of this structural shift in the balance between force and consent within the operation of American hegemony remained latent for a decade. The defining conflict of the nineties, indeed, all but completely masked it. The Iraqi seizure of Kuwait threatened the pricing of oil supplies to all the leading capitalist states, not to speak of the stability of neighboring regimes, allowing a vast coalition of G-7 and Arab allies to be swiftly assembled by the United States for the restoration of the Sabah dynasty to its throne. Yet more significant than the range of foreign auxiliaries or subsidies garnered for Desert Storm was the ability of the United States to secure the full cover of the United Nations for its campaign. The Security Council could henceforward be utilized, with increasing confidence, as a portable ideological screen for the initiatives of the single superpower.

However, the consent, so enlarged, was of a specialized kind. The elites of Russia and—this had started earlier—China were certainly susceptible to the magnetism of American material and cultural success as norms for imitation. In this respect, the internalization by subaltern powers of selected values and attributes of the paramount state started to take hold. But the objective character of these regimes was still too far removed from U.S. prototypes for such subjective predispositions to form a reliable guarantee of complaisance in the Security Council. For that, economic inducements to comply with the will of the United States stretched, in post-Communist Russia, from IMF loans to the backdoor funding and organization of Yeltsin's electoral campaigns. In the case of China, they centered on the fine-tuning of Most Favored Nation status and trade arrangements. Assent that is bought is never quite the same as that which is given; but for practical purposes, it was enough to return the U.N. to something like the halcyon days at the outbreak of the Korean War, when it automatically did the United States' bidding. By the late nineties, the U.N. had become as much an arm of the State Department as the IMF is of the Treasury.

In these conditions, American policy planners could confront the post–Cold War world with an unprecedentedly free hand. The Gulf and Balkan wars helped to crystallize an ever more comprehensive doctrine, linking free markets (the ark of neoliberalism since the Reagan-Thatcher period) to free elections (the leitmotif of liberation in Central-Eastern Europe) to human rights (the battle cry in Kurdistan and the Balkans). The first two had, in varying tonalities, always been part of the repertoire of the Cold War, though now they were much more confidently asserted: a change most marked in the full-throated recovery of the term "capitalism," held indiscreet at the height of the Cold War, when euphemisms were preferred. It was the concept of human rights, however, that was the principal innovation of the period, and did most to alter the strategic landscape. For this was the jimmy in the door of national sovereignty.

From the mid-nineties onward, the setting in which the Democratic administration operated was unusually propitious. At home it was cresting on a speculative boom; abroad it enjoyed a set of European regimes tailored to its domestic ideological agenda. The Third Way version of neoliberalism fitted well with the catechism of the "international community" and its shared devotion to universal human values. In practice, of course, wherever the logic of American primacy clashed with allied considerations or objectives, the former prevailed. The political realities underlying multilateral rhetoric were time and again made clear in these years. The United States scuppered the Lisbon accords in 1992, preferring to dictate its own settlement in Bosnia, if necessary at the price of further ethnic cleansing, rather than accept an E.U. initiative; imposed the ultimatum at Rambouillet that launched full-scale war over Kosovo; bundled NATO to the frontiers of Belarus and Ukraine; and gave its blessing to the Russian reconquest of Chechnya—Clinton hailing the "liberation of Grozny" after an onslaught that made the fate of Sarajevo look like a picnic.

In one way or another, all these moves in its back yard overrode or scanted European sensibilities. But in no case were these flouted too indelicately or ostentatiously. Indeed, as the second Clinton Administration wore on, European officialdom actually became, if anything, more pro-



Glenrowan, *by Sidney Nolan, from* Sidney Nolan, *a monograph by T. G. Rosenthal, published by Thames & Hudson. Nolan died in 1992.*

fuse and vehement in announcing the interconnection of free markets and free elections, and the need to limit national sovereignty in the name of human rights, than was Washington itself. Politicians and intellectuals could pick what they wanted from the mixture.

By the end of the decade, strategic planners in Washington had every reason to be satisfied with the overall balance sheet of the nineties. The U.S.S.R. had been knocked out of the ring, Europe and Japan kept in check, China drawn into increasingly close trade relations, the U.N. reduced to little more than a permissions office; and all this accomplished to the tune of the most emollient of ideologies, whose every second word was international understanding and democratic goodwill. Peace, justice, and freedom were spreading around the world.

Two years later, the scene looks very different. But in what respects? From the start, the incoming Bush Administration showed a certain impatience with the fiction that the "international community" was an alliance of democratic equals, and a disregard for the assorted hypocrisies associated with it, which was grating to a European opinion still in mourning for Clinton. But such shifts in style signified no change in the fundamental aims of American global strategy, which have remained completely stable for a half-century. Two developments, however, have radically modified the ways in which these aims are currently being pursued.

The first of these developments, of course, was the shock of September 11. In no sense a serious threat to American power, the attentats targeted symbolic buildings and innocent victims in a spectacle calculated to sow terror and fury in a population with no experience of foreign attack. Dramatic retribution, on a scale more than proportionate to the massacre, would automatically have

become the first duty of any government, whatever party was in power. In this case, the new administration, elected by a small and contested margin, had already posted its intention of striking a more assertive national posture abroad, dispensing with a series of diplomatic facades or placebos—Rome, Kyoto, etc.—that its predecessor had, rather nominally, approved. September 11 gave it an unexpected chance to recast the terms of American global strategy more decisively than would otherwise have been possible. Spontaneously, domestic opinion was now galvanized for a struggle figuratively comparable to the Cold War itself.

With this, a critical constraint was lifted. In postmodern conditions, the hegemony of capital does not require mass mobilization of any kind. Rather, it thrives on the opposite—political apathy and the withdrawal of any cathexis from public life. Failure to vote, as Britain's chancellor remarked after the last U.K. election, is the mark of the satisfied citizen. Nowhere is this axiom more widely accepted than in the United States, where presidents are regularly elected by about a quarter of the adult population. But—here is an essential distinction—the exercise of American primacy does require an activation of popular sentiment beyond mere assent to the domestic status quo. This is far from readily or continuously available. The Gulf War was approved by only a handful of votes in Congress. Intervention in Bosnia was long delayed for fear of unenthusiastic reaction in the electorate. Even landings in Haiti had to be quite brief. In effect, there is a permanent structural gap between the range of military-political operations the American empire needs in order to maintain its sway and the span of attention or commitment of American voters. To close it, a threat of some kind is virtually indispensable. In that sense, much like Pearl Harbor, the attentats of September 11 gave a presidency that was anyway seeking to change the modus operandi of America abroad the opportunity for a much swifter and more ambitious turn than it could easily have executed otherwise. The circle around Bush realized this immediately, National Security Adviser Rice comparing the moment to the inception of the Cold War—a political equivalent of the Creation.

The second development, of no less significance, is the "revolution in military affairs," a fundamental change in the nature of warfare by the comprehensive application of electronic advances to weapons and communications systems. The NATO campaign against Yugoslavia was still an early experiment, with a good many technical flaws and targeting failures, but the blitz on Afghanistan, deploying a full panoply of satellites, smart missiles, drones, stealth bombers, and special forces, showed just how wide the technological gap between the U.S. armory and that of all other states had become, and how low the human cost—to the United States—of further military interventions round the world might be. The global imbalance in the means of violence once the U.S.S.R. had vanished has, in effect, since been redoubled, tilting the underlying constituents of hegemony yet more sharply toward the pole of force.

These two changes of circumstance—the inflaming of popular nationalism after September 11 at home, and the new latitude afforded by the RMA abroad—have been accompanied by an ideological shift. This is the main element of discontinuity in current U.S. global strategy. Whereas the rhetoric of the Clinton regime spoke of the cause of international justice and the construction of a democratic peace, the Bush Administration has hoisted the banner of the war on terrorism. These are not incompatible motifs, but the order of emphasis assigned to each has altered. The result is a sharp contrast of atmospherics. The war on terrorism orchestrated by Cheney and Rumsfeld is a far more strident, if also brittle, rallying cry than the cloying pieties of the Clinton-Albright years. The immediate political yield of each has also differed. The new and sharper line from Washington has gone down badly in Europe, where human-rights discourse was, and is, especially prized. Here the earlier line was clearly superior as a hegemonic idiom.

On the other hand, in Russia and China the opposite holds. There, the war on terrorism has—at any rate temporarily—offered a much better basis for integrating rival power centers under American leadership than human-rights rhetoric, which only irritated the principals. For the moment, the diplomatic gains scored by the cooption of Putin's regime into the Afghan campaign, and installation of U.S. bases throughout Central Asia, can well be regarded by Washington as more substantial than the costs of the listless grumbling at American unilateralism that is so marked a feature of the European scene.

If such was the balance sheet as an American marionette was lowered smoothly into place in Kabul, to all but universal applause—from Iranian mullahs and French philosophes, Scandinavian social-democrats and Russian secret policemen, British NGOs and Chinese generals—what explains the projected follow-up in Iraq? A tougher policy toward the Baath regime, already signaled during Bush's electoral campaign, was predictable well before September 11, at a time when the long-standing Anglo-American bombardment of Iraq was intensifying anyway. Three factors have since converted what was no doubt originally envisaged as stepped-up covert operations to over-

throw Saddam into the current proposals for a straightforward invasion. The first is the need for some more conclusively spectacular outcome to the war on terrorism. Victory in Afghanistan, satisfactory enough in itself, was achieved over a largely invisible enemy, and to some extent psychologically offset by continuing warnings of the danger of further attacks by the hidden agents of Al Qaeda. Functional for keeping up a high state of public alarm, this theme nevertheless lacks any liberating resolution. The conquest of Iraq offers drama of a grander and more familiar type, whose victorious ending could convey a sense that a hydralike enemy has truly been put out of action.

Beyond such atmospherics, however, the drive to attack Iraq answers to a rational calculation of a more strategic nature. It is clear that the traditional nuclear oligopoly, indefensible on any principled grounds, is bound to be more and more challenged in practice as the technology for making atomic weapons becomes cheaper and simpler. The club has already been defied by India and Pakistan. To deal with this looming danger, the U.S. needs to be able to launch preemptive strikes at possible candidates, whenever it so wishes. The Balkan War provided a vital first precedent for overriding the legal doctrine of national sovereignty without any need to invoke self-defense—one retrospectively sanctioned by the U.N. In Europe this was still often presented as a regrettable exception, triggered by a humanitarian emergency, to the normal respect for international law characteristic of democracies. The notion of the axis of evil, by contrast, and the subsequent targeting of Iraq, lays down the need for preemptive war and enforcement of regime change as a norm, if the world is ever to be made safe.

A third reason for seizing Baghdad is more directly political, rather than ideological or military. Here the risk is significantly greater. The Republican administration is as well aware as anyone on the left that September 11 was not simply an act of unmotivated evil but a response to the widely disliked role of the United States in the Middle East. This is a region in which—unlike Europe, Russia, China, Japan, or Latin America—there are virtually no regimes with a credible base to offer effective transmission points for American cultural or economic hegemony. The assorted Arab states are docile enough, but they lack any kind of popular support, resting on family networks and secret police, which typically compensate for their factual servility to the United States with a good deal of media hostility, not to speak of closure, toward America.

In practice, while thoroughly subject to the grip of American "hard" power (funds and arms), most of the Arab world thus forms a kind of exclusion zone for the normal operations of American "soft" power, allowing all kinds of aberrant forces and sentiments to brew under the apparently tight lid of the local security services, as the origins of the assailants of 9/11 demonstrated. Taking over Iraq thus would give Washington a large oil-rich platform in the center of the Arab world on which to build an enlarged version of Afghan-style democracy, designed to change the whole political landscape of the Middle East.

Of course, as many otherwise well-disposed commentators have hastened to point out, rebuilding Iraq might prove a taxing and hazardous business. But American resources are large, and Washington can hope for a Nicaraguan effect after a decade of mortality and despair under U.N. siege—counting on the end of sanctions and full resumption of oil exports, under a U.S. occupation, to improve the living conditions of the majority of the Iraqi population so dramat-

[Painting]

COORS OF PERCEPTION



Fall from Grace, *by Dan Ford, was on display last summer at Metaphor Contemporary Art, in Brooklyn*

Artwork courtesy Gracie Mansion Gallery, New York

ically as to create the potential for a stable American protectorate, of the kind that already more or less exists in the Kurdish sector of the country.

Such, roughly speaking, is the thinking behind the Republican plan to occupy Iraq. Like all such geopolitical enterprises, which can never factor in every relevant agent or circumstance, it involves a gamble. But a calculation that misfires is not thereby necessarily irrational—it becomes so only if the odds are plainly too high against it, or the potential costs far outweigh the benefits, even if the odds are low. Neither appears to apply in this case. The operation is clearly within American capabilities, and its immediate costs—there would undoubtedly be some—do not at this stage seem prohibitive.

Why, then, has the prospect of war aroused such disquiet, not so much in the Middle East, where Arab League bluster is largely pro forma, but in Europe? In general, while European states know they are subaltern to the United States and accept their status, they dislike having it rubbed in publicly. The Bush Administration's dismissal of the Kyoto Protocol and the International Criminal Court has also offended a sense of propriety earnestly attached to the outward forms of political rectitude. NATO was accorded scant attention in the Afghan campaign, and is being completely ignored in the drive to the Tigris. All this has ruffled European sensibilities. A further ingredient in the hostile reception the plan to attack Iraq has met in the European—and to a lesser extent in the liberal American—intelligentsia is the justified fear that it could strip away the humanitarian veil covering Balkan and Afghan operations to reveal too nakedly the imperial realities behind the new militarism. This layer has invested a great deal in human-rights rhetoric, and feels uncomfortably exposed by the bluntness of the thrust now under way.

In practice, such misgivings amount to little more than a plea that whatever war is launched should have the nominal blessing of the U.N. The Republican administration has been happy to oblige, explaining with perfect candor that America always benefits if it can act multilaterally, but if it cannot will act unilaterally anyway. A Security Council resolution framed vaguely enough to allow an American assault on Iraq soon after the elapse of some kind of ultimatum would suffice to appease European consciences, and let the Pentagon get on with the war.

This does not mean that there will be any widespread enthusiasm for the war in the E.U., aside from Downing Street itself. Factual assent to an armed assault is one matter; ideological commitment to it, another. The demonstration of American prerogatives—"the unilateralist iron fist inside the multilateralist velvet glove," as Robert Kagan has crisply put it—may rankle for some time yet. In these conditions, we can expect the volume of low-level dispute and recrimination within the Atlantic bloc to go up. The slippage between the plates of consent and force within the system of American hegemony is becoming more actual.

Its immediate symptom, of course, is the outpouring of protest among the Atlantic intelligentsia—overwhelming on the E.U. side, substantial on the U.S.—against the impending war

[Opinions]

PLEDGE DRIVE

From essays submitted last August by Kathleen Lawrence's fourth-grade class at Shell Point Elementary, a public school in Beaufort, South Carolina. The students were asked to respond to a federal court ruling that the phrase "under God" is unconstitutional and should be removed from the Pledge of Allegiance.

We should say "under God" so God could keep all the states together. If we don't say "under God," He could not bless America.

My mother's opinion is that changing the Pledge of Allegiance would be like changing the Constitution of Rights.

I think "under God" should stay in the plege because if we didn't have god we wouldn't have people or you or me or animals or your family or my family.

I think we should say "under God" because he made us. He is our shepperd. He is our father and our brother too.

I would love for "under God" to stay in the pledge because it feels good to know He is with me the whole way through. If they take "under God" out of the pledge I will be very mad if they do. Anyway I hope they do not.

My mom said "under God" should be in the pledge because he made this country. He is able to wake us up. He is able to see this country.

It would never be the same again if "under God" was taken out of the pledge of allegiance. I can tell you everybody who wants "under God" to be in the pledge will not be as happy as they used to be.

against Iraq. At the time of this writing, a torrent of worries that America has forgotten its best self, invocations of the U.N., paeans to European values, fears of damage to Western interests in the Arab world, hopes in General Powell, compliments to Chancellor Schroeder, continue to course through the media. The Gulf, Balkan, and Afghan wars, we are given to understand, were one thing. These were expeditions that commanded the emphatic support of this stratum—its sober applause accompanied, of course, by that sprinkling of critical observations which denotes any self-respecting intellectual. But an American attack on Iraq is another matter, the same voices now explain, since it does not enjoy the same solidarity of the international community, and requires an unconscionable doctrine of preemption. To which the Republican administration has no difficulty replying, in Sade's firm words: *Encore un effort, citoyens*. Military intervention to prevent the risk of ethnic cleansing in Kosovo violated national sovereignty and flouted the U.N. charter, when NATO so decided. So why not military intervention to prevent the risk of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, with or without the nod of the U.N.? The principle is exactly the same: the right—indeed the duty—of civilized states to stamp out the worst forms of barbarism, within whatever national boundaries they occur, to make the world a safer and more peaceful place.

The logic is unanswerable, and in practice the outcome will be the same. The White House is unlikely to be cheated of its quarry by any concessions on the part of the Baath regime in Baghdad. Any sudden, deep plunge on Wall Street remains a risk for the administration, but the probability remains war; and if war, the certainty is an occupation of Iraq—to the applause of the international community, including the overwhelming majority of the commentators and intellectuals now wringing their hands over Bush's "unilateralism." Reporters from *The New Yorker* and *Le Monde*, *Vanity Fair* and *The New York Review of Books*, the *Guardian* and *La Repubblica*, will descend on a liberated Baghdad and—naturally with a level-headed realism, and all necessary qualifications—greet the timid dawn of Arab democracy. With the rediscovery that, after all, the only true revolution is American, power and literature can fall into each other's arms again. The storm in the Atlantic teacup will not last very long.

Reconciliation is all the more predictable, since the current shift of emphasis from what is "cooperatively allied" to what is "distinctively American" within the imperial ideology is, of its nature, likely to be short-lived. The "war on terrorism" is a temporary bypass on the royal road leading to "human rights and liberty" around the world. Products of an emergency, its negative goals are no substitute for the permanent positive ideals that a hegemony requires. Functionally, as the relative weight of force rises within the American synthesis and consent declines, the importance of the "softer" version of its set of justifications will increase—precisely in order to mask the imbalance, which the "harder" version risks accentuating. In the not too distant future, the widows of Clinton will find consolation.

Is it necessary to say that the war, if it comes to pass, should be opposed? The tissue of cruelties and hypocrisies that has justified the blockade of Iraq for a decade, at the cost of hundreds of thousands of lives, requires no further exposure in these pages. The weapons of mass destruction possessed by the Baath regime are puny compared with the stockpile accumulated by Israel and winked at by the "international community"; Iraq's occupation of Kuwait was an afterthought to the record of the West Bank; its murder of its own citizens far surpassed by the dictatorship in Indonesia, which was feted in Washington and Bonn to the end of its days. It is not Saddam Hussein's atrocities that have attracted the hostility of successive American administrations and their various European sepoys but his potential threat to imperial emplacements in the Gulf and—more notionally—colonial stability in Palestine. Invasion and occupation are a logical upshot of the strangulation of the country since Desert Storm. Disputes in Western capitals over whether to proceed to conclusions forthwith or to drag out asphyxiation to the end are differences of tactics and timing, not of humanity or principle.

Republican and Democratic administrations in the United States are not the same, any more than are center right and center left governments in Europe. It is always necessary to register the differences between them. But these are rarely distributed along a moral continuum of decreasing good or evil. The contrasts are nearly always more mixed. So it is today. There is no cause to regret that the Bush Administration has scotched the wretched charade of the International Criminal Court or swept aside the withered fig leaves of the Kyoto Protocol. But there is every reason to resist its erosion of civil liberties in America. The doctrine of preemption is a menace to every state that might in the future cross the will of the hegemon or its allies. But it is no better when proclaimed in the name of human rights than in the name of nonproliferation. What is sauce for the Balkan goose is sauce for the Mesopotamian gander. The arrogance of the "international community" and its rights of intervention across the globe are not a series of arbitrary events or disconnected episodes. They compose a system, which needs to be fought with a coherence not less than its own.



High Crimes (detail), *by Ryan Steadman, was on display in October at OHT gallery, in Boston*

[Missives]

YOU'VE GOT MURDER!

The following messages were sent to Saddam Hussein at the email address posted on Iraq's government website (www.uruklink.net). The messages were obtained by Brian S. McWilliams and were featured in Wired News *(www.wired.com) last October.*

Subject: President Saddam Hussein

Dear President Saddam Hussein,

Hello, I hope that you are well. I know that you are very buzy, but would it be possible to send me an autographed photo of you for me, please? I am trying to collect autographs of famous people. If you could help me with this . . . I would be so happy :-)))) I thank you for taking the time to read my letter. I hope to hear from you soon.

Subject: Regarding to how to use best weapon treatment USA Army

Dear Sir,

I am very glad to found your Ministry web. I am Iraq's friend! I am special for research biochemistry work. I sympathize Iraq people and believe finally Great Iraq will conquer USA!!! I recommend you use one of chemical gas treatment USA Army. This product easy for purchase, easy for make, more efficiency than others. The name is: Methyl Bromide. In fact, originally this product is for soil treatment, fumigation in grain storage, and fumigation inspect container. But if for weapon use, have function: no color, no smell, will let person dead in a few second.

In the World, only a few factory manufacture it. If you want to secret purchase, Belgium factory have agent in Saudi Arabia, you can through Jordan's company buy from Saudi Arabia.

Please kindly transfer these message to Ministry of Defense. Appreciate your concern.

Great Iraq government & Great Iraq people finally will victory!!!

One of support Iraq's friend.

Subject: PRESIDENT SADDAM HUSSEIN

Hi there, Your dictator President is going to die soon, Iraqi Arabian foes. You will soon see the mighty Armies, Navies, and Air Forces of The United States and The United Kingdom bearing down upon you. You will soon see in the skies above aircraft and many of them. You will see in the seas around you mighty warships. You will

see on the ground around you two mighty armies with mighty weapons.

And please don't forget the nuclear weapons carried by mighty Trident and Tomahawk cruise missiles! BE AFRAID SADDAM LOVERS, BE VERY AFRAID!

Bye.

Subject: Not every American is for the U.S.'s intended invasion
Dear Mr. President,

Although I will probably end up on some FBI watch list for writing this, I just thought that I would tell you that not every American is for any type of military action against Iraq. It's not that I agree with everything that you have ever done as a Leader, as with any great leader you have made mistakes, mostly with regards to trusting the U.S. to be a country of principle. As anyone with any knowledge of world events knows, the U.S. is completely without principle. You at least are only defending your right to sovereign rule without foreign intervention.

I would recommend diligence with regards to your own personal security. The CIA is notoriously crafty and extremely adept at overthrowing governments and their respective leaders. They have tried at least once already to overthrow you, using your own trusted men against you. Luckily for you they failed and went home. But they will be back, unless you already have some sort of deal worked out with them to insure your safety.

Oh well, what do I know. I am just an American citizen, which doesn't entitle me to much in the way of knowledge. Good luck and best wishes to you and your country.

Subject: Hello

How are you doing? I am looking for someone to talk to about selling my fire retardant for the army over there. We have a great product for the army. We have this formula that will protect uniforms and interior of cars. It can work on wood and everything. Please let me know who I can talk to. Have a great day.

Subject: Ya Ahlan wa Sahlan
Asalaam Aleikum!

Dear brother Saddam Hussein! As you know all Syrian loves you! My Question to you my brother, what can we Arabs, Muslims do to help you against the devil America? Tell me what to do. Each of us is ready to die for ALLAH in defending Irak against America!

PS: I did not write in arabic, because I have not got the arabic program.

Subject: collaboration from Pravda.Ru
Sirs—

I am from Pravda.Ru, the greatest Russian Internet news journal with 86% of traffic. Our readership is curiously mostly outside Russia. We have some millions of different readers per month, mostly instructed people with some influence.

I want to help Iraq by publishing articles giving YOUR perspective, your President's ideas, his feelings. It will be another voice for you, to try to avoid war.

Please give me your ideas on how I can help you and how we can collaborate. Insh' Allah!

Subject: anti america
dear mr. president hussein,

first i hope that all is well with you. don't let yourself get bent out of shape by those arrogant americans. unfortunately, the americans have a lot of money and power and cannot easily be fought. the embargo that still exists against your country is, in my opinion, a crime. if the americans should attack your country, you need only send a ticket to me in vienna and i will come to iraq to fight the americans. i am a good shot, and i am serious about my offer. i do not mean this as a joke. continue on doing what you are doing. you are one of the few people who does not fear the americans.

Subject: Happy Victory day

Hi, I want to wish all of you a happy Victory day. I love Iraq & all of the Iraqis in & out of Iraq. My prayers go out to all of you. I am involved with antisanction groups. I consider Iraq my country in my heart, even though I was born in the u.s.a. I used to love the u.s.a. but not anymore. I see Iraq as a beacon of light to the world.

[Dialogue]

LINGVO EUROCRACIA

From an October 28 Internet chat with European Convention chairman Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, sponsored by the European Union. Participants were invited to discuss a draft of a new European constitution that was released that week.

[Joshy] When is this Europa Chat going to take place?

[Joshy] I'm american

[jonm] Mr chairman, which of the four names for europe do u prefer: european union, united states of europe, european community or a united europe?

[Suzanne] I think it starts now with us talking to each other

[Guy] for the name how about just Europe

[Joshy] I would like to know how concerned you are, yourself, and as a body, about the waning interest in the EU regarding the future of the EU and the legitmacy of its operations

[Guy] bon apetit
[FEDERALE] Mr. President d'Estaing, Why in the Convention none sees the real fundamental subject involved, i.e. the creation of a new power, a new State, the creation of the European Federation?
[FEDERALE] I think that any of the project approved by this important convention will not be felt as creation wanted by the people. Where is the people in this process? I don't see it.
[Conv_EN1] Hi there—the questions are just coming in and being translated into English. You'll here from us soon.
[sos] The EU recognizes five basic consumer rights. Will these be included also in the European Constitution?
[Joshy] I'm willing to bet I'm the only American in here
[Joshy] hehe
[FEDERALE] I don't think the name of the future Europe to be a real problem. The question is: do we want a Federal State?
[annahg] what's the meanings of a constitution for the Europe
[Joshy] I think the US needs another world power to keep it in check.
[BERNI] I'm willing to bet I'm the only Majorcan in here
[RobertB] Joshy: I just hope the EU does not become an abusive bully given enough powers.
[Joshy] Yes, and I hope the EP continues to gain more relevance. The EU seems disturbingly covert and undemocratic at the moment, and tending to get worse.
[Joshy] I hope you guys can work things out, I'm gone—gotta go to class
[respro] M. President VGD: Will the convention choose a COMMON, SIMPLE, NEUTRAL SECOND language for all USE citizens as the USA did in 1776? If not, you can forget your USE!
[Conv_EN1] From Moderator: we're really delighted to have so many people participating—but please, please, please, give the President time to answer your questions
[HezbollaH] Mr. President: What is the EU future role in the middle east conflict and its strategy in defining terrorism?
[TGA] By the way, where IS the president?
[Foederali] It seems to me that the chat needs to be better structured.
[cathy] agreed
[RobertB] Foederali: I disagree. THis is the way the commission chats have always been structured, and I think using IRC as now is the best way to prevent censorship or other abuse—this may be chaotic but it's really for the best
[HezbollaH] Is the "so-called" president in this channel? How are we going to obtain the answers?
[Conv_EN3] To Respro: The citizens of Europe are very keen on keeping their languages. It is a right we must respect. However, we should promote the practical use of a smaller number of working languages in order to have direct dialogue and not to have to rely always on translations.
[PeterCosm] islamic and jewish fundamentalists are both better occupied in helping world development in that plane than in violence in the name of God—which is an error
[HezbollaH] Question: How true are the rumors that Hezbollah will be mentioned in the list of terrorist organizations of the EU?
[Foederali] At least one answer from VGE we would not mind.
[PeterCosm] Hezbollah—quite likely I think
[Tony] anyone that murders people for political gain is a terrorist
[HezbollaH] Tony and anyone who murders people for the sake of freedom is . . . ?
[PeterCosm] i suspect because it has a military arm bent on killing
[HezbollaH] PeterCosm, our "military arm" is limited in one geographical location which is the Lebanese occupied land. What does that have to do with terrorism?
[Ivanus] Cur non Latine et non Anglice?
[Tony] there are also terrorist states hez . . . many eu citizens support the palestinian cause but believe me dialogue works better than violence
[PeterCosm] The point about the middle east and this chat is that the convention wants to crystallise solidarity within Europe so that everywhere globalization with be improved thru solidarity—true world development—the beginning of a civilization of love
[Ivanus] Lingua anglica possibilitas est, sed non iusta: lingua materna est non omnibus civibus.
[cathy] Farming and Fishing
[Sorin] Mr. President and dear chat friends: In most of the chases the European constitutional treaty will be adopted by referendum most probably starting with 2004. What about Bulgaria and Romania?
[PeterCosm] few know latin, but i like it
[Michele] Esperanto is more neutral
[Suzanne] nobody knows Esperanto, it is not the language that is used the most nor the one that develops quickest. English is.
[cathy] So what exactly is a constitution? I speak Gaelic and we only have Parliaments
[PeterCosm] the tower of Babel would collapse!
[ElMo] Latin is my choice as it is the root of the majority of the languages in Europe

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He is also a distinguished author on communications. The National Communication Association has twice awarded its Award for Distinguished Scholarship in Rhetoric and Public Address to Dr. Zarefsky. In 1986, he received the Award for his book, *President Johnson's War on Poverty: Rhetoric and History*, and he received it again in 1991 for *Lincoln, Douglas, and Slavery: In the Crucible of Public Debate.*

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[Michele] we have to find a EURO language
[Silvah] Michele, forget it
[Michele] latin is dead
[Ivanus] Rectissime dicis, Elmo!! Vivat!!
[Silvah] There will never be a EURO language
[Ivanus] Lingua latina nullo modo est mortua, Michele!
[HezbollaH] ElMo but latin is outdated. Evolution had its word.
[Foederali] Ivanus: Why not Chinese, already one Billion people speak it.
[PeterCosm] its nice to talk three languages
[Michele] why you want to force us to learn english if we do not want it?
[Conv_EN1] By the way, do you all have any questions on the Convention? Or have you asked, and haven't had a reply?
[Foederali] Michele: you do already
[Conv_EN1] Hey! We're the interpreters. Don't you have any questions for President VGE????
[Michele] i don't want to be forced
[Ivanus] What the president think about a neutral language? This is: LATIN ???
[PeterCosm] good
[Conv_EN1] Euro English isn't neutral—it just isn't English . . .
[ParsaMila] Is the European Union President here or not?
[Ivanus] LATIN is NOT DEAD!!
[prokey] I cannot believe that some just cannot accept English as language of international relations
[RobertB] This chat seems to work far worse than previous chats! Hardly any answers are coming in. Is this because the chairman's native language is French and most attention is directed to the French channel?
[respro] I'm sorry: English is completely unfit as the common USE language and so are all the other ethnic languages. We need a COMLMON, EASY, NEUTRAL, SECOND lingvo internacia! Esperanto! It already exists since 1887. What's your opinion about this very crucial problem M. VGD?
[Andrea] Ivanus, I agree with you about Latin . . . but, unfortunately, it'll be most likely a utopia
[cathy] Mr President. Monsier—yoohoo
[Steve] Most of Europe is sleepwalking into a tyranny like those few can remember. Lose our democratic nations and we are in deep shit.
[Ivanus] gratias tibi ago, Andrea! Fortasse veritatem dicis . . . tantummodo utopia . . .
[Ivanus] Exist the "pronuntiatio restituta"
[Christine] How likely is the prospect of a unified European military, or even a rapid reaction force?
[cathy] I hated latin at school
[Tony] To Steve . . . a European Union is the one of the ways that a future tyranny can be avoided
[Angelos] I'm afraid that the only room satisfied tonight will be the french one . . . :(
[Ivanus] Ante magnum defensorem virtutum patrimoniique communium Europeorum, lingua utar nostra communi, non solum Ciceronis Vergiliique, Plini vel Boethii, sed etiam Batavi Erasmi, Poloni Copernici, Galli Cartesii, Angli Newtoni, Sueti Linnei
[Steve] D'Estaing heads a coterie of fat-cats determined to become the Eurocracy of Eucratia—immune from prosecution, irremovable from office and immensely well off. We must stop them before they stop everything which makes life worth while. No identity—no morality. If we do not stop this sinister farce we shall rot away.
[respro] Guy: Esperanto is a lot easier; even I could master it in three months. It's a very vivid and living lingvo. It's the second L on the www; Try google or yahoo and type ESPERANTO, you will be amazed!

[Miscellany]

HIBERNATING SIR, TODAY IS THE DAY

By Christine Hume, from AGNI 55. *Hume is an assistant professor of English at Eastern Michigan University. Her most recent book is* Musca Domestica, *published by Beacon Press.*

Sir, the fates eat fate. Day masons eat mortar. Day springs up, sir. Day hears the cloudless cry. And organs riddle seas drunk. Today, surgeons can remove spacelight. Transistor TVs leave music in place, and the music eats diamonds alive. Sir, transmit the whiteout. Wait for white to unfocus you, but don't wait. Can you feel the animal breath watching? Its slow teeth watching, sir. Hunters can toy with the safety of thick hands. Stones warm their pockets now. We eat stones so that our voices can touch it. Sir, a voice can change color. It can dig you out, and carpenters can springload today. Up, sir, a chimney blew away. Today we rise out of our mirrors. We roll comets off the telepath. Stars have eaten their own good. The surveyor knew, sir. He knew several weathers may be stitched to the center. Outside hangdogs you. Today we have struck night; we have you cold.



"Van Buren, Indiana (population 955), Town Council, July 21, 1999," a photograph printed on canvas by Paul Shambroom, was exhibited in October at Julie Saul Gallery, in New York City.

[Silvah] STeve, you might have seen too many movies

[Angellos] <To moderators> I was wondering whether we could skip for a while this whole language issue and go a little further . . .

[spithas] quit

[Conv_EN1] It isn't—I'm just joining in your discussion because I'm bored. No work is coming my way.

[respro] AGAIN: ESPERANTO FOR PRESIDENT OF THE NEW UNITED STATES OF EUROPE!!!

[Silvah] Conv_EN1, what is your work then?

[Conv_EN1] I'm one of the interpreters into English for this chat. But since we're not getting any replies to translate, we're not doing a great deal . . .

[Ivanus] Esperanto or Latin . . . but not english, my God!

[RobertB] Conv_2: Why is the president ignoring us?? There seems to be LOTS of activity in the French room but I don't understand French

[Angellos] Got disconnected . . .

[Silvah] Time stopped?

[RobertB] Maybe tell him that this is no way to build confidence in his European COnvention group. At the very least we want replies to our questions.

[Master] Mr. President: I thought that this chat room was meant for all EU citizens and not only for the Frenh!

[Nita] does somebody answer in English room too ?

[Steve] Silvah thinks I watch "movies"!!! Studying the workings of the Eurocracy doesn't leave time for "movies." They pour out their directives and regulations like a volcano vomiting ash—more than anyone can deal with—more than the subject governments can deal with—crippling small businesses—driving farmers from the land and fishermen from the sea—STOP watching "movies" Silvah and wake up!

[ElMo] In this Chat We can see the disadvantages (chaos!!) of not having a common second language in the EU

[PeterCosm] Steve—its a magnificent beaucracy—at our service in our common relationships

[Steve] I'm afraid so—it's called "bread and circuses" or how to keep the people docile

[Silvah] So, you're against any form of transnational or supranational organization then Steve?

[Philipp] Steve, national democracy has absolutely no means of controling a globalised business. those advocating the national sovereignity are in fact those who want business to rule with no social or environmental restrictions.

[Tony] national governments should deal with national issues . . . a democratically elected european parliament/government should deal with international issues such as trade/defence

[Silvah] Philipp, I agree . . . "only national

democracy" leads to conquests and wars
[Steve] Philipp . Not so—without national boundaries the globocrats take over
[Philipp] Steve, they already have taken over, long time ago. Only a strong European state can somehow limit the damage. Or do you think that any individual European country, even a big one like Germany or the UK can do anything against US interests, let's say in the IMF or the world bank?
[Steve] Jean Monnet (father of the EU) once said that it would be one of three great blocs controlled by a global government.
[Sorin] Phillip: a European state are you saying? I hope you want to see a copy of the US in Europe.
[Persia] Is the President here or not?
[Conv_EN1] Yes, the President is here in the room—sitting right across the way from me, in fact;

[Poster]

GAME OVER



A poster distributed by London's transportation agency as part of a campaign to help bus riders feel more secure. Within three years, every bus in London will be equipped with surveillance cameras.

[ElMo] We should keep trying with question like common language and united foreign policy, very important questions. Please Mr. President Why don't you answer them?
[Angellos] I have both chat rooms in front of me . . . the difference is impressing . . .
[Steve] The global government exists as the UN (controlled by an utterly undemocratic Security Council) the WTO which is colluding with the EU to give big business the run of its subject states and the Council on Foreign Relations and the Bilderberg Group—so much for democracy!!!
[Angellos] Alors, MrVGE. Que'est-ce qu'on vas faire?
[PeterCosm] If solidarity is based on equal dignity, then together in a union we create a communion, and this is not only in seeing an image of one another in one another, but tending from this material world toward sharing in the love of God. Why would this not be good for atheists who don't know about God?
[Angellos] nous n'avons pas des reponses ici . . .
[zulko] Ou sont les réponses??
[ElMo] We are arguing and talking among ourselves, The President is talking to the . . . french.
[Steve] UKIP—UK Independence Party Vlaams Blok—Lijst Fortuyn—Front national —FreiheitsPartei Oesstereich—all suppressed and lied about by the Eurocratic media—they are Europe's only hope
[Conv_EN1] Whenever I start a message with the words "to So-and-So," this is an official answer from the President which I have just translated.
[Tony] now you show your true colours Steve
[Ivanus] Lingua Anglica, nativa Britannis & Hibernis, emolumento est eis in negotiationibus, detrimento aliis. Nonne justius est linguam neutram invenire? Quenam habet plus historie communis Europee quam Latina, que in multis scholis et universitatibus docetur?
[Ivanus] Non merentur, Elmo. Sed gratias plurimas! ;-)
[Steve] TONY—that's supposed to be meaningful is it? Don't forget that it was the Nazis who last attempted to unite Europe and their successors in Italy are following in their footsteps!
[Tony] thru violence and state terrorism . . . not democracy
[Steve] Tony—that is exactly what is coming—when Giscard get his mitts on our freedoms. Have you see the provisions for a EU arrest-warrant in the Nice Treaty—you should!

[Andrea] Sic est, Ivane.
[Angellos] i really can't help wondering . . .
[Steve] Tony—There is no community of mutual undersatnding—all that happens is that a bunch of politicians form an elit and please themselves. National democracy is the only possible kind of democracy!!
[Conv_EN3] To Respro: The Convention has not debated the language issue
[Tony] Steve there should be multi layers of democracy. . . . with a European Parliament at the top which should not interfer in purely domestic issues
[Milad] so the president has left?
[Steve] Tony—the Brussels QUANGO should not interfere in anything—it has no right—and it doesn't care. Only the people of a country care—they must decide for themselves
[sandra] Mr. President, can you tell me why animals can be burned alive, tortured in very sadistic ways until death, dogs are hung in trees out of tradition, bulls are darted and beaten until death in village feast and much more, all this for entertainment?
[Sorin] The women victims of traffic will continue to be considered immigrants?
[fox] Don't you think that the EU is a CHRISTIAN club ? I think it is . . .
[respro] That's all folks. VGD went home. It's past 21:30 in Brussels
[fox] Is it finished ?
[Steve] The "corpus juris" is an invasion of national codes of law—it gives the state frightening powers—no free juries—no defence against tyranny—the EU is re-forming the Gestapo—it must be stopped
[Nirgal] the chat is over
[helen] are they not now starting to change the three pillar model?
[Philipp] Steve, now I don't get you, why are you afraid of a new Gestapo, if you like all the extreme parties in Europe, like Vlaams Blok, Freiheitliche Partei, List Pim Fortyun etc.? Tha doesn't make much sense.
[PeterCosm] helen, the three pillars was an empty centre
[Steve] The pillars are to be demolished to make way for a monolith—you'll be sorry, if they manage it.
[PeterCosm] empty
[PeterCosm] centre
[Sorin] helen: looks like they will put down the pilars
[PeterCosm] Mr Thacther
[PeterCosm] Mrs Margarewt T
[PeterCosm] The empty centre is a vaccuum
[operator] THE SERVER WILL BE SHUTDOWN IN 2 MINUTES

[Idioms]

CRAUNCH THE MARMOSET

From "Idiotisms and Proverbs," a chapter in English As She Is Spoke: The New Guide of the Conversation, in Portuguese and English, in Two Parts, *by José da Fonseca and Pedro Carolino, first published in 1855 by J. P. Aillaud. Long unavailable in the United States, a new edition, edited by Paul Collins, was published by McSweeney's Books last year.*

Pouco a pouco o passaro faz seu ninho.
Few, few the bird make her nest.

Quem se pica alhos come.
That which feel one's snotly blow blow one's nose.

Pedra movediça nunca mofo a cubiça.
The stone as roll not heap up not foam.

As paredes teem ouvidos.
The walls have hearsay.

Tirar a sardinha com a mão do gato.
Keep the chestnut of the fire with the cat foot.

Tirar a braza com a mão do gato.
Take out the live coals with the hand of the cat.

Não há melhor mostarda que a fome.
There is not better sauce who the appetite.

Por dinheiro baila o perro.
Nothing some money, nothing of Swiss.

Não se colhem trutas a bragas enchutas.
It must to break the stone for to have almond.

Isso faz agua na boca.
That make to come water in the mouth.

Não sabe onde dar co'a cabeça.
He don't know where give with the head.

Deu no ponto.
He has fond the knuckle of the business.

Elle tem rasca na assadura.
He has a part in the coke.

E louco rematado.
He is mad to bind.

Despedir-se á franceza.
Burn the politeness.

Untar as mãos, a carro.
To fatten the foot.

Comprar gato em sacco.
To buy a cat in pocket.

Fazer tórres de vento.
To build castles in Espagnish.

Esperar horas e horas.
To craunch the marmoset.

Andar n'um pontinho de aceio.
To live in a small cleanness point.

Comer o pão que o diabo amassou.
To eat of the cow mad.

Deitar perolas a porcos.
To make paps for the cats.

Barriga cheia, cara alegre.
After the paunch comes the dance.

Acabou-se a festa, tomai o toldo.
Keep the curtains, the farce is played.

[Reproach]

BRICKS IN THE WALL

From the "Disacknowledgments" section of a 1999 master's thesis by Christopher Todd Brown, who was a graduate student of materials science at the University of California, Santa Barbara. The university refused to confer the master's degree unless the section was removed, and Brown filed a lawsuit in response. Last October the Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals held that Brown did not have a First Amendment right to his "Disacknowledgments" section, maintaining that "an academic thesis co-signed by a committee of professors is not a public forum, limited or otherwise." Further details of his case may be found at www.disacknowledged.org.

I would like to offer special Disacknowledgments to the following degenerates for being an ever-present hindrance during my graduate career:

To the dean and staff of the Graduate Division,

You fascists are the largest argument against higher education there has ever been. Any claims you make as an ally of and resource for students are an utter sham. All dealings with you have ended in sheer frustration. I'd rather take a hot stick in the eye than deal with your bureaucratic nonsense. An especial disacknowledgment to David Fishman, whose officious, blind devotion to absurd rules provides a disservice to both education and the university.

To the entire management of the Davidson Library,

Your strict adherence to self-serving draconian policy has made it a supreme displeasure to work in your vicinity. Incomprehensible fines, unwillingness to help, and general poor attitude have made most library visits an ogre. I trust your incompetence will preside over the continued decline in library quality.

To Professor Fred Wudl,

For failing to realize that your professorship and tenure don't give you the privilege of disrespectful and cruel treatment of your students and employees. Further, it has surprised me that your arrogance and proclivity at being an ass can affect even those isolated from your presence. It is my supreme pleasure to never have associations with you again.

To former governor Pete Wilson,

A supreme government jerk who has personally overseen the demise of the university. Your policies have 1) raised tuition and fees fourfold since my first association with the university; 2) dismantled and traded some of the most competent senior faculty; and 3) generally hurt as many people as possible. For these, I wish you to never wield any governmental power again, as you have surely proved your ineptitude.

To the UC Regents,

Whose continued suppression of graduate students, your most loyal employees, serves as a paragon of corrupt management. May your continually biased and corrupt practices be fraught with controversies brought upon by the students whom you offer a fatuous disservice.

And to Science,

For being a hollow specter of what you should be. Your vapid conceits have rendered those in your pursuit lifeless, unfeeling zombies. If I can forever escape you, the better I will be.

[Fiction]

THE PROJECT

By David Means, from the Spring & Summer issue of Alaska Quarterly Review.

It was with a strange kind of reverence—of the monk toward his god—that I decided on my quest, or journey, to stake out and occupy each province of my household. I made it my duty to seek out each spot in the house, to locate the ones that I hadn't made fully mine,



"Diagonal Composition, 1993," by Jeff Wall, from Figures and Places, *a collection of his photographs published by Prestel.*

and to go to those places and spend enough time in them to know them completely. This was how I came to be found under the desk one night by Jenny, who upon noticing me there gave a startled yelp (she was sitting down to write another letter to a councilman about the property-tax situation, which is beyond all control—her words—and must be changed because our property is assessed for much more than its actual value. We pay more than our due, she says; it's a theme with her, an undercurrent). She found me under the desk when her toes touched my foot. I was all the way to the back of the desk, as far back as I could get, hunched up, examining mostly the carpet—a yellow shag—and the flanks of the desk's legs, around which paper clips and pencils had collected back there along with dust balls and insect frass, or what I construed to be insect frass, though I had no way of authenticating it because I am no expert. Jenny did not know about my project. She believed I was hunkering down for a piece of paper that had slipped back there, as papers are prone to do, or plugging in a computer cable, or just looking for termite damage. There were small piles of sawdust everywhere, and this gave me a pretext on which to begin my adventure; it shielded me for a few months, until it became evident to Jenny that I was one hundred percent committed to the project. Until then I was able to commit myself to each spot. I selected them in the morning over a cup of orange juice. I listed them on the yellow pad, which I kept locked in the strongbox under the bed upstairs (we were sleeping in separate

rooms at that time, not simply in single beds, as in old television episodes, but separate rooms allowing us each our own peculiarities and quirks, going through the door between the rooms when we felt like copulating, which was about twice a week). The list was never finished, but I began it knowing that the project would be one that grew upon itself—the exact biological phrase eludes me now—and the next spot, the intake vent for the furnace in Dodge's room, a large metal grille with a brown enamel finish, was one that required me to lie down, face against the grille, for a good twenty minutes to get the particularities of that vantage down specifically; which I did. It was, I might add, more compelling than the spot under the desk (though here I must add that there were many other spots in and around the desk that needed careful exhumation); consolidated on the inner edge of the boxpipe, at the point where the duct made a right angle into a rectangle of pure darkness, the lint and dust and carpet fibers and dead skin of the house had collected into a ridge at which I stared for ten minutes to get down all of its qualities; there were bits of toys, too dust-covered to afford an exact I.D., but I could make out that they were action figures of the small variety like the mummified Pompeiians. I'd order Jenny to go at them with a couple of unwound coat hangers, tweezer them up and out of there (if they went in, they'll come out) and wash them with care, and present them to Dodge as something lost and now found, to spur from him the raw delight he gets at the appearance of a new toy or of an old one lost for days (years, in his time) under the couch. When he sees a toy resurrected before his eyes, he'll often squeal and dance wildly about in an aboriginal manner, twisting his body. Before I proved to be one hundred percent committed to the project, in the weeks when I was still somewhat ambivalent about keeping the yellow-pad record of my ventures, I often used the original source of the mission—examining the house for signs of the termites—as an excuse to dig into places that were of little interest and held my gaze for no more than twenty or thirty minutes; such as down in the basement, in the little crawl space beneath the front entryway—prime for bugs, snug against raw earth, offering them ample entry for their foraging white bodies. There was little to see except for the substructure of the porch thatched over by planking, and slices of white sunlight coming in through cracks from the street, disturbed and broken up by the movement of people. While I watched, Dodge passed back and forth, playing alone, his little murmurs just audible enough to identify. He made sounds like a dove or a nightingale (though for the life of me I've never heard a real nightingale and wouldn't know one if it were whistling in my ear), babbling mostly in his own language; back and forth, he broke up the slices of light until Jenny came out and called him in to lunch, and I saw her legs pass over the slits, or what I had to presume were her legs, or her ankles, moving through the light, and then Dodge, too, and then nothing but long graceful dust-moted angles coming into the rubble floor of the crawl, against my cheeks—or one cheek, to be specific, because to get in there I'd had to wiggle and waggle and snake, leaving my feet out in the basement itself. Two hours that observation took, yielding me little—on the pretext of a termite hunt, though I did find a spot, flaking off a fine top layer of wood and making out in one slim band of light their milky bodies spilling against each other—an opportune find, really, because behind me Jenny was tugging at my shoe and asking me to come to lunch and wondering if I'd found any bugs, and I was able to say yes I had and to even let her look in and see the eaten spot. Now, a few days later, I venture into the garage, to the rotted baseboard along the south wall. A long vestige of dry rot leads to the corner, where water is seeping in and a small mushroom has bloomed; there are little shells of dead insects that require the utmost observation and seem so numerous as to be uncountable, but count them I must, I conclude, because it seems as if the project depends on the closest of scrutiny and an accounting of everything; whether I, for that matter, am fully up to the task is a question I can ill afford to ask, but ask it I do, on my knees on the cold concrete with only a slim light through the window, blocked by a great clump of brambles and allowing past only a dry dusty afternoon light. There are sounds outside conspiring to muddle me. My name as it is called repeatedly by both Dodge and Jenny sounds for all the world like the name of someone who has been lost for hours in a cold dark sea, a raging sea: the name of a man who is suffering from hypothermia and can hardly clutch at the lifeline that has been thrown, his fingers slipping, the sizzling spray of the rotor blades blinding him. It's the way you'd call someone who has been dead for hours, I think, but then I must be deceiving myself, because they have—I am sure—thrown their full support behind me in this project, vowed to support me to the end, and I've laid it out before them in the clearest terms. I'm here, I call back, still counting, not willing to take my eyes from the pillbugs and millipedes, the dry husks of their forms, shelled and sucked empty of life. I'm here, I'm here.



Four untitled photographs by New York City artist John Gilliland, from "Scrapes," a series of photographs of paint scrapes left by cars on concrete barriers along Interstate 95. Gilliland's work will be exhibited this winter at the Red Dot gallery, in New York City.

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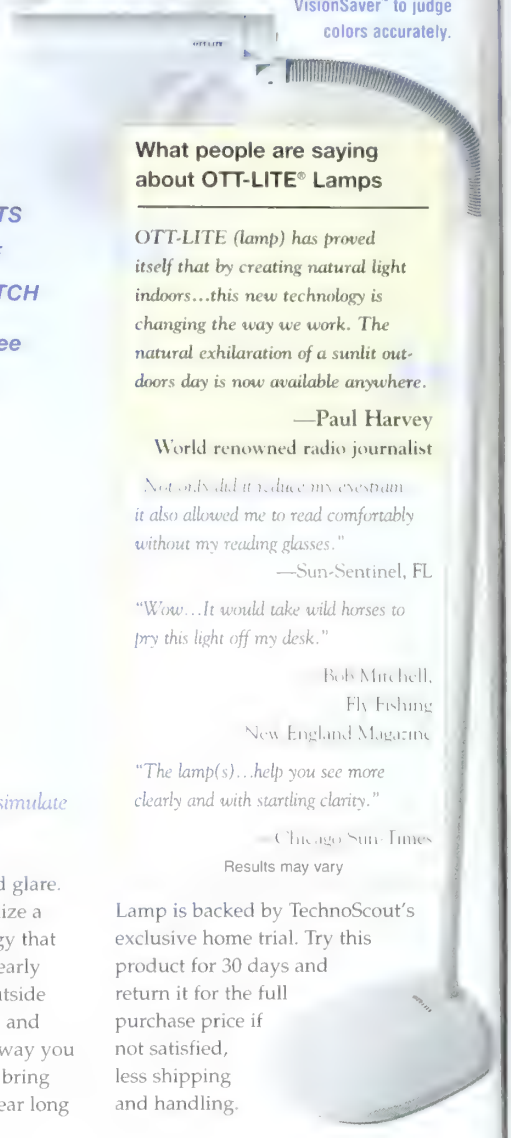
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COMMON GROUND

Finding our way back to the Enlightenment

By Thomas de Zengotita

The arc of the universe is long, but it bends toward justice.

—Martin Luther King

First, an anecdote. A friend of mine, very committed and active, a teacher of postcolonial history—he responded immediately and passionately to 9/11. He spoke out loud and clear, holding the United States' support for corrupt and terrorizing regimes historically responsible for the conditions that produced the terrorists and shaped the views of the millions who applauded their action. He insisted on the difference between explanation and justification, but the intensity of his convictions made him controversial—anonymous denunciations to the administration, that sort of thing—and I often found myself defending him.

Now, it happens that my friend had lost a brother to terrorism on Flight 103 over Lockerbie in 1988, something I was quick to point out, since it testified to the authenticity of his convictions. And that's essential, because people inclined to go with the flow want to believe that outspoken critics are striking self-important poses. One woman I talked to, who understood traumatic loss from personal experience, zeroed in on this piece of information: "That's what I don't get," she said. "How could Mr. D. think the way he does after what happened to him? It doesn't seem natural."

"Natural." That's the word to watch.

Like most decent people living normal lives, this woman has no interest in social and economic history. No serious study informs her political opinions. For Ms. S. life is about job and family and friends, and if events in the world occasionally intrude, she takes account of them as best she can, gleaning impressions from media coverage, from chance encounters with persuasive people, from her personal feelings for public figures, and from the mood in her immediate milieu. That's why she could put her finger so precisely on the reason most people don't pay attention to radical critics. It just doesn't seem natural to be so intensely involved with events in distant times and places at the expense of living the way most people do—invested in one's daily surroundings. It seems almost perverse.

Inspired by some passing muse, my reply to her went something like this: "Mr. D.'s core belief is that every human life is as valuable as every other human life, that every mother's loss, every brother's loss, is as terrible as any oth-

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THE PRINCIPLES OF ENLIGHTENMENT HUMANISM ARE UNAMBIGUOUS AND THEY ALL DEPEND ON THE IDENTIFICATION OF EACH OF US WITH ALL OF US

er. He also believes that, beginning with the conquest of the world by invad Europeans, we have inflicted untold millions of such losses and have contin to do so up through the Vietnam War and, more indirectly, to this day.

Ms. S. nodded as I went along, but I could see she thought I was evad the issue until I added, "and I am sure that within a few days, maybe a f hours, of hearing the news about his brother, Mr. D. thought about all th millions of anonymous losses, thought about how each one was like this o the one that happened to be his."

At first she wanted to reject this whole notion, find some way to disbeli it, call it crazy. But then she said, "I didn't know politics could go that dee

The more I think about it, the more striking it is that politics *does* go t deep for some people. As a matter of life habit, they identify intensely w (and against) multitudes of represented strangers—reading about them c stantly, hating these, supporting those—while other people, most people, j don't. Except during a crisis, when fear is upon them, when they rally arou the obvious rallying point, swept along in whatever direction the powers t be want to go.

Political activists need to think about this. It isn't right to assume that a one who isn't engaged is somehow impaired, corrupted by propaganda, tracted by sports and sitcoms. That bread-and-circuses stuff just doesn't it anymore. Noam Chomsky's 9/11 book got better shelf position at Barn & Noble than Dr. Phil, and basic information about the rape of the plan has been endlessly disseminated. No, let's face it. People aren't interest They don't care. That's the truth.

It's also important to notice that political engagement is not a functi of education—if only people knew this or that, then surely they would r up and demand . . . etc., etc. Droves of highly educated citizens are indiff ent to events unrelated to their immediate concerns, and many a n junkie ranting away on call-in radio never went past high school.

This is all quite mysterious, having to do with hidden confluences of cumstance and character. But this much is clear: deep political engageme is, if not unnatural, at least unusual. It takes something ex to influence people in this way, to cause them to extend th sense of self to encompass multitudes of strangers.

The most extensive such identification possible, the one I attribut to Mr. D., is an identification with all humanity and each human being. its secular form, that identification is rooted in the ideals of Enlightenm humanism, ideals articulated by Locke and Rousseau and Kant, and broug to bear on historical events in the Bill of Rights and the Declaration of t Rights of Man—all familiar, if disputed, territory. However miserably p tisans of these principles failed to fulfill them in practice, the princip themselves are unambiguous, and they all depend on that fundamental id tification of each of us with all of us, with the sheer human being abstra ed in the ideal from concrete contexts of history and tradition.

That's what ideals are. Abstract.

I am using "identity" precisely because it isn't part of the Enlightenm vocabulary. I've imported it from now-dominant postmodern rhetorics (m ticulturalism, gender, sexual orientation) that derive from a critique modernity in general and Enlightenment humanism in particular. We o that critique to Adorno and Heidegger, Bataille, Benjamin, Foucault, Lyota Derrida, Fish, Butler, Haraway, and Said, and to a generation of educat inspired by them to shape the academy we know today. College gradua since the seventies have learned to associate progressive politics with a c construction of concepts such as "natural rights," "natural reason," "hum progress," and even "human being." No longer self-evident and universal, th were exposed as self-serving constructions of a dominant interest gro (white bourgeois males), and politics was refigured as a struggle for access power by other groups, by those whom moderates had exploited and m ginalized. And all those Others were to propose constructions of their own

iscourses," they were called, in deference to the French—and deploy them ainst the hegemony of Western, especially modern, ideas and institu- nal arrangements. Hence, the culture wars of the last thirty years. Famil- ground, again.

On this familiar ground, I want to argue that no matter how justifiable the phasis on identity, no matter how empowering the turn to specifics of ex- rience that go with being black or gay—that is, in spite of all the unde- able gains we owe to identity politics*—I want to argue that progressive litics is still, *as a matter of fact rather than of rhetoric*, based on Enlighten- ent principles and has been all along. And I want to argue that progressives should acknowledge this basis explicitly and stand together on this foundation once more—or that'll be all she wrote. Time is not on our side.

It has been possible, even convenient, to deny a foundation in En- htenment humanism while fighting to establish African-American stud- programs and rid the workplace of sexism. It has been easy to imagine that eer Foucauldian power struggles were ing won or lost by this or that con- tuency. But in the crisis we now face, th the lives of millions at stake, with e United States embracing an open licy of empire—in these desperate rcumstances, such renderings seem ddenly parochial. It did and does atter that Jenny feels inhibited in ath class because the boys are so ag- essive, and it did and does matter at the CEO of AOL Time Warner is black man. But so many people don't ve any schooling at all, and AOL ime Warner is part of the problem, t the solution. The level of engage- ent demanded of us now is much eper than the issue of access within ie overdeveloped world, and En- ghtenment principles are the only nceivable anchor for the cause of man progress in general—the cause e must take up once again.



The foundational priority, the log- al and emotional necessity, of these inciples should be evident to any ogressive willing to admit to some nfusion since 9/11, to anyone feeling that it is not enough to nod when cott Ritter talks, to mock John Ashcroft, and so on down the list of typi- l gestures—that is, to any progressive feeling the need for a coherent po- tion in this new context and finding it difficult to fashion one. For we ex- erience the foundational priority of Enlightenment principles, if we are ncerely trying to work out such a position, *because these principles are what ient our judgments before we make them.*

Before you are informed, before you know what weapons Iraq actually has,

THE LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT DEMANDED OF US NOW IS MUCH DEEPER THAN THE ISSUE OF ACCESS WITHIN THE OVERDEVELOPED WORLD

To take just the most salient case in point: were it not for identity politics, the degree of nophobic racism in the American response to 9/11 would have been much worse— ore indiscriminate bombing in Afghanistan, more attacks on innocent Muslims in this untry, more stereotyping in the press, the whole shebang. We owe what tolerance we d display to institutionalized values of diversity and to the people who have worked for at institutionalization, especially in education. The insistence of the authorities, howev- condescending, on distinguishing between terrorists and Islam was driven by strategic d tactical calculations, but good old political correctness paved the way.

ntitled (*The Speechless Sky*) (detail), by Robert Van Vranken, courtesy O.K. Harris Works of Art, New York City

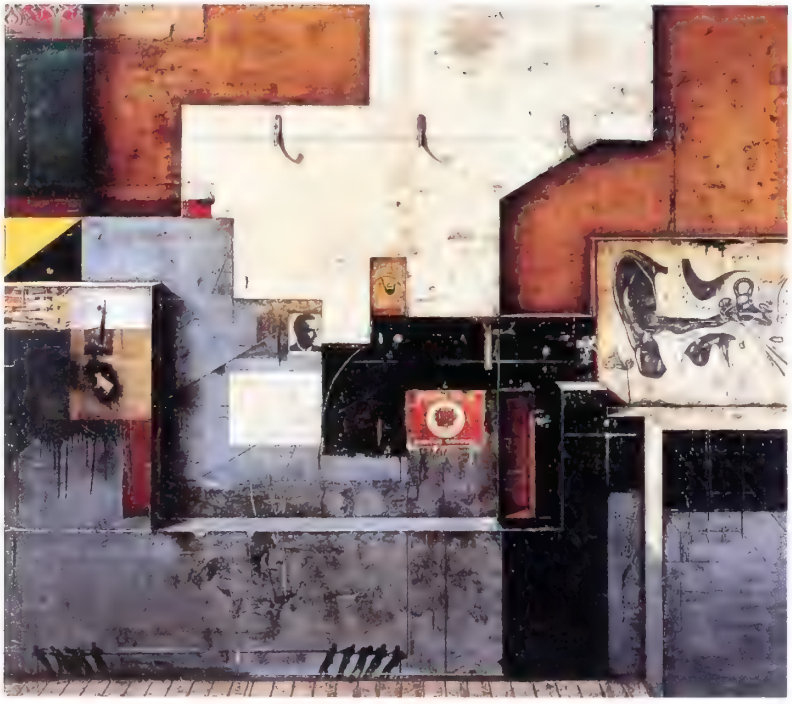
WHEN DECIDING WHAT GROUP TO SUPPORT, YOU JUDGE THE DIFFERENCES ACCORDING TO—LET'S CALL IT *THE DEGREE OF THEIR HUMANE COMMITMENTS*

before you read up on Pashtun history—what is your attitude? As you *be* to educate yourself, before you have made up your mind, as you look into t histories and commitments of the parties, what guides your inquiry, especia when your customary prejudices don't apply neatly—when, for examp your multicultural impulses and your feminist commitments diverge? Wh are you looking for when you really have to think and decide, rather th just hit the replay button on your polemic deck?

Doesn't it work this way? One may not know what distinguishes Sunni fr Shi'ite at first, but the inclination to progressive politics comes down one's willingness to find out. But more than that. In the end, when dec ing what position to take, you are also prepared to judge those differenc according to—let's call it *the degree of their humane commitments*. That's t criterion. When the big chips are down, identity considerations yield humanist principles, because, as an articulated value, the acceptance of d ference depends upon them, logically, emotionally, and historically.

You don't need a philosophical argument to "prove" that humanist pri ciples are real if they are actually at work in you.*

And this all holds for diversity practices closer to home as well. When acknowledge the Other as truly *other*, it can seem as if we leave the abstra Enlightenment equation of the sheer human being behind. But if we also i sist upon access to power for others, it turns c that we have only postponed our dependen on that equation. With the emphasis on grou we added an intervening layer, a very pote layer of concrete signs—race, sex, idiom—a that layer can obscure the underlying, a iomatic conviction, but it still holds: all else b ing equal, every human life is, by nature that is, simply by virtue of being human—equ in value to every other and *therefore* entitled whatever benefits or protections are at issue the struggle for access.**



Everything hangs on the "therefore," whether or not it actually operates this way our political thinking. If it does, then have found what we need—the basis for a c herent ideology that promis unity for progressives at th critical hour.

But isn't that just what postmode theory, in all its variety, taught us—that else is never equal? That nobody actually ists outside a context, outside history? That th Enlightenment axiom, the sheer human bei is a figment, a reduction of the socially co structed settings in which real people alwa already live? That this abstraction is, at best, a projection of modern We ern ideas onto other ways of life? Or, at worst, an expression of an imperi mind-set, a God's-eye view of nature and humanity that may carry conn

Which is not to say that establishing the ontology of such principles is easy or unimp tant. Heavy philosophical lifting will be required. The Enlightenment analysis depen on a no longer credible belief in natural design. Providing an alternative account—p haps a phenomenological account—should be a primary task for progressive intellectu But the question here is not, What are these things we call "principles"? It is only, A these principles actually at work in us?

Commitment to this principle does not entail indiscriminate approval of anything an body says or makes. Arguments about relativism and objectivism, intellectual and a thetic standards, etc., can go on quite consistently between people otherwise commit to political equity.

Untitled (The Past Speaks), by Robert Van Vranken, courtesy O.K. Harris Works of Art, New York

tions of justice but actually serves to rationalize Western domination of the orld? So, surely, we can and must do without it?

Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. No.

How could the postmodern critique get it right on all but the last ques-on? By misunderstanding the nature of modern abstractions—especially those sociated with nature (natural law, state of nature, etc.), to whose author-the Enlightenment appealed for leverage out of Europe's Middle Ages. ne reasons for this misunderstanding are complex, but it comes down to this: ou don't have to believe in an abstract ideal the way you believe in the chair ider your butt in order to believe in that ideal. Ideals are real in a differ-nt way from the way chairs are real, and furthermore, in the case of En-ghtenment ideals, they are universally real. That is, every human being, con-lting what early moderns liked to call "natural reason," *would* come up with mething like those ideals, given the opportunity. "Natural reason" just means nat an unbiased person *would* hold to be the case, where "unbiased" means ee of historical conditions and local attachments.

Now, the postmodern critique of such ideals rests on the undeniable fact at there is no such person. Pretty devastating at first glance. But even En-ghtenment thinkers (contrary to stereotype) understood this. Natural rea-n was *a possibility*—hence, the "would." Possibility is the mode of existence propriate to an ideal. Did they also tend to reify? That is, to believe that od built natural reason into us and ordained natural laws for this reason to cess? Did they sometimes imagine that humanity had fallen away from an storical state in which those laws actually held sway? They did a lot of that, s—but you don't have to.* You can just say, Okay, people are and always ve been thrown into concrete circumstances that determine their evalu-ions and attachments; people are and always have been shaped by linguistic d cultural structures, etc. And then you can say that it would be a good ing if everyone would try to get over that. It would be a good thing if people t past the relatively superficial differences between them, put them in rspective, and came together on common ground—of which there is a lot, the way—this common ground being what matters most in the end. ven if it is an abstraction.

It's as simple as that, actually.

Put it this way: If your concrete gayness is sufficient to propel your identi-cational attachment to millions of gay people you don't know, isn't that an straction, too? And likewise for women, ethnicities, etc. Compared with e Enlightenment abstraction of universal humanism, the abstractions of iden-ty politics are middle-range, it's true, and it's very important. It means they e packed with vivid specifics that bind people together, especially in the con-xt of oppression or marginalization. In such contexts, race and sexuality and ne life experiences they implicate can turn an out-group into an in-group vernight and motivate collective action with a force that also has to be lled natural—in some sense, in some pre- or post-Enlightenment sense.

There was a moment for me, it became iconic, it was at some political con-rence, years ago. A black woman, a commanding presence, rose to declare way of closing down the discussion, in the tone of one whose patience is chausted, that she had tried to read Marx once and couldn't understand what l that verbiage meant—but she knew damn well what being black meant.

A burst of heartfelt applause. It went on and on.

I've been haunted by that moment ever since.

The quasi-erotic power of tangible signs of identity and the mores that ac-mpany them (the *ways* of gayness) explains the gradual displacement of cialist agendas by diversity agendas over the last thirty years. But the En-ghtenment abstraction is based on some pretty tangible markers, too, if you op and think about it—as people must if they are to be persuaded to iden-

COMPARED WITH THE ENLIGHTENMENT ABSTRACTION OF UNIVERSAL HUMANISM, THE ABSTRACTIONS OF IDENTITY POLITICS ARE MIDDLE-RANGE

Did they also deploy the most outrageous justifications and rationalizations for exclud-g women and "savages" from the purview of their principles? They did that too, yes, t once again you don't have to. It's the principles themselves to which I am appealing.

PROGRESSIVES MUST FACE THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE MODERN WESTERN TRADITION *DOES* HAVE A SUPERIOR CLAIM ON THE ALLEGIANCE OF HUMANITY

ity with Afghan refugees, for example, or victims of the bombing of Bagdad. Here's a partial list:

Food, dreaming, safeness, humor, the sky, music, greetings, snakes, dolls, fire, stories, dignity, pain . . .

Very concrete, and quasi-erotic too, in its own way. And identification [of] all of humanity by abstraction through markers like these has this added [virtue]: a commitment to universal rationality, to making judgments based on our common humanity *in spite of the differences*—a commitment that is natural in the Enlightenment sense.

So what's the problem? If the Enlightenment abstraction is in fact operating at the core of diversity politics anyway, why have so many [intelligent] smart people invested so much in deconstructing, denying, and otherwise [undermining] determining these universal foundations?

Here is what it comes down to: Progressives don't want to break with the postmodern critique of the Enlightenment because, if they do, if they explicitly reassert modern principles of a secular and universal humanism, they might have to face the possibility that the modern Western tradition has a special claim—a superior claim—upon the allegiance of humanity after all. Western progressives defined themselves in just this way, of course, for most of the modern era, but not anymore. Few of us want to go there now.

That's what it comes down to.

The price we pay for our unwillingness to face this possibility (and it is only a possibility; there may be other sources for these principles) is high, and getting higher. A case in point: how many people who think of themselves as on the left have lapsed into virtual paralysis in relation to the war on terror because they are privately wondering things about Islam that would be difficult to bring up publicly, for the reason just mentioned?

Besides, such a stance has the feel of a tactical disaster. It feels like it would lead immediately to a break in the coalition of identity groups that has represented progressivism since the rise of access politics. Anyone promoting Enlightenment ideals risks being associated with heirs of Allan Bloom, with Lynne Cheney's cohort. You're haunted by the possibility that you might wake up the next day and find yourself agreeing with Samuel Huntington, find yourself signing up for a war to save Western civilization from polygamous barbarians with dubious dress codes.

But none of this follows logically or ethically or even emotionally—or it wouldn't, if our political conversation could rise to this occasion. Polygamy matters, the headwear doesn't, the veils maybe. Enslaving children counts, food prohibitions don't, and women eating separately—well, again, maybe and maybe not, you have to assess that on a case-by-case basis. And so on. *But the universal wrongness of inhumane coercion is the principle you apply to all of them.* Will that sometimes be hard to do? Will it be really hard to know how to proceed toward reform of inhumane customs without seeming to revive the imperial project of "civilizing" others? Sure, but so what? Debate the means, the ends are clear. The principle is still valid.

Face it. You respect difference, but only up to a point.

Distinctions can be drawn and maintained, in other words, but only on the basis of the universal principles. We can't afford to hide from this simple truth just because we might "sound like" some smug elitist at *The New Criterion* if we admit to such an allegiance openly.

We actually rely on these principles anyway, don't forget—that's the essential claim here. We leave that foundation obscure, but we operate out of it. This has become especially evident with respect to women's issues that have an international or cross-cultural dimension—clitoridectomy being an outstanding example. Every time feminists assert that women's rights are human rights, they are, in effect, overriding cultural contexts on the basis of a universal humanism derived, as a matter of historical fact, from Enlightenment concepts. Why not just say so?

This is so simple—maybe that's the problem. Maybe intellectuals who

ent decades in obscure hermeneutical debate over the illusion of Presence st can't see their way to resolutions this simple. You can align yourself with manist *ideals* of modern progress without committing yourself to defend- g what modernity actually did. What's wrong with that? You can say that ience provides a truer account of the material world than myth does, but u can also say that the dualistic worldview that made science possible is im- icated in a devastating exploitation of nature, in a degradation of the earth, at may already be irreversible. In effect, you don't have to believe that as- ology is as good as astronomy to defend the rights of people who believe in trology. You can say that the Bill of Rights provides a better foundation for ust society than any theology provides but that the selectivity of its appli- tion has been a monstrous injustice. What's wrong with saying these things?

In fact, isn't a lot of the anti-American feeling you have stored up actu- ly based on the *disparity* between those principles and reality? Between the ble words and daily routines of slave-holding Founding Fathers? Between charine-sweet ads for pharmaceutical companies and their vile patent- ofiteering in Africa? Between pious blather about leaving no child behind d the reality of resource distribution in our schools? In your heart of arts, do you *in fact* hold the West to a higher standard, not just because u live here but because the standard set forth is higher? Isn't the *betray-* of humanist principles what gets to you, at bottom? Wasn't that what out- ged you initially, in your youth, when you first realized what was going on hind the facade, when you first set out on the path of progressive politi- l engagement?

You certainly don't approve of the way China harvests organs from exe- ted prisoners, for example. Ten thousand sentenced to death last year, and me were still alive when the organs were tracted (the fresher the kidney, the more stomer satisfaction—and not mainly for estern markets, sorry). Imagine if our pri- tized prison systems were doing that. nagine the uproar, imagine how you would el. You just don't feel that outrage when 's China. Why not? Is it really just be- use it's another place, far away, a place in hich you have no direct stake or respon- bility? Or is it also because that outrage just esn't kick in, the way it did, for example, you read descriptions of Governor Bush ocking a condemned woman to whom he ad refused clemency? Or, if you do feel a mparable outrage, isn't it because China nce seemed to represent the socialist ex- riment, itself derived from the secular umanist principles in question? In that se, the betrayal of those principles is once gain a factor. There is a lot of slavery in frica and Asia right now. Figures show ore slaves there right now than were tak- n from Africa during the transatlantic slave ade. But somehow that doesn't get you at worked up. Maybe in some way you on't—as a matter of emotional fact—lame the slaveholders so much in this case as you blame postcolonial con- xts? So, somehow, African slaveholders in Sudan aren't full moral agents? low could that be?

So what's the answer? Do you or don't you hold the modern West to a igher standard, and is that standard more or less the classic Enlightenment andard of human equity or not? I'm not saying you shouldn't do this, by ne way—just in case your mind is so pulverized by pragmatist attacks on

WASN'T IT THE *BETRAYAL* OF HUMANIST PRINCIPLES THAT FIRST OUTRAGED YOU IN YOUR YOUTH, WHEN YOU REALIZED WHAT WAS GOING ON BEHIND THE FACADE?



ntitled (Hope Neuron) (detail), by Robert Van Vranken, courtesy O K. Harris Works of Art, New York City

PROGRESSIVES CAN NO LONGER UNMASK THE HYPOCRISY OF THE RIGHT, BECAUSE WE HAVE RELINQUISHED THE PRINCIPLES THAT WOULD EXPOSE IT

the idea of ideals that you think that's where I'm going. My point is th you should start doing it explicitly and affirmatively, because your politic convictions are actually grounded in this ideal, no matter how ensnared yo rhetoric may be in the intricacies of postmodernism.

Try it this way: If you are a member of an historically marginalized grou doesn't the outrage that motivates your politics derive from a gut sense of t violation of basic justice inherent in historical arrangements *as well as* fro the harm that you and yours have suffered? It's hard to distinguish t sources, but try. And if you are not a member of such a group, ask yours this: Why do you even care? If you are a straight white man with middle-cl advantages, why aren't you a Republican? That would obviously be in yo interest, in any Nietzschean sense of the word that might be accepted by po modern political thought. So what's the story here? Isn't it true that your p itics are, at bottom, motivated by Enlightenment ideals?

It will only hurt for a minute if you confess.

And the benefits will be many.

For example. Notice that when you confront the right with Europ genocidal imperialism and the hypocrisy of the Founding Fathers, and arg for restitutional policies based on that history, then *they* start up about d ferent historical periods, standards of the time, and so on. But there is no s tematic way for progressives to unmask this outrageous maneuver from the supposed critics of relativism, because we have relinquished the princip that would expose this hypocrisy. We have, in effect, allowed the right abscond with the very categories of political philosophy that have nourish progressive movements since the seventeenth century.

Think of the leverage we lost when we gave up on that simple story progress, especially in relation to the young, for whom "fairness," embryo the ideal of justice, is so fundamental. What a relief it would be if we cou once again summarize modern political history by describing it as a strug to *apply* the principles of Enlightenment humanism in accordance wi their inherent logic. Because isn't that what we were doing in the movemen for civil rights, women's rights, gay rights, and in the labor movements of lo ago as well?* Isn't that what has been going on all along?

And yet we refuse to describe it that way anymore. No wonder so many us are reduced, once again, but even more so, to ad hoc mockery and pur negative critique. No wonder those pictures of women shedding their burk could do so much to dilute a progressive response to Bush's conduct of th war—even though, as of this writing, and in spite of all the bogus promis essential supplies are *still* not reaching untold numbers of desperate Afgha however dressed. And is that not obviously what should be co cerning us, according to that deepest principle, the equ worth of every human life?

This appeal will not reach everyone. Some people process every eve automatically. Whatever scheme they already have always applies. This gument will mean nothing to them, unless it accidentally supplies so grist for their omnivorous mill. Other people really are locally motivated. Th politics are based entirely on the experience of being gay or the loss of a lov one to handgun violence or empathy for animals in pain, and they really are moved by general principles. So be it.

Pragmatists like Rorty and Fish may also decline this proffer. They will s Sure, let's invoke that Enlightenment principle when it works for us, but r when it doesn't. So be it, again. Welcome to the coalition, whenever it su you. There is no ontological litmus test.

* *There is a direct line from Locke's natural right to property based on the value of an individual's labor as against the institutionalized claims of monarchs and Marx's evalu tion of social labor as against the institutionalized claims of capitalists. The Hegeliani subject of socialism is as modern as the bourgeois individual, and the narrative progress, rooted in Enlightenment humanism, comprehends both—in spite of the politi and philosophical differences between them.*

But this argument is really meant for people who find themselves genuinely oubled by questions—and they are *questions*—like these:

- Is there no progressive figure or movement with mass indigenous support in the Islamic world to serve as a rallying point for Western progressives, analogous to Mandela's ANC, say? If not, why not?
- Why do so many critics of U.S. policy and corporate depredation habitually exaggerate when drawing up their bill of particulars? The truth is bad enough; why the litany of ultimately counterproductive exaggerations?
- At the end of the day, what should overdeveloped countries actually be doing in the area of immigration? Can progressives afford to confine themselves to supporting due process against the INS on the one hand and disdaining Pat Buchanan on the other? What should our immigration policies actually be?
- What about the utter failure of the Democratic Party to represent the interests of a dwindling middle class, not to mention the poor, in the face of corporate hegemony? Why is there *not even one* likely candidate for the Democratic nomination in 2004 who can risk the charge of "class warfare" and *lead a movement against* those malefactors of great wealth? Not one. That gaping void should give pause to progressives who followed Bill and Hillary and Jesse Jackson as they followed the money down their pragmatical path.
- Should progressives consider resurrecting their traditional hostility toward religious literalism? Think about it—in Israel and Palestine, India and Pakistan, Islamic fundamentalism all over the world, Christian fundamentalism at home—this is an horrific force, and the tide is rising. We *are* talking mass delusion here, aren't we? Maybe it's time to say so again.
- Similarly for belief systems in general. Have we collaborated too much with irrationality? Has anthropological relativism and philosophical constructivism, once so liberating, returned to haunt us in the form of an indiscriminate possibilism? Are we responsible for the fact that our top graduate schools are now full of people who think, Hey, alien abductions, psychic readings—it's possible, who knows, who really *knows* anything? And what about the youthful apathy and irony we so regularly lament? Progressives were running a lot of educational institutions while those attitudes were taking root. Why did our deconstruction of dominant discourses not inspire our students the way it inspired us? Was it because we were taken in by a canon that celebrated Western achievements and marginalized the others of the world while they've been exposed to the Other ever since we had them include the Native American point of view in their kindergarten Thanksgiving project and taught them why they shouldn't say that Columbus *discovered* America? Was it because, for them, what we have been deconstructing was never really a construct? Because, for them, all constructs have become options on a leveled playing field of optionality, so that after a while—well, who's to judge? Is that why a group of bright high school seniors of my acquaintance, after twelve years of exposure to emancipatory multicultural curricula, could watch the film *Gandhi* and then discuss whether or not it was "biased" because it didn't give the "British point of view"?

Enlightenment principles could inform progressive responses to hese questions, and to many more, but they will not provide the deductive certainty to which Bentham once aspired. In fact, the first consequence of a discussion of specifics among people committed to the equity xiom will be to expose what remains of our affirmative agenda for what it is: a shallow and selective laundry list that caters to the short-term interests of various constituencies claiming space under the umbrella, no matter how incoherent the net effect. As when, for example, the largest gay-ights organization in New York cuts a deal to support George Pataki gainst the first African American in that state ever to have a real shot at ecoming governor.

Hopeful imagery involving mosaics and rainbows can no longer mask the ruth. Except for undeniable gains made by certain members of certain groups n privileged Western countries, things are getting steadily worse for the retched of the earth and for the earth itself. In the face of this trend, the reponse has been—incredibly—to repudiate the very notion of ideological nity, though the cause of progress will surely suffer if only fanatics and

SHOULD WE NOT BE HOSTILE TOWARD RELIGIOUS LITERALISM? WE *ARE* TALKING MASS DELUSION HERE, AREN'T WE? MAYBE IT'S TIME TO SAY SO AGAIN

LET US FORCE THE "DEFENDERS" OF THE WESTERN TRADITION TO ADMIT THAT THEY ARE BETRAYING ITS CLAIM TO UNIVERSALITY. WE REMAIN TRUE TO IT

imperialists can achieve it. The obvious move is to work out such an ide
ogy, one that embraces diversity *and* transcends it.

Outlining in any detail what such ideological unity would look like g
far beyond the scope of this essay. Unresolved philosophical issues—ess
tially pitting sheer material need in some places against customary expectati
in other places—would divide progressives at the outset. At the level
policy, judgments about probable outcomes for citizens of the world wo
have to be made, and very technical disputes would immediately arise. *
the commitment in all these debates would be to all those citizens equally. That wo
be the common ground. That would be the criterion to which all w
bound. And that would be a major step forward.

On a tactical level, the advantage of returning to this foundatio
immediately apparent. It would allow us to force the bully boys of Am
can Empire to deny the equal value of every human life. They wo
have to stand up in public forums, in schools and colleges, and expl
why the lives of our babies are more valuable than the lives of other p
ples' babies. To take it to the root, they would be forced to admit th
when they call people on the American left "decadent" because t
didn't react "naturally" to an attack on their own country, the "natur
they are invoking is not the natural of *The Second Treatise of Governm*
Quite the contrary. The "natural" they are invoking is the natural
Darwinian selection and tribalism, the natural of passion and vengean
the natural of what the Enlightenment called "faction."* This "natur
Locke associated with the Fall, and a cosmopolitan Enlightenment e
plicitly set out to overcome it with modern ideas of rights and reason. L
us force self-appointed defenders of the Western tradition to this adm
sion: it is they who are betraying its highest claim to universality. We
main true to it.

But let us confront ourselves at the same time, along these lines:

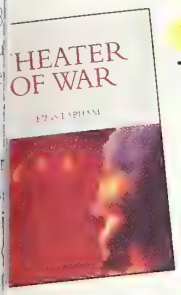
Have you actually become (or were you always) just a liberal after a
Were your pretensions to radicalism mostly a matter of style, of self-i
age? Have you been working for the realization of something beyo
bourgeois democracy—or have you just been aiming for reform? If wh
your politics really envisions is Global New Deal meets Respect for Div
sity, that's one thing. That means you are a liberal. That means you ba
cally accept a world system of private enterprise and technological inn
vation and consumer culture, and you want to see it managed so that
one is excluded, the environment is protected, free expression flourish
and so on. And you can be very active in all sorts of obvious ways, if th
is what you are.

If, on the other hand, you are a radical, the ironic implication is this: the
isn't much to do right now to distinguish yourself from liberals. Toss a fe
rocks at a Starbucks during the next WTO meeting if you want, but don
mistake such gestures for genuinely radical responses. What radicals shou
be doing right now is studying and thinking. You need to put in your ten ye
at the library, the way Marx did. You need to be figuring out what makes h
man beings tick and what, if any, direction is to be found in history. An
don't mean some half-assed sci-fi anarcho-Gaia nonsense you cobbled togeth
before you dropped out of Bard; I mean serious study, working toward an a
ternative to a global bourgeois democracy. What radicals need most right n
isn't action but theory.

But to any progressive, liberal or radical, inclined to do more th
claim that you were right all along, to anyone inclined to rethink politi
in a serious way, to anyone for whom the humanist revelation at the hea
of the idea of progress still lives—to you I say, if you can't make a mo
without support from a French intellectual, put down your Foucault. Tak
up your Voltaire.

*And, it must be admitted, the "natural" to which postmodern identity discourses u
wittingly acceded as they jettisoned the very concept.*

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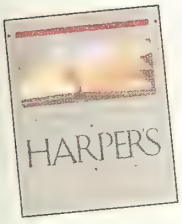
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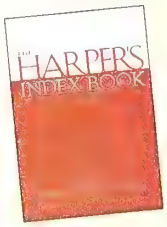


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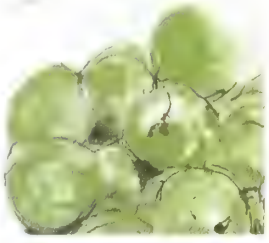
FRUIT AS REMEMBERED BY THE DEAD

Text and Drawings by John Berger

In cherries, there was the flavor of fermentation—as in no other fruit. Picked straight from the tree, they tasted of enzymes laced with the sun and this taste was complementary with the special shiny polish of their skins.

Eat cherries—even one hour after they have been picked—and their taste blends with that of their own rottenness. In the gold or red of their color there is always a hint of brown: the color into which they will soften and disintegrate.

The cherry refreshes, not on account of its purity—as does the apple—but by slightly, almost imperceptibly tickling the tongue with the effervescence of its own fermenting.



Because of the small size of the cherry and the lightness of its flesh and the insubstantiality of its skin, scarcely more solid than the surface of a liquid drop, the cherry stone was always incongruous. The eating of the cherry never quite prepared you for its stone. When you spat it out, it seemed to have little connection with the flesh that surrounded it. It felt more like a precipitate of your own body, a precipitate mysteriously produced by the act of eating cherries. After each cherry, you spat out a cherry tooth.

Lips, as distinct from the rest of the face, have the same gloss as cherries do and the same malleability. Both their skins are like the skin of a liquid. A question of their capillary surfaces. Make a test to see whether our memory is correct or whether the dead exaggerate. Put a cherry in your mouth, don't bite it yet, now for a split second remark how the density, the softness and the resilience of the fruit match perfectly the nature of your lips which hold it.

Melons seemed to us to be, by a kind of negation, the fruit of drought. Walking through parched valleys or over the cracked earth of dusty plains, we came upon melons and we ate them as you might draw water from a well in an oasis. They were improbable, they comforted us, but in fact they did not really quench our thirst. Even before they are open, melons smell of a sweet enclosed water. A heavy enclosing smell with no edges to it. Whereas to quench your thirst you need something sharp. (Lemons are better.)

When small and green, a melon may suggest youth. But quickly the fruit becomes oddly ageless—like a mother to her child. The blemishes on its skin—and there are always some—are like moles or birthmarks. They do not imply aging as blemishes do on other fruit. They simply confirm that this unique melon is and was always itself.

To somebody who had never eaten one, its exterior would give little idea of what to expect

John Berger's novels, stories, plays, poetry, and essays. An extract from his most recent book, The Shape of a Pocket *(Pantheon), appeared in the March 2002 Readings section of* Harper's Magazine.





Our peaches blackened in the sun. A crimso
black to be sure, but with more black than red
it: black like iron which has been heated re
hot and has been slaked and is cooling and giv
no warming of the heat still in it. The peach of t

The black seldom extended over the ent
surface. There were parts which, when the fo
was on the tree, were in shadow, and these we
whitish, although in the white there was a fa
of green as if the leaves, which cast the
had just brushed the skin with the finger

In our time, rich European women took en
mous pains to keep their faces and bodies pal
that color. But never the gypsies.

Their size varied considerably, from ones la
enough to fill the hand to small ones no big
than billiard balls. The skin of the smaller on
being finer, had a tendency very slightly to wri
kle when the fruit was bruised or overripe.

Those wrinkles often reminded me of
skin in the fold of a dark arm.

In the center you found a stone, with
of a dark bark and an aspect as sulphurou

Those wild peaches were the fruit
God for thieves.

All nuts are both simultaneously wet an
dry. This is the secret of their oil. But no
more so than the walnut. Smell them. Th
es the tongue. Contradictory. And along wi
their impatience is a kind of trickery. In t
bowl on the table they look like a heap
pokes. People love to let them run throu

Knurled, indented, pocky, scarred, furrow
creased, brittle, tough, in no way resembli
wood, light in weight, looking like overrip
fruit on which nevertheless you can break y
teeth, and in every pockmark and crease an

fter a meal, mun

A little round painting by Antonio de Per
da (1611–1675), painted in Madrid when h

SEX *and the* RIVER STYX

The libido in winter

By Edward Hoagland



When I was young I used to wonder about old scamps and leches, oglers, skirt-chasers, both because it might be my own fate and I didn't want their competition. Older men of some distinction appeared to retain a certain attractiveness to much younger women that their counterparts did not for a typical young man. This seemed mysterious to me, but I didn't mind in theory, of course, being male myself and midlife ahead of me. I understood that a sheen of success implied earning power in a potential breadwinner, as smooth skin and a trim torso signaled vigor, or that a romance with a real poet could be more meaty than with an aspirant. I understood, too, that since men kept their capacity to inseminate much longer than women did to conceive, there was an anthropological logic to the difference—that anyway these disjunctions between the sexes keep the world on an even keel. Without, first, young women's discipline in choosing partners, and then the fading appeal of women past menopause, and thus the gravitas of pregnancy, it could deteriorate into a welter of fornication. Even after the invention of condoms, that hadn't happened.

But how about these prosperous old crocks with their dozen books published or tenured accomplishments? How "dirty-minded" were they—and when did vim run out, how much sooner than lust? I wondered, anticipating my own arc past the procreative years. Did you need to be a genius like Picasso to remain virile practically into the grave? In theory and charity, desire and fantasy should decline simultaneously with potency. But I knew that mutation, not charity, is how nature operates, and so it encourages pushing the edge. *The New Yorker* cartoons of Daddy Big Bucks doddering around with a blonde leeched onto either arm were less funny if Daddy could still get it up, not be fobbed off with a wet kiss. Otherwise the blondes were working girls and Daddy, bathrobe and all, a veritable rooster.

I was reluctant to believe in clichés, such as the idea that codgers sat in the darkness at French films or in burlesque houses masturbating under

Edward Hoagland is a contributing editor of Harper's Magazine. *His last essay for the magazine, "Circus Music," appeared in the February 2002 issue. He is the author of seventeen books, most recently* Compass Points, *a memoir.*

Illustration by Stan Fellows

the flaps of their raincoats at the sight of bare-ass girls younger than their daughters would be. Yet there they were, circa 1950, the old guys, along with me and other virginal Harvard undergraduates, plus some sailors from the Boston Navy Yard, in the crowd at the Old Howard theater's skin show in Scollay Square of a Saturday night. It was traditional for students and seamen to be snickering at the naked pulchritude of the cast of strippers like Blaze Starr accompanied by a drum, a trumpet, a trombone, and a sax or another suggestive woodwind, and laughing at the "broad" jokes of the vaudeville comedians in baggy pants

If men seek to pant and women a safe harbor, the impetus can go askew, and asking how dirty old men are is to wonder what life did to them

and oversized jackets in "loud" patterns who spelled them off. The drum and trombone mimicked how each lady swung her tits and bum and socked it to us, after the trumpet had commanded her to begin and the clarinet or sax had giggled as she slipped out of her negligee and spangled bra before the down-and-dirty part.

Now, dirt can be like the paint under Picasso's fingernails. It can represent living. But I didn't look at the old men to see if their smiles were cruel and cynical and fantasy-ridden, or wistful and memory-laden. Veterans of shotgun marriages, divorce debacles, they weren't here to be educated, like me, a freshman who had never seen a woman nude before and was embarrassed to meet anybody's eyes, just looked at the stage. We were all in a state of undress, really, beached in the plush, tatty seats of the Old Howard, unable to muster a weekend date. Even the Navy boys, with no access to Wellesley girls, like, supposedly, me, must have failed to pick up a high-school dropout to neck with over in the "combat zone" of randy bars and penny arcades on Washington Street. But we weren't spent, and probably concocting a script for onanism, instead of hoping somehow to "score" somewhere after the show.

I had no clue as to when men stop manufacturing semen (I've been amazed, at seventy, to find it hasn't happened yet). But who wouldn't prefer to spoon and cop a feel, with maybe a heart-to-heart thrown in, than gawk at somebody's knockers waggled at you contemptuously from the height of a stage? Well, maybe those whorehouse and "ball-and-chain" vets who had discovered over the years that marriage was also coitus interruptus, in an emotional sense. At [illegible] brothel the next customer rapped on the [illegible] just as you were possibly unbuttoning to o[illegible] your soul, but if you'd tied the knot and thou[illegible] you were a stud and had all night every nigh[illegible] prove yourself, "the wife" might regard you[illegible] impotent in more significant ways, and mo[illegible] could be a spoiler too, though over a longer t[illegible] than in a cathouse. Such a gent might hold [illegible] hat over his lap and beat his meat I supp[illegible]

For a lonely college boy the headliners w[illegible] awesome and Hera-like, but it was important t[illegible] the show have a second-string performer w[illegible] looked like the pretty girl next door: attaina[illegible] in other words. A brunette—not flame-haire[illegible] she walked out in a natural manner and in a [illegible] ular blouse and skirt, peeling them off demur[illegible] as if astonished at herself, a winsome, untrai[illegible] girl you could perhaps talk to if you ever got [illegible] chance. This was thirty years before the bizarre[illegible] shows of the 1980s, with contortionist partners [illegible] other intrusive stunts, like a dictatorial Dada p[illegible] or rancid S&M freak show. Sex is for copulat[illegible] or, failing that, for pleasuring someone or, fai[illegible] that, recapitulating some unexpungeable n[illegible] drama, like nursing or being sponged, spanke[illegible] whatever. I certainly went back to my dorm [illegible] hiking the several miles instead of riding [illegible] MTA—and masturbated, telling myself it wa[illegible] avoid "blue balls," that semi-legendary ache[illegible] frustration "like the bends" that you always [illegible] ployed to beg girls to let you come at least in y[illegible] pants, if they'd let you feel them up. I assumed [illegible] old men, in their single-occupancy hotel roo[illegible] did too (if they hadn't jumped the gun), being [illegible] soiled by the life force that propels us. I had b[illegible] writing a college paper about Boston's skid row [illegible] the South End beyond the "combat zone," [illegible] knew about these hotels, as well as drunk-tank[illegible] railments, but not the subtler forms of homel[illegible] ness attendant upon the estrangement of c[illegible] dren, or emphysema, varicose veins, incontine[illegible] or kinkier dysfunctions. Virginal lads like the [illegible] ma of infatuation or self-sacrifice or destitution [illegible] not the unseemliness of down-at-heels pensi[illegible] ers heckling a limelight strumpet. Enough alre[illegible] what is sperm for? I would have thought. The [illegible] tion that grown men, married in the subur[illegible] might jack off would have astounded me.

In my parents' well-heeled town in Conne[illegible] cut there were some terrible marital stories. I[illegible] Robinson's wife hated him so much that she [illegible] rumored to have withheld his heart-attack m[illegible] icine when he most needed it, and buried him [illegible] fore his friends from the office could organize a [illegible] neral. Mr. Caskey, pushing fifty, had taken [illegible] with his secretary, whereupon his wife hung h[illegible] self. Later, ostracized, distraught, he ran head [illegible] into a tree. Mr. Milligan, laid up with arthritis, [illegible] whose wife stayed away a lot, was said to h[illegible]

awn his pistol on the maid and forced her to dis-
be. The police picked her up, wandering on
the road, but, scoffing at her claim,
put her on a train for Harlem.

I could go on, but I didn't connect these
en with the solitaries in seedy suits who sat
lfway back in the half-empty Old Howard.
or my college mentor, Archibald MacLeish, a
ree-Pulitzer poet, Librarian of Congress, and
oosevelt Brain Truster, who startled me one
ernoon, walking the Cambridge streets just
the bobby-soxers were being let out of
hool. Before catching himself, he said, "If I
er get 'sent up' it will probably be for molest-
g something like that." He was sixty, I was
enty, and they were about fourteen. Nor my
vn father, a Wall Street lawyer who read sala-
ous potboilers, though a pillar of rectitude
no stopped communicating with friends who
ooped to getting divorced.

But what was salacious? Would Lewis Carroll
ve gone in for the *Story of O*? I soon knew a few
ung women who enjoyed trysts with very much
der men. One would date Saudi Arabian princes
no came to New York on oil business or to their
N. mission, and get a jeweled wristwatch or gold
in in the morning. (She took the latter to the
merican Numismatic Society because the prince
ad scratched MOM onto it and she wondered
hether that might have increased its value.)
nother friend, born to Park Avenue, set her
ghts on screwing the best Kennedy, and did
ssess the looks and access to have pulled it off,
cept that her father was powerful enough in
en presidential politics to nix the project. She
enged herself by sleeping with his most elder-
pal—partly out of curiosity, she said, to see
hether the tycoon could still get a hard-on—like
a experiment, as she used to do also with me,
sting my changes in breathing as she allowed me
fferent splendid things. (When she bought a
inting, she'd screw the artist under it, on the
oor, after the gallery closed, then bring him
ome and feed him steak if he was already rich,
ad spaghetti if he was poor.) But this guy was so
d he dropped the bottle of champagne he'd
ought to celebrate the evening on the sidewalk
itside the store; then went back in immediate-
to spend another three hundred bucks, and, self-
ade millionaire that he was, managed to pen-
rate her for good measure, and for both of their
rposes trump her dad.

Being a "breast man," I romanticized the strip-
ers (never strumpets to me), elevating them to
ie status of professional athletes who earned a
velihood by exerting their bodies for the crowd's
tillation. This left out the obloquy attached to
hat they were doing, the shamefaced, secretive
uffle with which we customers left after a show.
Blaze Starr wasn't Venus Williams; indeed, no Venus Williams could have existed then. A "sweater girl" like Ruth Roman might do pretty well in Hollywood, but most strippers wound up as waitresses, not in a marquee job in the insurance business, such as fame would bring a batting champ. In retrospect, I think Greek belly-dancing may be more down-to-earth than our infantilizing of *Playboy* breasts: the navel being after all Delphi, omphalos of the world, and a simulacrum of the place that grown men head for.

And me—did I become a porno-flick fan, a peep-show habitué? Actually, my clumsiness gradually evaporated in the next decade, through a marriage and divorce (though most divorces are not caused by clumsiness; quite the contrary, perhaps), so that I could find companionship without fretting about when to take the woman's hand or sneak an arm around her shoulders. For a while later on, I even fell in with a down-at-heels showgirl, as if, like two exhausted antagonists of trench warfare, we had each had enough of this mickey-mouse war between the sexes, climbed out of our emplacements, and embraced in what had been no-man's-land. Her breasts were almost too sore to be touched, after a quarter-century of putting food on the table—since she had been a fresh-faced Playmate—and now she had to go to a dental college to get her periodontal work done, plus act as janitor in her building to win a cut in rent. So sometimes when my head lay between her legs, she would make as if to crush it in a scissors squeeze in a fantasy of revenge. Yet I was not Hugh Hefner, and she was not a narcissistic mis-



anthrope like some of her sisterhood. We were friends, joking about what breeders people are, easy to manipulate practically till their attenuated end. If men seek to pant and women a safe harbor, the impetus can go askew, and asking how

dirty old men are—retired from a clockwork job and sitting in the dark—is to wonder what life did to them.

If the purpose of sex is so transparent, why isn't the pleasure simpler, like handling firewood, warmth and cooking being as necessary as procreation? Obviously the woman must test [illegible] to see how gentle yet brutal he is—gentle at home but a protector and breadwinner, not a pushover—and compete with other women who have ample hips by swaying them, a bit honky-tonk, while seeming reassuringly respectable too. That complicates it, as does our having been so totally in the power of a member of the opposite sex during babyhood. When we grow up to replicate a good deal of the power of the parent of our own gender, it dissipates some of the mystery he or she had held. But there is still the omniscient other one, that big mommy or daddy we didn't grow into, who, although garbed in other personalities, must be confronted. My first wife—a dear friend—and I had a blindman's-buff sex life. I was mainly the clueless one, but she liked to be bounced on my knee the way her father had done before he left the family as she turned thirteen. And once a boyfriend of hers had shot himself while pleading on the phone for her to take him back. My second wife died before my mother, sadly enough—at sixty, versus ninety-five—and except for politics, we'd argued less than my mother and I, which naturally is what enabled us to stay married for twenty-five years. My mother took disputation with men to be a form of flirting: attention getting in the flapper mode. She had witnessed the boom of [illegible] twenties, the bust of the thirties, the serio[illegible] ethic of the forties, the solipsism of the fift[illegible] the rebel chic of the sixties, the disoriented [illegible] enties, the greedy eighties, and seemed ra[illegible] content to drift toward dissolution in [illegible] nineties, secure in her Episcopalian faith.

Both she and Marion liked men more th[illegible] women, at least as company, and—valuing [illegible] sanctity of marriage—especially homosexua[illegible] pals. But Marion seemed more interested in [illegible] mosexuals, for their often protean learning and [illegible] hilistic wit, than "straights." At the *fin de sid[illegible]* they seemed gay and acrobatic conversationa[illegible] with a gallows humor, and she liked people [illegible] were "bent" if they aroused her considerable s[illegible] pathy or had a funny shtick. Marion was more [illegible] erary and empathetic than my mother, who [illegible] lied most instead with men of the cl[illegible] (professionally unavailable and wary, themsel[illegible] about appearances), and so when our sex l[illegible] tailed off because neither of us could make l[illegible] as well with people we loved as in the fever of [illegible] suit, she hung out principally with them, wh[illegible] veered off more in order to seek pursuit.

But this is about old age, not marriage, [illegible] Marion died, alas, before she even reached old [illegible] Born in the Edwardian epoch, in the same [illegible] as Charles Lindbergh, Ogden Nash, and Rich[illegible] Rodgers, Mother didn't die till 1998, when I [illegible] gan collecting Social Security checks. By t[illegible] time we'd had peaceable relations for a long wh[illegible] and, from the distance of Vermont, I had been [illegible] pervising her care. She'd ceased regarding an[illegible] ments as flirtation after my father's death, th[illegible] decades before—when the umbrella of his p[illegible] tection had been removed—and I had also lis[illegible] ened up. Her series of small strokes didn't [illegible] pair her much until her eighties, however. I wo[illegible] visit every three months or so, and she wo[illegible] visit us in the course of enjoying a life of q[illegible] rounds. She'd bought a house on Martha's Vi[illegible] yard for $40,000 in 1965 for her widowhood[illegible] ter she realized that my father was dying of c[illegible] cer (angering him when he fathomed her purp[illegible] he hadn't resigned himself at that early poin[illegible] the irrevocability of his diagnosis) and she w[illegible] be leaving the suburbs.

About twenty years passed before abrup[illegible] quite belatedly, I realized that she needed [illegible] help in managing her affairs. It's a discovery [illegible] rying responsibilities and portents that child [illegible] wish to avoid; and I had certainly done so [illegible] bookkeeper was needed, and a woman to l[illegible] with her, prepare some meals, help her m[illegible] about, and put in her glaucoma drops. A "ju[illegible] nile delinquent" could do it, her doctor s[illegible] including his own daughter, whom we hired. [illegible] we'd generally use some college-age girl who [illegible] not in college; and when I visited to relieve [illegible]



d talk to various other people who needed see-
g, I'd enjoy sleeping in the girl's bed in the
est room, especially if she hadn't thought to
ange the sheets before she left (in my fifties, al-
dy a dirty old man, quaffing her twenty-year-
l's scent), while Mother and I would go through
nily scrapbooks for the weekend and watch
V. Later, as her enfeeblement increased, she
eded help on the stairs and rarely summoned
rself to speak, so we hired older women who
me to sit with her in eight-hour shifts, in case
e climbed out of bed to wander the house. She
aded one person and broke her hip. From an-
her, who had a cold, she caught pneumonia.
nd another, an artist who slept with her
yfriend on the rug under the nineteenth-
ntury portrait of Great-uncle Hickok in order
"*épater le bourgeois*," went out and lived on
e beach with some hippies for a couple of weeks,
ll pretending to inhabit the house.

But these were the bad eggs. I grew to be friends
th the conscientious ones (fortunately my fa-
er had left enough money to see her through),
o slept in a lounge chair beside her bed. Karen
aitressed at a steak place before her midnight-
-morning stint with us, and then went out scal-
ping in all weather with her husband through
idday, while worrying about a nephew she'd
ised. Nancy ran a day-care center at her house,
ter her shift with my mother, and had four
hool-aged kids of her own. Claire, who was
der, had a husband, himself a stroke victim,
o required substantial care. And two others suf-
red marital disasters while caring for my moth-
. One tried to stab her husband, after catching
m in an affair, and had to be hospitalized her-
lf, though she was otherwise the liveliest of the
omen to talk with, and wrote poetry to boot.
nd the one I thought was the most intuitive or
spired of the caregivers—and who had a kind
haggard, haunting, oblivious beauty—might
me to work black-and-blue. Then when she
ected her husband, she was so pressed for mon-
that she tried to fake an unemployment-
surance claim and was put on probation. She
ad no idea, I expect, that she was beautiful, be-
g engrossed in the troubles of her children and
rpetually at work at menial, all-hours jobs,
ashing and spoon-feeding old people in nursing
omes, witnessing their debilitation and pain,
eir desolate, fearful exits from life, and then
tting beaten and bruised when she went home.

My mother, seventy years after graduating from
assar in 1925, was temperamentally and physi-
lly incapable of complaining of neglect, as she
fted through her flapper dreams and memories,
ad scarcely aware, I think, of the rare occasions
hen there was a screwup. We moved her down-
airs into a hospital bed when the steps became
n obstacle, and later into the utility room off the kitchen. Because it tends to be ladies in distress who take these endgame jobs, the first who stayed a long time came directly from leaving her husband, although by then she was my own age. She had had ten children—sometimes needing to hitchhike to the hospital with contraction pains

Some men keep an eye peeled for a final chance to implant themselves clear to the last, a stance more anthropological than pathetic. And I seem to be among them

because her husband was too drunk to drive her—and tragic troubles with several of them. Accidents, a suicide. Much as Ellen, the haggardly intuitive, gifted caregiver who had also been abused by her husband, finally resorted to embezzlement in desperation to try to ease her financial dilemmas, Arlene, whose emergencies were now more in the past, plunged into religion as a poultice. She became obsessed with miracles, and traveled when she could to shrines in Italy and France, as peremptory as a traffic cop about the priorities of the saints, and so possessed by miracle-working that after a few years we had to let her go.

We don't speak of "dirty old women." They don't covet pretty men at their bedside, or cross the River Styx joking of blonds; they have a different concept of dignity. An old coot may want to seem cocky right to the end, still in play, and not only because his wallet may be thicker than a younger man's. He's worldly, he's wise, has tricks up his sleeve. A white-haired friend of mine went into the hospital for cancer surgery that was going to end forever his capacity for sexual intercourse, and joking with the buxom nurse who was preparing him (and knew him from previous visits), he suddenly realized and wistfully told her that in all his half-century of activity, he had never slept with a blonde. Middle-aged, touched, she motioned for him to get up on the gurney. "We still have a couple of minutes. Just so you can say you have, let's get it done."

As our life spans are artificially elongated, the "monkey gland" jokes are going to proliferate, but that some men keep an eye peeled for a final chance to implant themselves clear to the last seems a stance more anthropological than pathetic to me. And I seem to be among them. On the island, I used to eat at an old-fashioned, round-stooled, dockside diner where the waitresses, like my mother's caretakers, were stalled by a thicket of problems. A husband had been arrested for

dealing drugs, which meant the lady's tips went straight to his lawyer and she couldn't leave town before the trial. She maintained the veneer of prosperity she had acquired in Cancún and such spots, however, by bleaching her hair and remaining a cheery stabilizer for the carpenters, fishermen, plumbers, and other early birds facing her over their coffee. Her counter-partner, a blowsy, sleepless, sympathetic woman with a tendency to weep, who was lonely enough to eat here even when off-shift, worked otherwise in an animal hospital, which provoked a lot of friendly cracks. Men notice women's vulnerabilities with a falcon's eye—it's surely instinctual—yet not just for predatory purposes: also protectively.

Meanwhile, big spender that I was, I'd given ten thousand dollars of my mother's money to a former girlfriend of mine, from three decades before, now sixtyish and in some difficulty. And driving south one time from my home in Vermont, I'd picked up a young hitchhiker right at

For a long-in-tooth male, the next best thing to sleeping with a much younger woman is to protect her from the machinations of men of her own age

our cloverleaf on the interstate, who confided after a few miles that she had just shot her husband. Flustered, having grabbed his gun from the drawer to escape a punch, and instinctively aiming low, she had only injured his leg, she said. She was fleeing not so much the police as his family, who would be coming after her. They were famous burglars and fences by reputation in our corner of the county (one of her husband's uncles had even robbed my house, I suspected, though my best proof was the way that he had smiled at me afterward in town), so I silently agreed with her that if their young man had suffered a flesh wound they were likely to seek an informal revenge. She stole a glance to see if she had cooked her goose by confiding in me. But white-haired guys with glasses don't stop to pick up a slightly unkempt young woman with black hair and a blue windbreaker over a fluff-dried blouse, standing by the blacktop at the edge of the woods with no suitcase, and rubbing one bare leg as if she had just emerged from the brambles, in order to turn her in. Her hand was raised to catch a ride, but her posture was hunchy and noncommittal, as if she wished to remain inconspicuous.

A damsel in distress was a powerful image to my generation, so I'd swerved over immediately. The snow had melted temporarily, but she was lightly dressed for the weather and looked to be four or five years out of high school, at that point when the bloom goes off some of the choices a person might have made, up in the sticks. Warily, fatalistically, she had slid in beside me, accepting the luck of the draw as if she wouldn't have trusted her judgment anyway. Denise was her name.

"Do you mind classical music?" I asked. As a college professor, I was used to quizzing young women about their plans and prospects without feeling nosy. Her faded makeup made her look pale, but I didn't detect any bruises and she wasn't fingering a wedding ring. She fastened her seat belt when I asked her to and slipped out of wet sneakers that she said were squishy, but scrunched down low whenever a car passed us from behind. I'd cleared my throat coolly, though the engine coughed when my foot left the pedal, at the news of why she wouldn't want anybody tailgating us.

"No, no, I left the gun. I didn't want nothing of his," she offered as a nervous non sequitur, in case I was worried.

"Maybe we'll get you out from under the storm front. It's not supposed to rain below White River Junction," I said as we approached the Lyndonville exit, because she seemed apprehensive that I would swing off. Both of us omitted any reference to how far we were going. "Have you got money for your trip?"

When she nodded, I ventured a joke about a story in our weekly newspaper that there had been seventeen unsolved murders in our county in seventeen years.

"That's what frightens you," she said.

"You were afraid?"

Her thin face was more strained but more calculating than a younger girl's would have been, and her wrists and hands resembled the middling stage of life. In our county it's almost a tradition that every few months some married woman or "live-in" will leave her house at an unseemly hour—at least if she has no children at home—after getting socked once too often and wave down the first car that passes, to escape harm's way. Then they may work in the village at the Laundromat, folding clothes, followed in the comfort of clean linens and soap and toddlers and mothers, sleeping upstairs where they're safe, until perhaps they try Florida for the winter, bedmaking in a motel or bagging in a supermarket, with a new boyfriend who manages a cemetery's lawn maintenance while living more scuzzily than they'd expected. There is a parallel kind of country code that the accused batterer or rapist who gets out on bail will go to work in the woods on a lumbering crew with other "rejects" (as you'll hear the joke at night in the Crystal Saloon) until his case is resolved, in a tacit quarantine—staying

of sight again when he is out on parole—ough you'll notice a dog looking out of the senger side of his vehicle that says to the rld, *there's two of us*. (And a gun in the glove npartment would make that three.) In mar- al climates, people cling to the weather's gh edges for additional equanimity. The tire- ne snowdrifts, storms icing the windshield, l then mud season, furnish a keel that may ance them. And they'll put on some ornery- king fat for extra ballast and insulation, pig- g out when a mood of depression threatens. e individuals who strut down Main Street d to be those on welfare, however. For them trut is medicinal. And the cattle dealer has smirky, sidelong air of a slave merchant cking suffering coffles to the slaughterhouse.

Denise looked so wan that I told her she could in the back seat out of sight, if she was tired or red. She said she had met her husband on Cape d, where he was working at a construction job, l been "wined and dined" by him until she quit computer course she was enrolled in; thank dness they'd had no kids. Her own family, wn near New Bedford, was as close-knit and nnish and messed up as his—"just not crooks"—d would take it personally if the Vermonters ne all the way down there searching for her.

"Same old, same old," she said, when I asked ether she might have found a job that inter- ed her in our neck of the woods. Nervier, ingier than the box-shaped honorary lunks u'd see knocking back beers in the Crystal loon, and not gaunt or pudgy like some of welfare moms ("I don't want to go there," ey'll say, if you chat with them at the lunch unter, falling back on the argot of their up-therapy sessions when the topic skids to- rd dicey experiences), she indicated with her nd that she wanted to stick with me, when I ered to drop her off at the White River Junc- n bus station.

I said I had watched girls who had tried Arizona Florida, after marrying some North Country looka, but then crept back with their self- eem lamed and moved in with their parents ain, saying that "the pace" had been too fast. She sniffed at that silliness.

"Was it a ricochet that bloodied him?" I ced—dirty old Polonius—to open an alibi for r. She would have none of it.

"I hate guns."

"But there'll always be guys with guns around. ne trick is for you to avoid them. You should k on the Internet for where unemployment is west."

She nodded, and for a loony moment I thought might even make a pair: her youth with my sdom. For a long-in-tooth male, the next best ing to sleeping with a much younger woman is to protect her from the machinations of men of her own age. Although Denise would no doubt have dumped an old fart like me in Las Vegas or Key West or Seattle or wherever at the end of our road trip, I actually felt a hard-on, enjoying a deep-seated, predatory sense of repletion for this interval that she sheltered with me. With her rubber-banded ponytail, blue cotton socks, unironed blouse, and blinking air of sleeplessness and tremulous bravado, she was just about ready for a new linkup, and probably too far along to run home to her mom and dad and stick there anyway. The homely truth was that she needed to be driven to a cozy mid-priced motel somewhere off the beaten track, with a Jacuzzi and a pool, for a week of rest and recreation. Then after the dirty old man had thoroughly pumped the tension out of her (being a good ten years older than Lolita, she would not be weeping at night, as Lolita did), he would give her a couple of hundred bucks to outfit herself with a nice change of clothes—the jeans, tank tops, pullovers, and other basic wash-and-wear stuff that, with a hairbrush, shoes, toiletries, and a few nights of healthy dinners and beauty sleep, will prepare a twentysomething-year-old to go practically anywhere and start over, if she has the spirit for it. But because this is a real-life tale, there was no succinct denouement. I had common sense enough not to drop everything and begin living out of ATM machines. A bit regretfully, I slowed to exit at my turnoff, hoping that she wouldn't wind up with some eightball on a motorcycle. Indeed, she seemed to feel the same.

"I wish you'd wait till I get my next ride," she murmured. She had a hint of scoliosis in the posture of her back, I noticed, while watching from the ramp as she waved reticently at two or three fast cars. But a black pickup soon braked to a quick stop.



"Do you need a lift, darlin'?" I heard the stranger say, with an accent from a thousand miles away. And her bold, scrambling timidity in entering his truck—with her blouse collar turned up, her scoliosis, her sneakers—touched me extremely.

In a Third World city such as Bombay or Kampala, where people live on a dollar or two a day but Islam's disciplines do not also apply, I've sometimes given money to a young woman who approached me, desperately needing it for her children or a visit to the doctor, and asked nothing of her in return except maybe a day or two of companionable conversation with a lonely traveler. The impulse was not demeaning or sadistic, in other words, but protective (and it would be she who had the hungry, coughing children, not the men or older women who were also asking for money). And yet my penis might secretly swell at the manliness of providing her with half a dozen weeks or so of future security. Was that dirty-minded?

Well, you may ask, tell us more before we judge. At home in the United States, as a college professor, do you sometimes fantasize about your female students? No, I don't, ever. I may feel attracted in the classroom to certain individuals, but I don't daydream alone later on about them, or at night when my consciousness is turned off. Two or three decades ago, when professors at



many institutions were routinely allowed to sleep with undergraduates and I was middle-aged, I didn't do that either (though I did with a few graduate students, believing at the time that there was enough of a difference in self-direction in the

older women). We live in a sort of wind tunn each of us a test pilot for the blowback of soc change. In the 1980s, during the same years th faculty-student romances were outlawed, a co siderable loosening occurred in permissible h mosexual public conduct, however, as well as the parameters of acceptable white-collar cor rate behavior. And divorce—exceptionable mid-century—had become commonplace.

Human nature is as many-footed as a centipe and doesn't alter with rapidity, but interpre tions of course do: egalitarianism, hedonism, u rightness, Darwinism, wealth and sex as taint virtue. My mother had a yardstick for marriage the era when divorce was unthinkable, whi still seems pretty apt: "Would you let her use yo toothbrush?" Marriage is for the morning after, b tween the poles of friendship and infatuatio where burps and farts won't derail it. Many me in the passion of lovemaking, might go down a woman whose toothbrush they wouldn't u two hours later. But a woman I know, pushi fifty and wicked-tongued, has a blanket method expressing it when someone puts the moves her. "He wants me to have his babies," she'll s with her disheveled flair and bartered swagg The seventeen unsolved murders in our cour mostly relate to a spousal or sexual crescendo, b cause felons teeter further from the norm th the rest of us do, but in an arc that we are fam iar with. Even a web-surfer in a swivel chair w pendulums between chat rooms may tap his fe as restlessly as a hunter-gatherer with authen walking to be done.

As our obesity and insomnia increase, the s cial workers hereabouts have begun handing o snowshoes each winter to families that need mo exercise, as well as the usual sacks of macaroni a surplus bricks of cheese. Claustrophobia is mo of a problem than hunger for those on (to empl an ancient term) "relief." But in a rural comm nity everybody knows the halt and lame, the bi lical unfortunates "ye will always have with you as Matthew says, who used to be warehoused vivid destitution at the proverbial Poor Far whereas now the Visiting Nurse drops in on the in subsidized housing. Turtling down, they te to grow faceless, if they don't adopt that righteo medicinal strut in heading for the post office t their food stamps—while some of the rest of travel, pharmaceuticals in hand (lest it becor real travel), to places labeled the Acropolis, a so on, or to an equatorial climate where wages a a fiftieth of ours, hopping about by Boeing wi a photo ID, borrowing camaraderie from t stranger in the aisle seat, or a waitress for an ho

A friend of mine explored his fascination wi waitresses, or "rented wives," as a dirty old ma by compiling a whole book of interviews wi them. All around southern California, he

ed the pot roast and asked the lady about her-
f, a respectful listener, pining over her in a
nageable manner. I haven't gone that far, but
ce or twice, when beached in some catfish
vn like Venice, Louisiana, I've offered a road-
use chum a ride north, if she looked put upon
ough that she might want to jump in my car.
nust have sounded crazy to her: nor did I know
at we'd do once we reached Manhattan, being
that time a married man—in deference to
ich I hadn't attempted a spree with her during
week on assignment in Venice.

The chapfallen guy lingering at the counter as
he soup had been home-cooked, who has mem-
zed the schedules of the different "girls" so as
time his meal to coincide with and win a smile
m his favorites, is a staple of transient Amer-
. He knows the names of their kids and mums,
d needs them, these public wives, for survival
ond the Social Security check. Men's energies
often skid askew that the waitresses eye the un-
ached joe who strolls in for the difficulties he
y pose, like intrusive flattery, a bullying gaze,
he stuffs his mouth revoltingly. But I've met
itresses who were lonelier than me. Once,
out dusk, I was the only customer in a small-
vn eatery, when the waitress, with bleached
ir, on the far edge of middle age, took out a lit-
store cake that she said the owner had left
her when he went home, and trifled at it with
ork. Then, although I was a stranger, she cut
a sliver too, shyly confiding that it was her
thday, licking her fingers when some icing
me off. So we nibbled together from paper
ates with the counter between us, as if on French
stry (she'd been born in Quebec), and talked
our children's birthdays and her new grand-
ild, and such. When she offered me a second
ce, I asked if she shouldn't take it all home to
are with her husband, but she told me he might
t regard her birthday as an occasion to cele-
ate. We mused over our chocolate frosting, and
ent to a cylindrical rack of inexpensive watch-
displayed near the wall and made it rotate,
inting to each of the ladies' models as they
ung around. When she nodded at one, I paid
it. She unlocked the glass case and put it on,
eping the receipt, without our exchanging a
rd about the uncommon intimacy of the ex-
ange. But we both felt good, and huddled over
ffee and my supper of chicken salad on oppo-
e sides of the counter until closing time. And
meant that I had a friend on other lonely
evenings when the tables were turned,
later on.

I love teaching as a sideways form of parent-
od; and a couple of years after my mother died
ecame a grandfather belatedly (having been be-
ed about having children as well). When the phone call came, I got on the nearest Amtrak train, in Albany, New York, and glided south along the Hudson River through resplendent scenery that had inspired so many nineteenth-century landscape painters and is not too badly dimmed even now. Being in a ferment anyhow, I was alive to the Catskills' voluptuous grandeur—the curling, widening, pewter-colored water, with flittering ducks or a standing bittern, a pair of swans occasionally, or a gray-blue heron in the marshy sloughs, with amber or obsidian water, a bristly island of splendid willows, and all backed up by the wild-looking contours of mountains loping off toward a serrate horizon, or plunging straight into the river in lion-colored palisades. It's as lovely a stretch of railroad as any I know of in the United States, and primal enough to befit this rare journey to lay eyes on brand-new Oren: whose name means "cedar" in Hebrew.

The chapfallen guy lingering at the counter, who has timed his meals to coincide with the schedules of his favorite waitresses, is a staple of transient America

I simply wanted to feast them in the meantime, yet felt hassled by my daily tic of poring over the newspaper. Because this wasn't related to what was happening in the actual news, my eyes would stray discordantly from the eely, silvery river to some mayoral news conference or culture bookie's prognostication about who was in and out. A skirmish went on in my head between gazing at a birchy copse and the personable oaks, a cruising osprey over a water meadow, or egos crowing over the minutiae on the op-ed page. I'd be pining intensely out the window at the handsome headlands of the river, and a tributary in a glen, a butternut tree in a forest, and watching the weather brewing, with serenity and excitement twinned—as if on the point of fathoming primordial memories within myself—when, like the White Rabbit consulting his watch, I would twitch back to my newspaper habit, absurdly checking off sections that I'd finished with, like Metro or Style and Trends, as if I were killing time in a greasy spoon. The shining river unspooling behind me barely held its own.

Then we were in the rail yards of Manhattan, pulling into Penn Station. Exuberantly I extricated myself from underground and walked across town to New York University Medical Center to get a glimpse of—a gander at—*take in* my grandson. Lying in my daughter's arms (she purring with triumph), he was a great deal closer to the Hudson, I immediately realized, than to a

newspaper, being a reddish, wriggly, and gloriously amphibious creature, as miraculous as a mythical salamander, and now air-breathing. He was still slope-headed, for his outward passage, and, newtlike, squirming toward shelter and warmth. But unlike a newt, his upper lip appeared to be his most developed muscle, attuned to suction, as he rather quickly mammalized and vigorously began priming the pump. Thus was he protean, this newborn citizen of the island at the mouth of the Hudson—like the leap of a fish I had seen that morning, or the beating of a trio of geese downriver—until he would collapse once again in a momentary nap, or gaze bedazzled off toward the pewter-colored and obsidian world out the window.

So what do we do, us geezers with brains still sparking? Silence is dignity? Sex is strenuous, so live in your memories? "Keep your thoughts to yourselves"?

We tend to get things wrong, such as not discovering Herman Melville until decades after his death, or not peering out the window much while traveling down the Northeast's signature river toward the birth of a baby as if right out of that great germinal, artesian, selfsame river. *So, get serious*, I instructed myself. *You're a grandpa and pretty soon headed back toward that immemorial water.* When my daughter shooed me away so Oren could sleep, I went uptown to the FAO Schwarz store to muse in their river of toys. It's a wonderful spot, and despite the cash registers discreetly placed, the imagery of wild things—both animals and "animorphs"—remained tumultuous and profound, as though I were dowsing, walking around. Amazonian and Congo beasts were heaped unmanageably together with Inuit symbols, Bushman dreamtime facsimiles, and Sesame Street. The gorilla with a sturgeon, and a graveyard mask with an android togged out in a spaceman's suit. Oren had no tics yet. He could grow into the Last Mohican or a Cro-Magnon Man if we let him, or walk on the moon. Like a marmot emerging out of hibernation or a tadpole with its legs sprouting, he was the soul of atavism and animalia. He was everything at once: no options closed.

An ecstasy's synapses are amoral. They fire off from friction, in a convulsion, whether it is sex for hire or an affair of the heart. Like the crab bite of a cancer, they are a process, not judgmental, but unlike ancient illnesses, they threaten to become a kind of hall of mirro what with the invention of Viagra and vibr tors, Internet pornography, and the more inte active wrinkles that will likely follow. Becau nubile women need a long-term partner, not one-night stand or a creaky pasha, in order raise children, we frown on liaisons where t age differential looks wacky—yet fill the mec with young women as eye candy in the equiv lent of underclothes, and often grotesque posed to tweezer the libido.

So what do we do, us geezers with brains st sparking? Silence is dignity? Sex is strenuous, live in your memories? "Keep your thoughts yourselves"? Well, we do, of course, as everyo over eleven mostly does, but my memories are tangled with the gristle of life that if I try to repl scenes of lovemaking with one of the women have genuinely loved, it swiftly ramifies into t complexities of the entire relationship—the sa ness, the disconnects. The sex in the packa cannot be extricated from the stymieing co ardice or passivity, the misperceptions that dil ed our passion. Poignance overwhelms my sens al memories. Why, I wonder, wasn't sex the b during my marriages, but rather on the sly? Or, tating that around: when and where it was the be why didn't we simply get married? I bridle at th not really wanting to know the reasons. I've ne er visited a psychiatrist and plan on dying u shriven by that priesthood, but do recognize so of my selfishness, obtuseness, and "fear and tre bling" nevertheless. My life seems like a sn shell whorled with recalcitrances that slowed r to a crawl, whichever pairing I think back t And my friend's progression as well, because the is an equal solipsism to the female: created to o live that needlessly pugnacious lunk who i pregnated her, and find another by jutting a rou hip and showing a nipple or a belly button.

Old men have to shave more carefully th young ones, lest they look not rugged but bu mish. And they'll stoop and stumble anyway, they need to choose clothes to draw the eye aw from a wattling neck, irregular gait, not just a old sweatshirt that can be stripped off for t beach. Everybody wants to flee from a dying m but for the preceding dozen years or more he m exude a certain twilight, or candlelit, appeal: t stability, humor, perspective, with so little of t macho bluster of a younger guy, and no worriso consequences from a mild flirtation. He can confided in without the danger that he will st calling, stalking, peeping, or driving past.

I'm a person who dreams of strangers m than about people I know, and although I seld have real nightmares—the mind, when reas ably healthy, seems to keep a safety catch on t dreams one has, like a gun that doesn't fire the monitor that prevents grown-ups from w

g their beds—these tend to be hedged about
h red tape, anxiety, lost passports, or a slight
tigo. They're not the "sweet dreams" my moth-
claimed to have enjoyed. Nonetheless, I look
ward to them. Although more dicey than my
time life, they're also more interesting. And
every week or so) I start to kiss a stranger, the
am will mellow into a willing friendship and
ight. Before a resolution is achieved I'll wake
, which is frustrating, but not more so than
natural blunting of most of the denouements
ife itself. And the odd part is that these night
ams—where my unconscious is given its head
d I can't directly censor its anagrammatic re-
itulation of forgotten memories—are cleaner
kinks than my daydreams are. The sex is sim-
r, in other words, more wholesome and affec-
nate and like the evolutionary mating position.
ight be embarrassed to recite my daydreams,
t seldom night dreams that I can recall. This
adox might be explained by the old saw that
u're always thirty" in your (night) dreams,
ereas you are perhaps resentfully dragging your
ls, always aware of your age, and not going gen-
"into that good night," during the day. I re-
mber my friend John Berryman was the op-
site of me in this respect, and dreaded falling
eep because he sometimes dreamt of killing
children. Being asleep, he could not turn off
dodge the visions, and finally killed himself.
d age unstrings you. Bet-
the hoary Milton Berle
ce. "How many times a
nth do you make love
th your wife, Mr. Berle?"
straight man or the pneu-
tic babe beside him on the
udeville stage would ask,
ien he was gray. "Oh, al-
st every night!" he an-
ered pertly. "Last night, al-
st. And the night before
at, almost . . . And the
ght before that, almost . . ."
A seventy-year-old is quite
rmless, if he isn't reduced to
mming his food. Dotage it-
f is inappropriate behavior,
whether he spills his peas or
rbors outré fancies, he is
rdly a clear and present
nger, like some creepy,
opy fifty-year-old. Instead,
iat does it say about life that
even wonder—is there no plateau of equa-
nity? Maybe there shouldn't be. We eat, pay
ls, maneuver through the social pleasantries of
average set of acquaintanceships, and try to
intain the cock of whatever hat we have cho-
n to wear through the terrain of an entire life.



Forty-something years ago I wrote a book about prizefighters and saw how they were able to preserve a mask of aplomb through withering punishment. Endurance was panache—right to the brink of being knocked out. And I remember Paul Sann, a fabled old-time, cynical, swashbuckling New York tabloid editor, whose girlfriend, a leggy, undernourished model maybe thirty years younger than him, was my wife's friend. Marion also liked Paul, as everyone did, but they used to commiserate angrily that aging newshounds in green eyeshades were allowed to have druggy brunettes for arm candy, to display in clubs and restaurants and at the fights, who made their living by the shape of their cheekbones, or selling their gams in stocking ads—and the old guy only able to perform cunnilingus on her at night, and too old or too cheap to marry her.

Nylons and nightlife: the Walter Winchell game. I once saw Sam Spiegel, the Hollywood mogul, stroll across the tarmac to an Air France plane in Nice, with three nearly identical blondes carrying his briefcases and suitcases. This was in the early 1960s, and the sun on the runway illuminated their hair, which was bobbed to shoulder length and styled to the same tint—all in their thirties (he was fifty-eight at the time), twenty years younger than him, and of the same height, wearing the same smile, and trim in the same secretarial suit jackets, with the breeze swinging their gray skirts. Although their limo had bypassed the terminal, they boarded our flight late to occupy first class. And short, strutting Sam, all putzy energy, made his threesome walk briskly to keep up with him, but bestowed an auxiliary confidence on them that, with the luxury of the shooting locale, may have compensated them for looking like a harem.

I've never known men of my own age who were rich enough to take on trophy wives, but have run into them at New York parties or talked to them when they were stalled in traffic on the highway to East Hampton and using a cell phone, with the Vegas-voiced spouse kibbitzing in the background. Also, I've seen distinguished writers like Robert Lowell, in their late, shaky years, waving over a succession of young groupies to sit on the great man's lap and be fondled by him for a few minutes at a soiree. Kenneth Burke, Conrad Aiken, William Faulkner, and other gurus used to stroke the hair of oth-

er people's wives at dinner parties without objection, as a privilege of the famous elderly, whose grizzled, mystical look and cranky, persistent virility were assumed to be a signal of unquenchable vitality—like Saul Bellow's fourth child, born when the author was eighty-four and still publishing scintillating fiction. Such genes should be perpetuated, whereas we say to the ordinary snickery-minded lech, why would the world want yours ever again?

And most old crocks agree. We don't attempt to conceive children we don't have enough years left to father. If you want to do good, there are plenty of needy kids around. Just ask that red-eyed waitress who brought your meatloaf; then double the largest tip she says that she has ever received—and go home with her to meet her mother, who babysits when her shift doesn't match the children's schoolday. Help the boy search for the arrows from his archery set that he lost in the grass; help persuade the girl that the doctor is right and her eyes are too young and still growing to put contact lenses in; and give them both some books. Their mother is sleeping with a knife under her pillow after kicking her husband out, because his logger friends are barreling past her isolated house, hollering in the wee hours. The catcalls frighten her—plus several survivalists have been camping in the woods nearby, which makes it worse. The grandmother assiduously counts the silver she brings home each night in tips, as if that might somehow enable their small family to escape.

So do you now, as a visitor in the parlor, feel like a dirty old man in search of "jollies with a dolly"? Old Adam, in fact, isn't that bad. Even in his nether regions he knows that kindness is the priority, and has stopped calibrating cup-size and the straightness of the woman's nose, for a surge of altruism. Life is an earful, after all, and while the twoness of a lady's breasts and buns invite the twoness of one's hands, our ears exercise a different role. They hear anguish, they hear danger, and seem more linked to our intuitions. Our eyes appraise and calculate, and can trigger pity or anger, in feeding upon body language. They hunger or they envy or they lust, as ears—less snobbish and less squeamish—scarcely do. Our ears are gentler, and almost patient, attuned to a breeze's music more than to athletics, though as quick as repartee when called upon. They hear



emotions, and may well with empathy or cul
from suspicion. They deal with intimations,
direction, more than our eyes do, and con
quently are being submerged by the racket of a
ilization that is motorized. Like the whiffs of sc
our noses no longer catch, much of our for
sound palette is being lost. Instead we hear me
anized or scripted, broadcast, instrumental sou
and people squawking their voice boxes.

Civilization is so much a matter of schedul
not the seven-decade-long rhapsody one might
pect from the premises of organized religion, t
our smiles become a social device. You'll
nowhere without a smile, we hear, and a mileste
of preadolescence is when you recognize that y
parents are really not as happy as you may h
presumed. Not just not as omniscient, secure
in control, but less happy? *So, I'm pretty much
ing to have to go it alone?* Yes, pretty much: you
alized that they couldn't serve as paradigms o
a lot of future help, as children will ordina
have assumed. And they are authentically ti
"Tired" had just sounded like a family excuse
saying no, but now you grasped that they were
deed exhausted, their faces sometimes masks of
ignation. And it appeared to be a deeper disil
sionment than merely bellyaching about mon
bad teeth, or the boss. Although school for you
necessarily tense, adults ran their own affa
didn't they, so shouldn't life
smooth sailing for them, or
they knew the ropes? What
the trouble? Wasn't God's wo
made for them?

We gradually learn that,
the contrary, the world we
gotiate nowadays is mostly ma
made, and curiosity is going
be our approximation of rev
ence; or that, at any rate, li
generosity, it complements it
is praise of God distilled to co
mon sense but implying the m
veling that religion used to t
and without which many of
would be simply bores. Marveli
is a form of joy, and what mig
be called the "mating flight" th
young people do on their ho
eymoons, or probably before, te
this, as well as each partner's v
and sensitivity. Girls with n
diplomas used to look perha
for a flamboyant protector, stea
but funny, a good-looker but not a cheater, i
ventive but predictable, strong and smart but co
siderate and self-deprecating. It was a tall ord
but nobody wants to feel that they are trudgin
24/7, toward oblivion. Meanwhile, just make
happen, nature is saying, although sex—a redo

l preoccupation in our addled society—occurs tively rarely, compared with other pleasures necessities.

Orgasm and ennui—frenzy and languor. And ennui is more puzzling than the ecstasy is, be- se what is the purpose? More than "resting " it often involves a sort of turning-away and tting-off, as if to clear the decks for the pur- of another love partner, another go-around. at doesn't happen, but silence, the languorous tch-off (traditionally a time to douche and ke), advertises the possibility. And yet coition peremptory and unambiguous, after the to- l-fro that preceded it—the flattery and flow- the tentativeness and gulling—that such a saw of emotion, from ritual to screwing, almost nands a spell of indifference. If such perfervid derness, like the simulated brutality of hard in- course, has been out of proportion to what the participants actually feel, the pendulum brings back to normalcy.

Like oil and vinegar, courtship and coition are eguiling combination. And neither is com- te without the other. The public bodies dis- yed on TV don't do it, any more than the pa- back covers on 25-cent copies of *God's Little re* or *Tobacco Road* in the bus-station book ks of my youth. They were intended to draw quarters out of your pocket, as the salt on tzels keeps you coming back. But salt—the rthand version of hackneyed stuff—befits old s again, after vinaigrette is unobtainable. Old rt-chasers come a cropper in classic plays and eras as well as in life: old moneybags who try steal the bloom off young girls' cheeks. And if y aren't rich, they're violating the social com- t by which middle-aged folk pay taxes to nkroll a decent dotage for the elderly on con- ion that they quit looking accipitrally at school- ls if they're men, or smearing on ruby lip gloss, alk-white cheek powder, and black mascara if y're not. (In general, as with many problems ely, it would help if people of both sexes would p trying to live so unnaturally long and gave world more breathing room.)

Curiosity, like a gopher, can pop up unex- tedly from myriad redoubts, but more than fore, even the polymath or Renaissance man ust choose what he has time for. We're so belly- ep in a buffet of news cycles and celebrity gos- , sociological theories and scientific break- roughs, that we could easily gourmandize rselves into informational butterballs if we dn't throttle our intake to a considerable extent. e want to know everything about what might fishly concern us, like cholesterol, attention ficit disorder, or West Nile virus, but not geno- de or AIDS on the Nile. And because insight a type of sight, not proof, we have seen so many eakthroughs merely eclipse previous break- throughs that we stilt-walk a bit among them all, knowing that received wisdom will continue to shift. Eggs will be good for you or not; cancer metastasizes because of unhappiness or not; cell phones and fluoride are harmless or not. Certainties are so squishy now, we'll fall back on what we sometimes say about the arts—"I know what I like"—although the idea itself tends to truncate experience.

There is inevitably a spiritual dimension to speculation, and faith is speculative too, but fluctuates partly because our interpretations are subject to the influences of body chemistry. A headache can spoil a church service or museum visit, not to mention the effects of depression. As a people, the more we learn about the human genome, global-positioning coordinates, dark energy and matter, the ancestress of man in Chad, and the origins of the universe, the more antacids, tranquilizers, and sleeping pills we seem to consume. We are disoriented—our learning curve doesn't free us up—and sex has been a dragging anchor, instead of holding fast, as one might have expected it to do. It slides into androgyny, or orgy, or again monogamy, not in the course of centuries, as before, but in close sequence, like other New Age pulsations that wilt and flourish as revulsion follows excess, and then overreaction again. I expect a century of crises that will surpass the last century's because they will be environmental; and the priapic absurdities that interactive games in cyberspace may bring in the way of perpetual lubricity (what will men and women do, crank the chair-side dial to Ecstasy?) will be a sideshow.

Old men with dirt under their fingernails may be of some help. Old dogs who've been "around the block," who can look at their grandchildren and see a little ahead

Old men with dirt under their fingernails may be of some help. Old dogs who've paid their dues and been "around the block," who can look at their grandchildren and see a little ahead. I remember a senior anthropologist in Boston whose house was a couple of blocks from a five-alarm fire that broke out, interrupting his work. When he heard the sirens and bells he stepped outside, looked at the smoke and the ladders going up, wet a finger and lifted it, and then went back inside to rap on the keys of his typewriter again. He had been around the world and assessed a lot of fires, bar fights, auto crashes, divorce wrangles, tribal cultures, guerrilla wars, and had that dash

of Churchillian dignity a wicked old, randy old sea dog has. Such a one is a good judge of character and can hold his brandy, outtalking, outliving his juniors, and not sink in a storm that panics the pups. He knows that the woman we really love is usually a "Jeannie with the light brown hair" and not some bottle-blonde, and is deft at avoiding spurious quarrels, nimble at sidestepping angst, recognizing how much of life's unpleasantness is avoidable, really, or if it isn't, knows the moves.

Most people construct a personality for themselves, and if they don't start kiting checks or kissing showgirls' toenails by the age of forty, they probably won't later on. It is an edifice born of mimicry, admonition, trial and error, and maybe movie-watching. We want to be debonair yet diligent, congenial but a little austere. Society instructs us to live responsibly, with moderation, but also and subliminally, *Don't be a fool, live to the hilt, you only have once!* So we may finally bemoan our timidity in not having traveled more or had more children or risked a big change in midcareer. Here for scores of years, and that was all we signed up for? "Cocky" is the word for that old scamp who still manages a swing to his shaky walk—does he still have the balls to go with it? But did he stay in the game and push further than us? The loves that we perhaps passed up as secondary a quarter-century ago don't seem so now, as we sit on the porch. When we tell people what we were interested in, it may not seem enough. God formed man "from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life," says Genesis, so naturally he stays a bit dirty to the end. Do you think that I, at seventy, never want to enter a woman again? Sex remains an unfinished business, which keeps our antennae up. Our eyes, indeed, with their focus upon curvaceousness, may feel as if they have withdrawn partway into our heads after an attractive woman has passed by—the way a frog's do when he swallows a fly. But our ears keep right on listening for information and premonitions, soaking them into our emotions. Intuition has other purposes besides being a sexual appendage or enabler. Soldiers on a killing field may pause in hacking up civilians to spare a certain individual, but more mysteriously than on the basis of whether she has breasts. Sound waves or sixth-sense vibrat may penetrate the bestiality to invoke a spik remorse, or arouse the rare dissident who refuse "unlawful orders." A child's voice t isn't just a scream; a man's words spoken with common clarity. Like predators (I remember b onet training in the 1950s army), we are ten ed to try to kill whatever runs away from u weakly feeds our sadism, and rape is also an toric soldiers' sport.

But most old men haven't the stomach for e verbal cruelty. They omit being violent, an general will wear a special squint when force watch bad stuff, as you'll notice at an accid scene or an untimely funeral. Their temp mental flashpoints wane, and "do no harm" grandparent's mantra. Not that they try to ref the world (if they ever had a zest for that); but t do bear witness. And that's not an inconsi able recipe for life—to do no harm and to l witness. The second is often harder than the f

Do they have a glint of divinity in them this strange millennium we tend not to think having denatured our sense of religion—ta the bite of authenticity and joy and somber and charity out of Christianity, for instance. do we much like the idea of going from "dus dust" anymore either, having natured nature as well. We fer cremations, burial vaults, the like: tidier forms of term tion. "Deceased," we write mail, to notify the governm the lawyers. The world has come too packed to believe each person in the crowds have a spark of God in him. as our life expectancy is assi or extended, our apprehens about death are diluted, as if unknowables had been disper We are still a bit afraid of ease, discomfort, or debilitat but if death is simply a void (the new, ecumenical agn cism), and not the entry p to an afterlife, then it is goin appear a great deal less com or fearsome. If it is regarded biochemical process, not a of reckoning, then, although grief of the survivors won appeased, people become ra relaxed about the prospect not a passage, a crossing-ove ward a radiant (or fiery) frontation. Things are mere an end. The tick-tock stops. blood pools and blackens. old men.



MIRACLES AND ANTHEMS

The alchemy of soccer

By Eduardo Galeano

(translated by Mark Fried)

GIVE THANKS FOR THE MIRACLE

Beside the altar in Mexican church-
, ex-votos proliferate. They're im-
es and words painted on small pieces
tin that give *thanks to the Virgin of*
uadalupe, because Pancho Villa's troops
ped my sister and not me;
thanks to the Blessed Child of
tocha, because I have three sisters and
n the ugliest and I got married first;
thanks to the Little Virgin of Sor-
ws, because the night before last my
fe took off with my buddy Anselmo
id now he's going to pay for all the
ngs he's done to me;
thanks to the Divine Face of Acapul-
, cause I kilt my husband and they
nt do nothin to me.

That's the way it was. And still is.
it you also see novelties, like ex-
otos that give *thanks to Our Lord Je-*
s Christ because I crossed the river
id came to the Estays and I didn't go
nder or get died.

luardo Galeano is the author, most re-
ntly, of Upside Down. *A revised edition*
his book Soccer in Sun and Shadow
ll be published by Verso this spring.

ark Fried has translated several of
aleano's works. These texts are published
re for the first time in English.



Alfredo Vilchis, better known as Leonardo da Vilchis, paints on commission in the market at La Lagunilla. The Christs in his little paintings all have his face, he doesn't know why, and his archangels wear soccer outfits, because many of his clients want to give thanks for the divine hand that bestows goals on their beloved club or on the Mexican national team.

THE SECOND SKIN

On a wall in Rio de Janeiro, a fan of Fluminense scrawled, "My beloved poison." And on a wall in Buenos Aires, I read, "Racing, an inexplicable passion."

The shirt, the second skin, causes more suffering than pleasure, but we all know that that's the way it is with affairs of the heart.

Love isn't expressed only in the pain or joy you feel at the defeat or victory of your adored club. What would God be without the Devil? Love is confirmed by hatred of the rival team. In Argentina, a Boca Juniors fan on his deathbed wrapped himself in the flag of the despised River Plate, and with his final breath he sighed, "An enemy dies."

And from Galicia I received a confession. Angel Vázquez de la Cruz wrote, "I always belonged to Celta de Vigo. Now I've gone over to its worst enemy, Deportivo de La Coruña. Everybody knows you can, and maybe should, change cities, women, jobs, or political parties; but never, never can you change teams. I'm a traitor, I know. But please believe me, I did it for my children. My children talked me into it. I'm a traitor, but I'm a good father."

THE EXEMPLARY FAN

We were in Seville, at the stadium. The match was a yawn, the ball grew whiskers, but it was pleasant

istrations by Richard Beards

[illegible] in the middle of the crowd.

"There's a fan here who always brings his father," Sixto Martínez told me.

"Sure," I said. "Fan father, fan son."

Sixto took off his glasses and looked me in the eyes. "The one I'm talking about comes with his dead father."

And he let his eyes drop. "It was his final wish."

Every single Sunday, the son brings the ashes of he-who-gave-him-life and sets them down beside him in the stands. On his deathbed, the father had asked, "Take me to see the Betis I love with all my soul."

At first the dead man went to the stadium in a glass jar. One afternoon the guards, fearing violence in the stadiums, wouldn't let him in. After that the father traveled in a cardboard carton lined with plastic.

THE BROADCASTER

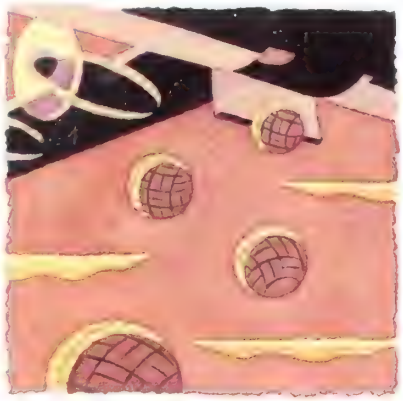
"Only three people left Maracanã stadium speechless: the Pope, Frank Sinatra, and me."

Alcides Ghiggia said that, sticking out his chest, and he wasn't lying.

The end of the match was near. Ghiggia slipped around on the right and rammed home the goal that made Uruguay champion of the world. After the final whistle, with darkness falling and everything falling, the spectators remained seated in the stands. A people sculpted in stone, a gigantic monument to defeat: 200,000 Brazilians, the largest crowd ever gathered in a soccer stadium, were unable to move or speak or believe. Many stayed there until midnight, immobile, mute, astonished. OUR HIROSHIMA, claimed the newspapers the following day, exaggerating just a little.

Isaías Ambrosio was there. He was one of the workers who built the stadium, the largest in the world, and he'd been given a free ticket.

Time went by, but Isaías remained in the stands at Maracanã. Every afternoon, gripping a microphone, he broadcast the goal that had wrought a national tragedy. From Monday to Friday he broadcast it, again and again and again. Isaías repeated Ghiggia's movements, step by step, for the listeners of an imaginary radio station, or for himself, or for no one. He kept at it for half a century, ever since that afternoon: in a stage voice, he roared out the goal, or rather he wailed it, and then roared it again, wailed it again, to the immense empty stadium, as on the previous afternoon and the following afternoon and every afternoon.



THE TRUCE

As the new millennium was being born, the oldest man in England died. Bertie Felstead spanned three centuries: he was born in the nineteenth, lived in the twentieth, and died in the twenty-first.

He was the sole survivor of an extraordinary soccer match on Christmas Day, 1915. The match took place between British and German soldiers. A ball appeared from who knows where, and started rolling, who knows how, in no-man's-land. Then the battlefield became a playing field: the enemies threw down their weapons and leapt to pursue the ball, all for all and all against all.

It didn't last long. Screaming officers reminded the soldiers that they were there to kill and to die. The soccer truce ended, and the butchery resumed between men obliged to hate each other.

THE BALL AS TOOL

At the World Cups of 1934 and 1938, the Italian and German players saluted the crowd, hands outstretched. "Win or die," Mussolini ordered.

Goebbels lamented that winning an international match is more [illegible] portant to people than capturin[illegible] city.

At the 1970 Cup, Brazil's mili[illegible] dictatorship took the glory of Pe[illegible] team as their own. "No one can [illegible] this country," government advert[illegible] ments proclaimed.

At the 1978 Cup, the Argen[illegible] brass celebrated their team's triu[illegible] on the arm of the omnipresent He[illegible] Kissinger while airplanes tossed [illegible] prisoners into the depths of the se[illegible]

In 1980, in Uruguay, the natio[illegible] team won the so-called Little W[illegible] Cup, a tournament among wo[illegible] champions. The dictatorship sold [illegible] victory as if the generals themse[illegible] had played. But that was the mom[illegible] when the crowd, after seven year[illegible] obligatory silence, first darec[illegible] shout. The stands broke the sile[illegible] and roared: "It's going down, it's [illegible] ing out, the military's on a rout."

THAT SMILE

Outside the country people w[illegible] der, Is Colombia condemned to [illegible] lence by nature or by destiny? [illegible] Colombians doomed by their ge[illegible] or are they prisoners of a machi[illegible] of death that uses fate as an alibi?

A suggestion to violentolog[illegible] take a peek at a match played by [illegible] Colombian side. Such a joyous [illegible] cer, clean and inspired, springs f[illegible] a joyous people. And I'd recomm[illegible] a good long look at the photogr[illegible] of René Higuita making a sav[illegible] England's Wembley Stadium in [illegible] autumn of '95, a save never be[illegible] seen in any stadium anywhere in [illegible] world. With his outstretched bod[illegible] the air, the Colombian keeper let[illegible] shot go past his hands and cleare[illegible] with his heels, kicking his legs [illegible] way a scorpion flicks his tail. [illegible] what is so powerfully revealing a[illegible] that picture isn't Higuita's outrage[illegible] feat. The eloquence lies in the f[illegible] splitting grin he wears while com[illegible] ting his unpardonable mischief.

ANTHEMS

Before every match at every W[illegible] Cup, the players listen to their [illegible] tional anthems and hum along. [illegible] general rule, the anthems urge the[illegible] kill or die. They marshal omin[illegible] threats, clamor for war, curse fore[illegible]

and demand they be turned into
burger, and exhort us to perish
iously in a heroic bloodbath.
ortunately, the players play deaf.
there is always some obedient
lier ready with vicious kicks to
ish the enemies of the fatherland,
cially the ones who commit the
nse of playing beautifully.

KEEPER

t noon, down on the docks of
nburg, two men were drinking
talking in a beer hall. One was
ip Agee, a former CIA agent in
guay. The other was me.
he sun, not a very frequent visi-
to those latitudes, bathed the
e in light.
etween one beer and another, I
d him about the fire. Years be-
, the newspaper where I worked,
ca, had gone up in flames. I
ted to know if that had been a
e present from the CIA.
lo, Agee told me. That fire was a
of Divine Providence. And he
me: They gave us a fabulous ink
destroying the printing presses,
we didn't get the chance to use

he CIA didn't manage to place a
le agent in our print room. The
man, Agee acknowledged, was a
t goalkeeper.
es, I said.
nd then I saw him: Gerardo
ti, with that chronic and incur-
smile in his eyes. Yes, he was a
t goalie. And he also knew how
ttack. The day Agee and I met in
nburg was several years after Ger-
was kidnapped, tortured, and
dered, never to be seen again.



INTERLOPERS

When a fortune-teller offers to read your future, ask her to choose another victim: Please madam, let me go on believing the future will be a surprise.

We fans are lucky enough: even in professional soccer, an industry programmed by the monotony of power, predictions are frequently humiliated by astonishing results.

Wonder opened the last World Cup. In the first match, France, winner of the previous championship, was beaten by Senegal, one of its former colonies. With no World Cup history, no stars, no obligation to win or trepidation about losing, Senegal played in a state of grace and was the revelation of the tournament.

While the twentieth century was expiring, Calais, a team of clerks, factory workers, gardeners, and teachers, nearly became champions of France. They lost by a hair in the final, after leaving the star-studded teams foundering in their wake.

In Italy a dwarf insulted the richest clubs in the world. Never in Italy's history had a small-town team reached the A league. Chievo came from a hamlet of 3,000 peasants, and in the 2001 championship they battled for one of the top spots. The entire club: players, substitutes, and everyone else lumped together, was valued at one fiftieth of what Juventus received for the sale of a single player, Zinedine Zidane, to Real Madrid.

In Brazil the story is São Caetano. The club was born in a working-class suburb of São Paulo, in the industrial ring that incubated the new union movement and the Workers' Party from whose ranks Lula rose to become the country's president. Barely thirteen years after its founding, São Caetano came in second in the Liberators Cup, playing against the best teams of Latin America. And this in spite of the curse of small clubs and poor countries, which build players just to lose them.

THE UNION

Like everything else, professional soccer seems more and more to be run by a Union of Enemies of Beauty.

Ignacio Salvatierra, an unjustifiably unknown referee, ought to be canonized. He gave witness to the new faith. Six years ago he exorcised the devil of fantasy in the Bolivian city of Trinidad. Referee Salvatierra gave the boot to a player named Abel Vaca Saucedo, showing him the red card and sending him off the field so he would "learn to take soccer seriously." Vaca Saucedo had scored a goal that was clearly a satanic act. He eluded the entire opposing team, one by one, in a frenzied bout of dribbling, overhead lobs, back-heels, and other jugglerie, and ended his orgy facing away from the goal by thumping the ball into the corner of the net with his rear end.



THE EXEMPLARY ATHLETE

Two soccer world championships were played in Asia last year: one by athletes of flesh and blood; the other, at the same time, by robots. The android teams battled for their trophy in the Japanese port of Fukuoka, across from the Korean coast.

World robot tournaments take place in a different city every year. Their organizers hope someday to compete against human players. After all, they say, a computer defeated Garry Kasparov on the chessboard, and it doesn't take much to imagine that mechanical athletes could achieve a similar feat on the soccer field.

The robots, programmed by software engineers, are powerful on defense and quick and potent strikers on the attack. They never hang on to the ball. They don't kid around when carrying out the coach's

orders, and not for an instant do they ever entertain the lunacy that players are supposed to play.

ALCHEMY

Cyclists dodge syringes to reach the finish line. At the Olympics, Clark Kent turns into Superman and runs at the speed of sound. To achieve twice as much, soccer players last half as long. Erythropoietin, hormones, steroids, and other magic potions yield gold medals and World Cups. They also make for brittle muscles and bones of glass, and they break more hearts than the soaps.

Half a century ago, Uruguay beat Brazil in Maracanã stadium and became, against all odds, against all evidence, soccer's world champions. The primary protagonist of that impossible feat was a player named Obdulio Varela. Wine was his drug of choice. They called him Wino. Those were different times, long gone.

THE RULES OF THE GAME

On the field at St. Judas, across the bay from the port of Tumaco, soccer was always played without clocks or shoes. Bare feet set the ball rolling at dawn, and the match ended when the sun bit so hard the players smelled of grilled meat.

Dr. Dorado, a believer in progress, decided to contribute to the development of local sports by donating an enormous clock and a few Grullabrand canvas shoes he'd bought from a Turkish peddler.

The shoes weren't bad. They had metal eyelets, rubber soles, and polyurethane uppers. But they were few and small: not enough to supply the crowd that played on a field open to anyone anytime, and sizes hardly suitable for feet used to unfettered freedom.

Humberto, Dr. Dorado's son, remembers. "We agreed that each player should wear at least one sneaker onto the field. And there were a lot of ow-ow-ows. The foot jammed into those tight shoes hurt. Papa helped out with novocaine."

The players put up with it for a time, limping in one shoe, but it wasn't long before they ditched the tormentor that wouldn't let them feel what the earth said and what the ball desired. And they went on playing, as always, barefoot.

The clock, which declared the party over precisely when the fun began, met no better fate. Bored because no one paid it any heed, it gave up and died.

FLOWER FOR A DAY

Professional soccer has not always been the dictatorship that it is today. Twenty years ago, when the military dictatorship in Brazil still held sway, the players took over Corinthians, one of the country's biggest clubs. Unheard of, unimaginable: the players decided everything among themselves by majority vote. Democratically, they discussed and voted on training procedures, playing systems, money, and everything else. On their shirts, it read: CORINTHIAN DEMOCRACY.

After two years the displaced bosses grabbed hold of the tiller once again and brought it all to an end. But while democracy lasted, player-run Corinthians offered the most daring and resplendent soccer in the entire country. It attracted the largest crowds and won the São Paulo championship twice.



BIRTH

At dawn, Doña Tota walked into a hospital in the barrio of Lanús. She was carrying a child in her belly. In the entranceway she found a star, in the form of a brooch, lying on the floor.

The star sparkled on one side, not the other. That happens with stars whenever they fall in the dirt and are left to wallow in it. On one side they glow silver, conjuring up the nights of the world; on the other side they're just plain tin.

That star of silver and tin, grip
in her fist, accompanied Doña T
in labor.

The newborn was named Di
Armando Maradona.

MARADONA

When Naples was crowned ch
pion of Italy for the first time in s
years, it set off an earthquake of
phoria. The city's vindication c
courtesy of a stocky, curly-hai
magician named Maradona, and
tricks had people dancing in the
all over southern Italy, where ev
one was accustomed to losing at
cer and at everything else.

Toward the end of that nigh
nonstop celebration, an enorm
sign appeared, painted on the wa
the cemetery. Not on the outs
wall, but on the inside: the mes
wasn't for the street but for
tombs. The sign said:

WHAT YOU MISSED!

THE ANGEL

At the end of the southern s
mer in '96, José Luis Chilav
scored a memorable goal in Bue
Aires. The Paraguayan star, who
great at blocking goals and also
scoring, shot from afar, more t
sixty yards out. The ball flew up i
the clouds, then dropped strai
down and into the opposing net.

Journalists wanted to know how
did it. What was the secret of that k
How did he make the ball take t
incredible journey? How could it fa
a straight line from such a height?

"It hit an angel," Chilavert
plained.

But no one thought to check
ball for bloodstains. Nobody bo
ered to look. And so we los
chance to find out if angels are
us, if only in that way.

TICKET TO PARADISE

The referee can show two card
a player who's out of line: one wa
the other punishes.

The yellow card, which infl
penance on whomever makes a d
move, consigns the player to Pu
tory. The red card consigns hi
Hell. Hell is expulsion from the fi

In Finland they've come up wi

d card. It's used only in the youth ues. Such a card would be ridicu- s in professional soccer, where ing dirty is part of a dirty system lay in which winning is obligato- osing is prohibited, and anything s. The Finnish card, the green l, rewards the player who helps a en adversary, who apologizes en he knocks into someone, and acknowledges having commit- a foul.

E SCORER

t wasn't just any Sunday afternoon 967. It was the day of the classic. ta Fé was battling Millonarios for championship, and the entire city Bogotá was in the stands. Outside stadium there was nobody except crippled and the blind.

By the eighty-eighth minute, the ch was headed for a tie when a ta Fé striker, Omar Lorenzo De- ni, fell in the penalty area and referee whistled a foul.

Devanni was perplexed: it was a mis- e, no one had touched him, he just ped. He wanted to tell the referee, his teammates picked him up and ied him on a stretcher to the white alty spot. There was no way out of he stadium was roaring, on the edge delirium.

Between the posts, hangman's ts, the keeper waited.

Devanni placed the ball on the ite spot.

He knew right then what he would and the price he would pay. He se ruin, he chose glory: Devanni up to the ball and with all his ht kicked it wide of the goal. ■

---

swers to the December Quiz, ason's Reasons":

Rome's Saturnalia; **2** They were rificed; **3** Osiris; **4** It was predict- that a Jewish messiah would be n there; **5** A pig; **6** Unmarried men; **7** The story of Adam and e; **8** Apples; **9** Apple trees; **10** rrh, gold, and frankincense; **11** perial Rome; **12** March; **13** In dreidel's message, "A great mira- happened here," *peh* ("here") is placed with *shin* ("there"); **14** ccer.

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Helen Vendler
A Tribute to William Butler Yeats
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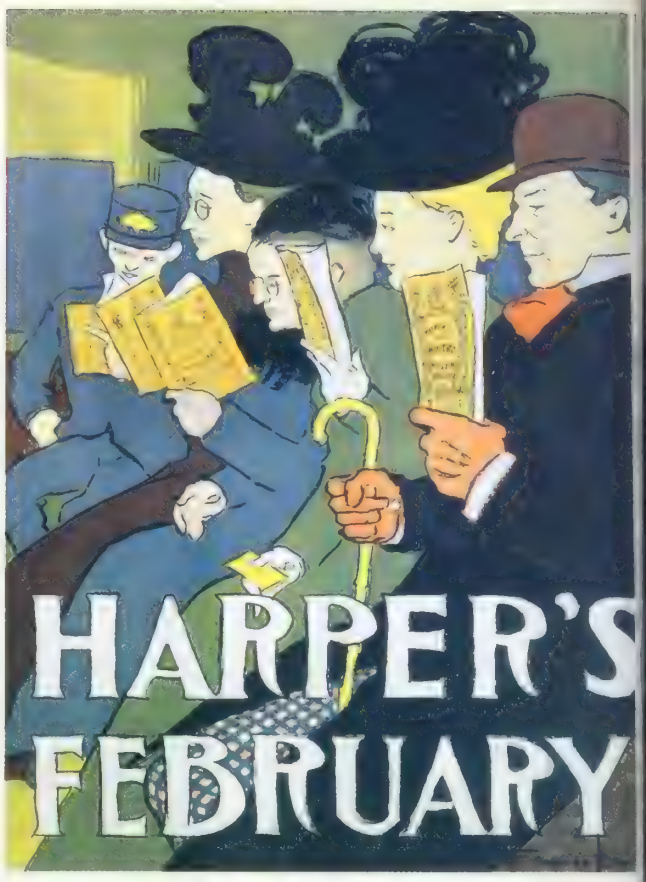
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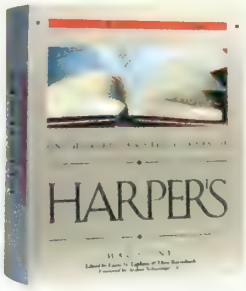
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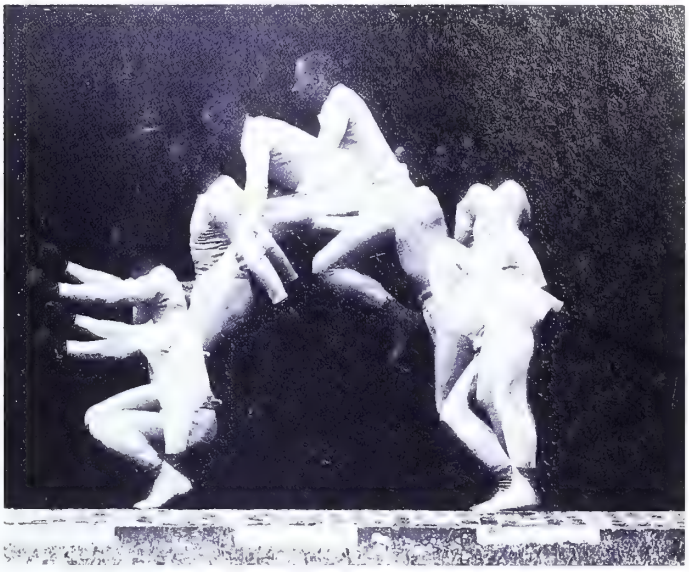
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NEW BOOKS

by John Leonard



About race in America, about music in history, about atom bombs and "phantom mechanics"—curved space, loopy time, true chance, jump and flow—THE TIME OF OUR SINGING (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, $27) is an astonishment but not a surprise. Richard Powers has been astounding us almost every other year since 1985, turning intellectual activity into imaginative literature in novels that ask homesick strangers and resident aliens to cope with everything from game theory, molecular biology, and artificial intelligence to such terrorisms as hostage-taking and the behavior of "limited liability" corporations. We can no longer be surprised at whatever he dares to think in ink about.

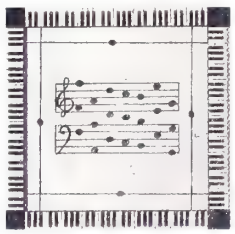




Powers has been warming up for this novel in particular. *Prisoner's Dilemma* (1988) ended with a son looking for his sick father, who had run away to the atomic desert of Los Alamos. *The Gold Bug Variations* (1991) needed Johann Sebastian Bach's polyphony to crack the genetic code. And *Operation Wandering Soul* (1993) brought the nonwhite Third World home, to a pediatrics ward in a public hospital in Watts, Los Angeles. As if these sight lines were to triangulate on the American unmentionable—mixed race: "There isn't a horse alive that's pure-bred"—we now have the Stroms.

David Strom is a German Jew who has escaped the Nazi net to profess physics at Columbia University in New York, where his ability "to imagine what goes on inside the smallest matter's core," to hear the "harmonies in time" of forces and fields that curve and flow, will be useful during the war to atomic scientists like Rabi, Bethe, Pauli, Von Neumann, Szilard, Teller, and Fermi—"all of them boys, caught up in pure performance. The permanent urge to find and release." On Easter Sunday 1939, at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., David Strom meets Delia Daley.

Delia is the brilliant daughter of a black Philadelphia doctor; she is also a daytime hospital nurse, a nighttime music student, and a part-time singer in church choirs, with a sound "that could fix the broken world." She should have had a concert career except that she arrived at the conservatory for her audition wearing the wrong skin. And she's come to the nation's capital for the same reason as David and 75,000 other people—to hear Marian Anderson sing in spite of the Daughters of the American Revolution.



Against all odds, David and Delia decide to start their own revolution: "Maybe they could make an America more American than the one the country has for centuries lied to itself about being."

At least they make three more Americans: Jonah, "a year older, a shade lighter," than his brother, Joey, followed by their darker little sister, Ruth. And so long as all five are gathered around a piano in their derelict house in the northwest borderlands of Manhattan, playing "Crazed Quotations"—a musical game born of David and Delia's shared belief that "any two melodies could fit together, given the right twists of tempo and turns of key" and that, as Delia imagines it, "in the only world worth reaching, everyone owns all song"—they seem safe enough. But outside, "ever downward, from crazed to numb," race trumps love "as surely as it colonized the loving mind." These "half-breed" children must sing not only for their supper but also for their mother, burned alive in an explosion before she has finished making her music.

"Honey-wheat" Jonah, sent away to music school in Boston at the insistence of Albert Einstein himself, is best at performing "whiteness," at singing

igh Jump," by Étienne-Jules Marey, courtesy Archive de Collège de France; photograph of nuclear explosion
r Bikini atoll, 1954 © CORBIS; photograph of civil rights activists, Selma, Alabama, 1965, by Flip Schulke
CORBIS; 4 Sided Piano Table, ca. 1920–1930 © Ricco/Maresca Gallery/Art Resource, New York City

Stockhausen and Schubert and even Palestrina, regressing in harmonic history throughout the novel, all the way back to Gregorian chant, as if his very own back yard hadn't grown a wonderful bastard music of spirit hollers, cabin songs, field calls, gutbucket, rag, blues, jazz, and scat. "Muddy milk" Joey, his sometime accompanist, has a harder time hiding out in concert halls from an America at race war. On one occasion, he finds himself playing show tunes in an Atlantic City dive. On another, more usefully, in a freedom school in Oakland, California, he teaches old stuff to street kids weaned on rap, for the first time doing work "that wouldn't have been done if I wasn't doing it."

Ruth? She has always lived in the burning world, the real history that torched her mother. While Jonah ("Orpheus in reverse") sings his way to the monastery, Ruth's history agonizes onward, from Marian Anderson to the Million Man March, with full stops at Emmett Till, "Bull" Conner, Medgar Evers, Birmingham, Newark, and Watts. Watts is where Jonah finally reads the score. So much for The Cloisters and unicorns. But Ruth is a Black Panther. It's her freedom school where Joey ends up teaching, and it's her son, of all the black children lost in space-time, who will be found in the wavelengths of color and pitch in the "somewhen" of his Jewish grandfather.

This is a Richard Powers novel, after all, and as such it must bend our minds as gravity bends time. Einstein on general relativity intersects with Leibniz on music. If, as David Strom dies hoping, most galaxies would rather rotate counterclockwise, then traveling back in folded time is possible, but only if we've already been whenever. If time is always now, so is music, "an exercise in occult mathematics by a soul that doesn't even know it's counting." And shame, too—shame is the very air we breathe, the normal respiration of our fearful tribal lungs.



Compared with Richard Powers, Ishmael Reed is almost bumptious. On the other hand, the author of

R (Basic Books, $24), a novelist, a playwright, a poet, and a crank, has had to live being black instead of just imagining it. He's hoarse from having to remind us that for most African Americans, those who aren't at Harvard, Princeton, or The Heritage Foundation, this country, with its racial profiling and Confederate flags and bell-curved "urban pathologies," is less a peaceable kingdom than a banana republic; that domestic terrorism got started in the hoodwinking, lynch-loving South long before Oklahoma City and the World Trade Center; that white people still freak on meeting Reed in an elevator or a parking garage. Besides which, he has doubts about solidarity with Latinos and Asians, who vote Republican, a bone to pick with feminists, a nose to thumb at the Irish, a middle finger for the neocons, and an enemies list that includes *Newsweek*, *The New Republic*, the *New York Times*, National Public Radio, *Salon.com*, Susan Brownmiller, Andy Rooney, Judy Woodruff, Tom Wolfe, and both Thernstroms (but especially Abigail).

I'm glad that Reed seems finally to have forgiven Toni Morrison, if not Alice Walker and Maxine Hong Kingston, for writing books that sold more copies than his own *Mumbo Jumbo* or *The Terrible Twos*. But it isn't necessary always to agree with him, and maybe even an insult to his iconoclasm. In these essays on Booker T. Washington, hip-hop, and *The Turner Diaries*, he manages not only to be furiously funny—on, say, "Negro-Saxons" and "performance intellectuals"—but also, by a kind of jive jujitsu, to keep us honest, or at least off-balance.

Sherwin B. Nuland's

(Alfred A. Knopf, $24)

may tell you more than you w
to know about the Yale profes
surgery and bioethics who
How We Die: Reflections on Life
nal Chapter. It's not just that
land, who seems in his books
sanest of medicine men, suffer
his late thirties and his early f
from a depression so incapacit
that he was hospitalized for
than a year; that only the stre
objections of a twenty-seven-
old resident psychiatrist spared
from undergoing a lobotomy; or
he endured twenty treatmen
electroshock before he fi
stopped feeling guilty, inadeq
helpless, worthless, and obses
compulsive. It's that only now,
than a quarter of a century aft
emerged from the hospital div
and broke, has he decided to fa
to what put him so far down i
first place. And this means facin
to his difficult (and perhaps imp
ble) father.

Meyer Nudelman's was no
immigrant success story. What
his teenage life had been like i
Bessarabian shtetl before he le
1907—and he never spoke of
his children, nor did he reply to
ters many years later from his l
lost brother Avram in Bue
Aires—he failed to improve it
He was angry, "without a comp
abusing his family in a caustic "
fused jumble of Yiddish and H
lish." He was ignorant, somel
immune in the South Bronx to
instruction available at ni
school, the politics available at
Workmen's Circle, the relig
available at the synagogue. He
sickly, so much so that his son, e
while at college, had to wait at
subway stop for his return from
Garment District sweatshop.
did his temper improve when
worn-out wife finally died. The
thing he ever knowingly taught
son was how to shave. And
butchered the very English langu
on which that son, grown up
name-changed, would perform s
remarkable surgery. Nuland det
that butchery to wounding eff
blaming himself, in the end,
having run away. We have to l
our fathers; it says so somewhere.

La main heureuse by René Magritte © C. Herscovici, Brussels/A
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HE FIRST LIES CLUB

ow the imperial eagle got its wings

Charles Glass

ıssed in this essay:

Great Triumph: How Five Americans Made Their Country a World Power, by Warren Zimmermann. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2002. 562 pages. $30.



hor injustice and bullying by the strong e expense of the weak, whether among ons or individuals.

—Theodore Roosevelt

On February 15, 1898, at 9:40 in the evening, the USS *Maine* lay at anchor in the ıquil harbor of Havana, Cuba. The tleship's commander, Captain arles Dwight Sigsbee, was aft in the cers' quarters writing a letter home. e Union veteran of the Civil War ıbted that the *Maine* would be ded any longer to protect Americans lives and property. Protests by conservative Spaniards in Havana against Spain's grant of autonomy to the island—the reason President William McKinley gave for dispatching the battleship on January 24—were over. Spanish officers had been invited to dine aboard the *Maine* and extended a reciprocal invitation to the Americans. Soon, Sigsbee wrote, the *Maine* would cruise to New Orleans for Mardi Gras. All seemed well.

Taps sounded at ten after nine. "I laid down my pen and listened to the notes of the bugle, which were singularly beautiful in the oppressive stillness of the night," Sigsbee wrote later.

> I was enclosing my letter in its envelope when the explosion came . . . it was a bursting, rending, and crashing roar of immense volume, largely metallic in character. It was followed by heavy, ominous metallic sounds, probably caused by the overturning of the central superstructure and falling debris. There was a trembling and lurching motion of the vessel, a list to port. The electric lights, of which there were eight in the cabin where I was sitting, went out. Then there was intense blackness and smoke.

The *Maine*, carrying 354 officers and men, had lost most of its bow and was sinking. Crews from other ships rescued survivors. "Chief among them," Captain Sigsbee recalled, "were the boats from the *Alfonso XII*. The Spanish officers and crews did all that humanity and gallantry could compass." By morning, 254 American seamen had died. Bodies floated amid the wreckage. Fifty-nine wounded were recovered, some of whom died later—bringing the total American dead to 266. It was the twin towers, the Gulf of Tonkin, the Pearl Harbor of its time. As with all the later attacks, war followed.

"Remember the Maine!" America's new battle cry bellowed from the newspapers and echoed through Congress. During the 114 days of the Spanish-American War, the United States remembered the *Maine* by conquering Cuba, theater of the ostensible *casus belli*, then by pushing into Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines. It also annexed the Hawaiian Islands, a nominally independent state that had never been under Spanish rule, and occupied Wake Island 2,000 miles farther west. The war to save Cuba from Spain, like the war on terror a century later, turned out to have many and varied objectives. The two campaigns carried American power deeper into a world that, for the most part, preferred to run its own affairs. One war justified the ruthless suppression of Filipinos; the other excused the shredding of treaties on missiles and international justice, the detention without trial of hundreds of people, and the denunciation of the war's opponents as traitors. It may also require an invasion of Iraq. The difference was that in 2001 those who attacked the United States more or less claimed responsibility.

No one ever produced proof that the Spanish sank the *Maine*. Two naval commissions of inquiry, in 1898 and

perCollins will publish Charles Glass's th's Pale Flags, a new book on Israel and stine, later this year.

ograph of Colonel Theodore Roosevelt and his Rough Riders
n Juan Hill, Cuba, 1898 © The Granger Collection, New York City

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1901, concluded that an explosion, not a fire in the mm or external source, possibly a mine. A modern forensic analysis, published in 1976 by Admiral Hyman Rickover, concluded, "There is no evidence that a mine destroyed the *Maine*." The most likely cause, Rickover wrote, was spontaneous combustion of coal stored next to the powder for the *Maine*'s guns. As with the Gulf of Tonkin incident in August 1964, when Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara said that North Vietnam had fired on the USS *Maddox* without provocation, the truth—that the *Maddox* was supporting illegal attacks on North Vietnam—came too late to prevent further bloodshed.

Taps sounded that night in Havana's harbor, not for the crew of the *Maine* but for the myths of the American republic. Sigsbee was not the only naval officer to remember the sound of bugles in 1898. On July 3, during the last sea battle off Cuba, Captain Victor Concas of the Spanish flagship *Infanta María Teresa* heard music amid the cannons—Spain's naval band playing in Santiago Bay—while a superior American force destroyed his fleet, ship by ship. Concas lamented, "The sound of my bugles was the last echo of those which history tells us were sounded at the capture of Granada." At Granada, Spain had expelled the last Muslim kingdom from the Iberian Peninsula and used plundered Arab treasure to finance the conquest of a new world. The brass prelude to the first modern empire in 1492 became its finale in 1898. The *yanquis* acquired from Spain colonies and—a century later—another, unexpected inheritance: the crusade against Islam. An empire was dead, long live the empire.

America's businessmen and politicians, after the war with Spain, let the public purse and the military shoulder their share of the rich man's burden alongside Britain, France, Germany, Holland, Portugal, Belgium, and Russia. America convinced itself that it was better than the other, older imperial powers. The colonial game required that America do what it had been established in 1776 never to do: govern without the consent of the governed. (The preamble to the Declaration of Independence had not prevented America from ruling indigenous peoples and slaves, for the Confederate states back into the Union, all against their will, and denying women the vote. Nor would it impede the occupation of most of Spain's empire.) Only the most adept propagandists could, and did, explain away millions of new voteless, dark-skinned subjects under American dominion. Lady Liberty entered the brothel with the old whores, and said she was in it just this once, not for herself, but for you, but because it made the boss happy. When McKinley celebrated with a roomful of America's richest and most powerful men at a Boston banquet following the Treaty of Paris with Spain, he swore that "no imperial designs lurk in the American mind. Just leave the money on the table."

American minds in which empire lurked were, however, everywhere. McKinley might have noticed them behind the pious faces of congressmen, lawyers, businessmen, stock traders, and—never far from overseas adventures—missionaries. Some served in the administration. "Soon after I began work as Assistant Secretary of the Navy," Theodore Roosevelt (who obtained the job courtesy of his friend Henry Cabot Lodge) wrote in his autobiography, "I became convinced that the war would come." The empire gift, Roosevelt knew, would be an empire. Before the declaration of war, without informing his superiors, Roosevelt ordered Admiral George Dewey to Hong Kong to prepare his squadron for "offensive operations in Philippine Islands." When the war began in April, Roosevelt resigned from the Navy to join the Army. The newly commissioned Lt. Col. Roosevelt, in a uniform tailored by Brooks Brothers, led the First Volunteer Cavalry under fire up Cuba's Kettle Hill. He shot a Spanish soldier with a pistol supposedly retrieved from the sunken *Maine*. With or without the *Maine* to remember, only a war with Spain, the weakest of Europe's empires and holder of both Caribbean and Pacific prizes, would make America what was called a great power.

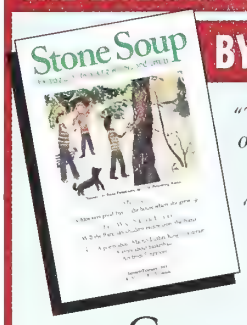
"In 1898 the so-called world Christian had plunged into war with unspeakable horror, desolation, and misery," Roosevelt wrote

s autobiography. "It was not 'war' , but murderous oppression." The ed States would liberate Spain's nies and substitute Spanish op- ion with its own. Roosevelt wrote, a legacy of the Spanish War we left with peculiar relations to the ppines, Cuba, and Porto Rico [sic], with an immensely added interest entral America and the Caribbean " Whereas he employed the eu- nisms "peculiar relations" and ericanism," Senator Henry Cabot ge liked "the large policy." The imperialist who used, and reveled ne words "empire," "imperialism," "colony" was imperialism's intel- ual priest, naval Captain Alfred yer Mahan. "I am frankly an im- alist," he boasted in his memoirs. ahan, born in 1840 to a West nt professor, began his post- apolis naval career as a reformer exposed corruption in the Boston y Yard and as a passionate oppo- of empire. An expedition as com- der of the USS *Wachusett*, during rder war in 1883 between Chile Peru, led him to write, "The very icion of an imperial policy is hate- he mixing of our politics with those atin republics especially. Though tified, unluckily, with a military ession I dread outlying colonies or rests, to maintain which large mil- y establishments are necessary." n came Mahan's epiphany, toward ch the country would one day fol- him. In 1885, passing time in the lish Club library in Lima, Peru, he l "the book that changed his life." as a translation from German of odor Mommsen's *History of Rome*. rren Zimmermann writes of this nent in *First Great Triumph*:

s he read, Mahan was suddenly struck y "how different things might have een could Hannibal have invaded Italy y sea, as the Romans often had Africa, nstead of by the long land route; or ould he after arrival have been in free ommunication with Carthage by wa- er." The march, Mahan wrote later, ost Hannibal more than half his vet- ran troops . . . and enabled the Roman eneral Scipio to intercept his commu- ications and confront him at the Treb- ia River.

Mahan next taught naval history at new Naval War College in New-

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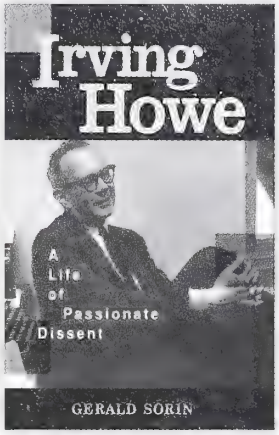
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ed Theodore Roosevelt, as author of a popular book on the War of 1812's naval engagements, to address his students. Roosevelt was then twenty-nine and had already been a prominent, and progressive, Republican state legislator in New York. He and the forty-seven-year-old Mahan, in Zimmermann's words, "established not only a friendship but an alliance." Both believed the U.S. Navy misunderstood that single cruisers, however much they had harassed British shipping in 1812, would not make America great at the end of the nineteenth century.

In 1890, Mahan published *The Influence of Sea Power upon History*. One of its more positive reviews called it "the most interesting book on naval history [in] many a long year." The reviewer was Roosevelt. Another admirer was Henry Cabot Lodge, who said that Mahan was "the greatest authority living or dead on naval warfare." The U.S. Navy would resist, but later adopt, many of Mahan's prescriptions, including the deployment of large battleships to fight far from American shores. Among those impressed by the book were the world's two largest naval powers, Britain and Germany. Kaiser Wilhelm ordered it placed, as the U.S. Navy had Roosevelt's book, on every ship of the line. Germany's subsequent construction of more and larger ships to compete with the Royal Navy would be a contributing cause of the First World War. Mahan's thesis was that nations, in order to protect their commercial shipping on the high seas, needed large navies. Global fleets required "stations" for refueling and safe anchorage. Stations became colonies. To "enable her fleets to remain as near the scene as any opponent," Mahan proposed that the United States occupy bases in the Caribbean. He also suggested that a canal between the Caribbean and the Pacific would ensure the U.S. Navy swift maneuver between the two American coasts. Caribbean bases on one side meant Pacific bases on the other. Mahan was sketching the outline of American imperium.

The United States had occupied Midway Island in the Pacific in 1867. On its own, Midway was valueless. Making it one in a string of possessions across the Pacific would anoint the United States as an Asian power. The pre-imperial finger pointed next to Hawaii. King Kalakaua, already tolerating American missionaries and planters, denied McKinley's request to send American troops. McKinley responded to the impertinence by eliminating tariffs on all imported sugar—harming Hawaii's economy while helping American interests in Cuba. "We need Hawaii just as much and a good deal more than we did California. It is manifest destiny," McKinley explained in 1898; he had already introduced a bill to annex the islands. Hawaii, Wake Island, and the deal with Germany to parcel out Samoa waited for the war with Spain. Mahan was providing the moral basis for what was, in essence, a bully's demand for someone else's property.

Roosevelt acknowledged that McKinley went to war with Spain to do more than protect Cubans: "Our own direct interests were great, because of the Cuban tobacco and sugar, and especially because of Cuba's relation to the projected Isthmian [Panama] canal." Nevertheless, he insisted, "But even greater were our interests from the standpoint of humanity." Roosevelt's humanitarian justification, redolent of American rationale for bombing Vietnam, Yugoslavia, and Iraq in the late twentieth century, earns Zimmermann's credulous respect. "The Spanish-American War," he writes, "was the first in which Americans were activated in large part by the way a foreign government treated its subjects." Later, quoting McKinley's war message to Congress—which he calls one of "the two founding documents of American imperialism," the second being the joint resolution on war by Congress that "was strikingly different from the president's message" in that "it plainly called for Cuban independence"—Zimmermann concludes:

> The principal ground cited for intervention, the primary reason why the United States initiated the war, was human rights . . .
>
> In his unusual treatment of human rights McKinley was writing the first words of a new chapter in American foreign policy. "It is no answer to say this is all in another country, belonging to another nation, and is therefore none of our business," the president argued. "[W]e specially our duty, for it is right at our door." Even allowing for the time ored custom of placing altruism abe narrower interests in the public de tion of policy, McKinley's words extraordinary. For the first time in A ican history a U.S. president was tending that the United States had a right and a duty to intervene v another country abused its citizens
>
> In these words of 1898 was born doctrine that a country's sovere cannot protect it from outside i vention on human rights grounds. priority given human rights by later idents from Jimmy Carter through Clinton owes its inspiration to a p dent who had seen suffering and wh gardless of other motives, felt a pe al concern for Cubans under oppre

This nonsense is the central a ment in an otherwise informative tory by a career diplomat, who se as American ambassador to Yugos at the beginning of its civil war. ambassador, perhaps more than ot should distinguish the reasons for from the excuses put forth by p cians and repeated in the press. mermann admits that, despite Mc ley's "personal concern" for Cub "he made no call for independe In fact, he explicitly excluded i pendence." There seems to be no s in Zimmermann's 562 pages McKinley's other, perhaps deeper cern: American business. Betwee destruction of the *Maine* in Febr and the declaration of war in A Howard Zinn wrote in *The Twe Century*, McKinley received app from Henry Cabot Lodge and his advisers along the lines that J. P. gan, John Jacob Astor, and o prominent financiers wanted a victory to restore confidenc telegram sent to the White Hous March 25, 1898, did not go int wastebasket: "Big corporations now believe we will have war. Be all would welcome it as relief to pense." While neglecting busines fluence on McKinley's decision to *First Great Triumph* ignores Mc ley's 1896 presidential campaign Lodge's wife, Nannie, wrote, it co million, then the largest sum ever s on a campaign, to William Jenn Bryan's $300,000. That may exp more about the politics of Amer

vention than the fact, which Zimnann does record, that Nannie e had an affair with her husband's d and co-empire builder John Hay.

irst Great Triumph focuses its gaze far from economics, on the brains-and-action trust—Teddoosevelt, Senator Henry Cabot e, Alfred Thayer Mahan, Secretary ate John Hay, and War Secretary 1 Root—who strove with greater ose than any other Americans of time to create an empire. Gath- at Hay's mansion in Washing- or at the Metropolitan Club, pressfor one another's advancement, ing means to increase American l strength, the "five Americans] made their country a world powvere in effect a junta that ignored ılar will when it suited them and ded as traitors Americans who red the imperial lure. (Mark Twain, d treasonous for his anti-imperi-, wrote, "They are always doing us compliments like that; they are born flatterers, those boys.") Zimmann calls them "the fathers of ern American imperialism and the who set the United States on the to becoming a great power." They , he writes, "remarkable men by measure." Most were Phi Beta Kapat their Ivy League universities, all but Root were prolific authors.), Roosevelt and Root, won the el Peace Prize, the former for sponng discussions to end the Russonese War and the latter for his innce in establishing the Central erican Court of Justice. Roosevelt ame the youngest member of the v York legislature and, later, the ngest American president. Hay had n secretary to Lincoln and ambasor to London. Root earned his for- as a lawyer for corporations whose esses Roosevelt, as president, would mpt to inhibit under antitrust legtion. Accomplished, determined, influential, the imperial junta make scinating study. Without them, vever, America might yet have red its imperial dreams.

America lived not only in the wing rooms of the colonizing ca- Developments outside Washing—on the farms of the Midwest n their overproduction of wheat,

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in the Pullman factories whose laborers' strikes were suppressed with violence, in Chicago and Pennsylvania, where working people rioted for their rights, and on Wall Street, where faith in an American economy without protected overseas markets was dwindling—played as large a part on the imperial stage as did the machinations of Roosevelt and company. In 1890, the year of the last major massacre of American Indians, at Wounded Knee, the Census Bureau declared, "The unsettled area has been so broken into by isolated bodies of settlement that there can hardly be said to be a frontier line." The official closure of the frontier did not halt expansion. As with the fruits of its prairies and factories, America sought to export the frontier. James Truslow Adams wrote in *The Epic of America*:

> Again we might suggest that without the safety valve of Western empire building, and with increasing density of population, the conflict between capital and labor would probably become intensified as the evils of an industrial age were felt by a population singularly unprepared to lie down under them. Once more, we might say, somewhat cynically, that having lost our hunting ground for adventure, and having now seized and peopled all the continental land we could get, we should probably, like other nations, find some excuse for an imperialistic adventure overseas.

In 1893, the American economy suffered its worst depression between the Civil War and 1929. Industrialists were producing goods greatly in excess of what the country, with nowhere to grow, consumed. European imperial markets were closed. The nascent labor movement proposed paying more to working people to enable them to consume America's bounty, but big capital wanted an empire. William Appleman Williams wrote in *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* that there was a third group,

> a coalition of businessmen, intellectuals, and politicians who opposed traditional colonialism, and advocated instead a policy of an open door [John Hay's phrase] through which America's preponderant economic strength would enter and dominate all underdeveloped areas of the world.

The United States, however, lacked both the power to break into the major empires and the will to restructure its economy to the detriment of the plutocrats who had funded McKinley's election and selected most of the Senate. "If peaceful imperialism turned out to be impossible," Howard Zinn commented in *The Twentieth Century*, "military action might be needed." Adams, Williams, Zinn, and other historians have noted American capitalism's need for an imperial domain that would avoid addressing domestic relations among producer, worker, and consumer. Zimmermann does not. He emphasizes McKinley's platitudes about Cuban rights to the detriment of American decisions to forbid Cuba's representatives from attending either the Spanish surrender in Santiago or the Paris peace talks. The U.S. Senate, backed by the U.S. Army, forced Cubans to include in their constitution provisions granting America naval bases and the right of armed intervention. Puerto Rico, which had achieved self-governing status within the Spanish empire, was annexed.

The Philippine islands were a simpler proposition. They became a colony. McKinley balked at the reported assurances of Emilio Aguinaldo, the leader of the independence movement against Spain, that Aguinaldo would be content with an autonomous Philippine republic under an American protectorate. Instead, he launched a war for American domination. McKinley claimed it was America's duty to "uplift and Christianize" a population that, after four centuries under the Spanish, was almost entirely Christian. McKinley's words weigh more heavily with Zimmermann than does the devastation wrought by the war. The policy of forcing villagers into concentration camps, introduced by Spain's General Weyler in Cuba, was one of America's humanitarian justifications for war with Spain. The United States corralled Filipinos into similar camps and sixty years later, under the name of "strategic hamlets," did the same to the Vietnamese. It used "water torture" and turned vast areas of the islands into free-fire zones w civilians were liable to be shot on s Not for Zimmermann the wry ob vation of James Truslow Adams, the first time we glimpsed the fact even when people want to go themselves, they may not be capab it—when *we* want to govern *ther*

Zimmermann praises War Se tary Root's colonial administra and its governors, notably Wil H. Taft in Manila and Leon Wood in Havana. His conten that the United States embrac new ethos to rule people who would not absorb as citizens in s within the Union jars against precedent of America's long do ion over people it never intende absorb, its indigenous populat "An Indian reservation is the complete colonial system in world that I know about," an In anthropologist is quoted as sayi Zinn's *The Twentieth Century*. glories of the frontier traveled t new conquests. Teddy Roosev Rough Riders, borrowing their r from a performing troupe in Bu Bill Cody's Wild West show, experienced with the horses an dians of the American Southw Roosevelt, a buffalo hunter sometime rancher, had written *Winning of the West*. Praising book, Zimmermann concede took an often insensitive appr to Native Americans. That is, sevelt called the Indians "filthy, el, lecherous, and faithless"—s thing that Zimmermann ad "crossed the line into racism."

As in the West, so in Cuba, to Rico, and the Philipp Most of the American ge suppressing the Filipino war for pendence came from Indian conq and employed the same brutal, cessful methods. American sol called Filipinos "savages" and "nig while the paternalist governor, preferred "little brown brothers." yard Kipling wrote of a day he with Roosevelt viewing Indian at the Smithsonian, "I never got the wonder of a people who, ha extirpated the aboriginals of their tinent more completely than any ern race had ever done, honestl

d that they were a godly little New
and community, setting examples
utal mankind." An earlier observer
merica's treatment of its natives,
is de Tocqueville, wrote, "It is im-
ble to destroy men with more re-
t for the laws of humanity."
mmermann, having ignored the
omic impetus for an American
ire, excludes the economic con-
ences. Asserting that the United
es did not use its position to
e money out of Cuba, he forgets
American business soon invest-
30 million in the island. New
corporations assumed control
amways and ferries. The United
Company, later to become no-
us in Guatemala, bought almost
illion Cuban acres at twenty
s each. By the time American
es withdrew in 1901, American
ness controlled 80 percent of
a's mineral exports. In the same
, McKinley died; the vice presi-
that the Republican conven-
had forced upon him, Teddy
sevelt, succeeded him and sent
erica's vast new Great White
t around the globe on history's
test exercise in naval public rela-
s; and J. P. Morgan and Compa-
announced the formation of
ted States Steel. Its capital was
billion. As with the empire it-
it had been a long time in the
ing. "The 'billion dollar trust,'"
es Truslow Adams wrote, "had
e."

Two years later, President Roo-
sevelt began work on a canal
through the Isthmus of Pana-
When Colombia, of which the
mus was a part, hesitated to pro-
access to the United States, a
l revolution declared an inde-
dent Panama. Washington rec-
ized it within hours, and the U.S.
y prevented Colombian troops
reasserting their authority. Be-
the new Panamanian govern-
nt's representatives arrived in
shington, Roosevelt bought the
al zone from the private De
eps Company. Roosevelt, who
ed the canal his "most important
on" in foreign affairs, wrote, "I
not lift a finger to incite the rev-
ionists." He lied. ■

ration by Jeffrey Decoster

THE "I" SPY

Fiction and the autobiographical question

By Jonathan Dee

Discussed in this essay:

Nowhere Man, by Aleksandar Hemon. Nan A. Talese/Doubleday, 2002. 256 pages. $23.95.



"The novelist is one who, according to Flaubert, seeks to disappear behind his work," writes Milan Kundera. "This is not easy these days, when anything of the slightest importance must step into the intolerable glare of the mass media, which ... causes the work to disappear behind the image of its author." As a critic, one aspires to honor these sternly self-abnegating terms and dismiss the circumstances of a novelist's life as a kind of husk from which the work has emerged. Some cases, though, are more challenging in this regard than others.

So let us get this much out of the way: Aleksandar Hemon, born and raised in Sarajevo, traveled to America in 1992 as a participant in a government-sponsored goodwill tour, intended to expose young Yugoslav artists and writers to democratic values, the gospel of which they might spread among the un-Westernized upon returning home. Hemon, though, never got back home. He was in this country when the military siege of Sarajevo began, making it too dangerous for him to return; twenty-eight years old, with only a basic command of spoken English, he went in a matter of days from junketeer to refugee. By the time the war was over, Hemon had decided that, rather than return to what was left of his ruined native city, he would stay where he was—namely, Chicago. He began writing in English only in 1995. It wasn't long before his work found a champion in the person of Reginald Gibbons, professor of English at Northwestern University and editor of the re-

Jonathan Dee's latest novel, Palladio, *was published last year by Doubleday.*

spected literary magazine *TriQuarterly*. That Hemon's previous mentor, a revered English professor in Sarajevo, had spent the war years championing the cause of ethnic cleansing, and directed the bombing of the Sarajevo library before ultimately shooting himself in the head, is the kind of oddly literary detail that makes Hemon's biography such a temptation to those charged with writing about his fiction.

Hemon's first book, a short-story collection entitled *The Question of Bruno*, was published in 2000 to extravagant praise, including many flattering, if somewhat unimaginative, comparisons to his émigré predecessor Vladimir Nabokov. Although the stories showed an impressively wide range, the indubitable centerpiece was a novella entitled "Blind Jozef Pronek & Dead Souls," in which Pronek—a young Sarajevan writer on a government-sponsored goodwill tour—is trapped in the United States when the siege of Sarajevo begins. Unsparingly funny in its depiction of the poor, stunned Pronek's efforts to acclimate himself to a new life in Chicago, the story was also quite obviously autobiographical, and why not? If you were a writer and life handed you that kind of material, you wouldn't pass it up either.

Now, a mere two years later, Hemon has produced a marvelously inventive first novel. *Nowhere Man* opens in the voice (and in the apartment) of a nameless narrator, a kind of underground man whose startling eye for detail—a prospective employer's "eyelashes bent abruptly upward, like little scythes"—plays eerily against the fact that the details composing his identity are few and provocatively vague: an émigré from the former Yugoslavia with a scar on his throat, he lets slip only that he has "changed a lot, having gone through a long and debilitating illness," and that his circumstances are lately dire enough to have reduced him to selling off his own furniture. That his life seems poised to touch bottom only heightens his premonitory sense of self-effacement: "The frighteningly simple thing," he says by way of describing his home, "was that when I was inside nobody was on the porch: the green plastic chairs convened around nothing; the swing still quaked under invisible weight; the empty flowerpots faced out, like Easter Island heads."

On the morning of April 18, 1994 ("Defenses Collapse in Gorazde," read the newspaper headlines), this indistinct figure crosses town to bluff his way through a last-ditch interview for a job teaching English to fellow immigrants. On a tour of the facilities, he opens the door to the "advanced" class and hears a man haltingly reading aloud a childish passage about Siamese twins named Ronnie and Donnie; that student, it dawns on him, is someone he knew as a child, in Sarajevo:

> A boy kneeling on the soft ground over a constellation of marbles, brushing away pebbles and twigs and litter between the two marbles a foot apart: one of those two marbles was small with three orange fins inside the glass globe; the other one was solid marble white. He picked up the orange marble, got his knees off the ground, and squatted . . . His marble flew low over the dirt, and then hit the white one—ping!—and the boy smiled. The white marble was mine and I lost it, and the boy was Jozef Pronek, the man reading about Ronnie and Donnie. I remembered him, there he was, out of nowhere.

"How did he get here?" the narrator wonders. "What was his story? What was his life like?" Having laid these lines of inquiry, the novel proceeds to fill in, with a kind of mournful good humor, the rest of the Pronek résumé. As for the narrator himself, his own presentiment of invisibility has come true by the end of the first chapter—not in terms of the plot (for we never do learn what happens to him) but in terms of the book's very structure. He is the real nowhere man; his pale, wavering, contingent existence is the key to the novel's exhilarating success.

If there is a presiding spirit in the wealth of great American immigrant literature, it is the spirit of doubleness. The schism in the personality of one who remakes himself, willingly or not, after leaving home—new language versus old, the imperatives of the present versus the claims of memory, the projected self versus the private, historically constituted one—finds its clear correlative in the double consciousness of the fiction writer, whose public self, no matter how genuine, is also a kind of transparency laid over a second nature. Some of the stories in *The Question of Bruno* found another correlative to this idea of consciousness that watches itself: international spies, whom Hemon memorably characterized in an interview as "people with multiple personalities functioning simultaneously."

That Pronek himself is so conspicuously *watched* is what makes *Nowhere Man* more than just a serial record of his adventures. The novel, broken into chronologically distinct chapters, is narrated in the first person, but there is considerable question as to how many of those first persons there are. When Chapter Two, for instance, flashes back to Sarajevo—indeed, to the day of Pronek's birth, and to the twenty-five years that follow—the first-person pronoun makes only occasional appearances, mostly in the guise of rhetorical narrative flourishes ("I need not describe . . ."), which to the point that one can no longer say with any confidence whether the narrator is still that same mysterious Chicagoan from the opening pages or some other figure entirely. Whoever he is, he stands in the darkened wings of a stage largely occupied by Pronek alone.

As a child, Pronek is most often attended by his grandmother, a pure and fiercely protective figure who lies beside him in his bed and whispers animal stories to help him fall asleep until one morning he awakens to discover her still stretched out alongside him, having died in that position overnight. Later, on a seaside vacation just before the start of sixth grade, "a small reconnaissance unit of pubertal harmones—the avant-garde of a whole army—enter[s] the unconquered Pronek territory"; thus Jozef and the amenable girl from Belgrade named Suzana wind up swearing their "eternal love," eternity lasting, in Suzana's scheme of things, a month or so, at which point she encloses in a letter from Belgrade a photo of her new boyfriend wearing a Sex Pistols T-shirt.

In the wake of this "love disaster" comes an epiphany: newly in possession of a guitar and a Beatles songbook, Pronek decides to start a rock and roll band and does his mandatory year in the service ("As if bent on punishing Pronek for his fantasies, the army's idea of what

ng a man meant was the exact op-
e of Pronek's: perpetual humilia-
was its main tool") and writes oc-
nal, scathing reviews of other,
successful Yugoslav rock bands, a
at leads unfathomably to the gov-
ent-sponsored junket to the Unit-
ates, on the dubious assumption
Pronek is "a young journalist like-
promote the values of freedom."
adually, just as in the opening
er, Pronek's emergence as a char-
starts to cast a sort of shadow, in
rm of a much fainter but still viv-
effect on the narrator's own sense
f. "Sarajevo in the eighties was a
iful place to be young," he is em-
ned to say as he winds up his ac-
t of Pronek's formative years; "I
because I was young then." And
our hero flies off on a lark to a
er school in Ukraine (the summer
91, as it happens, during which the
t Union collapses), the narrator
over the episode entirely, with a
imer that amounts to a surprising
ion of his own individuality: "But
s a different story, and I have nev-
en in Ukraine—someone else will
to talk about that part of his life."
almost as if that contact with
ek himself is what's needed to
the "I" to the surface, even if
for a moment, as a character—as
son—in his own right.

when the next chapter turns out
the story of that very trip to
ine—narrated, once again, in the
erson—one's sense that the unas-
ng episodic structure of *Nowhere*
is actually concealing something
extraordinary begins to fall into
. The first-person pronoun itself is
passed along somehow, like a mi-
hone in the dark, by a group of
le (or perhaps just one excep-
lly multifarious person), each of
m enjoys a brief intimacy with
ek—is, in fact, animated solely by
tification with him—only to re-
when our buffeted hero moves
o silence, invisibility, irrelevance.
t the narrator of the Ukraine
de, whose attachment to Pronek
unrequitedly sexual, goes so far as
ve himself both a name (Victor
chuk) and a professional identity
American queer-theory Shake-
re scholar) seems like little more
a red herring. And this motley, ea-
ger, inconsequential group of story-
tellers start to feel less like narrators
than like informants.

Once settled, if that's the word, in Chicago, Pronek works briefly as a kind of field assistant to a private detective and then as a canvasser for Greenpeace—two jobs that at least gratify his interest in peering into the living rooms of a variety of pathological strangers; he sticks with the latter job mostly because it keeps him near a fellow canvasser and true believer named Rachel, by whose vivid American-ness Pronek is mesmerized. He couldn't be more surprised when Rachel, rather than recoiling from his obvious enthrallment, actually begins to respond to it. They go to various demonstrations together; his Greenpeace cohorts like to stoke their self-importance with secret-agent-style nicknames, so that he finds himself traveling across Ohio in a van with someone named JFK and someone else named Dallas:

> They had a couple of hours before the protest, and JFK dropped them off at the American Museum of Science and Energy. Rachel made Pronek stand under an American flag, got down on her knees at his feet, and took a picture of his face, headed by his chin, the flag limp over him. . . . She'd look up at Pronek smilelessly, wearing the CONFUSION IS SEX shirt, which he could not help finding ominous. On their way to the museum, she sat in the front seat, and he was convinced that whatever peaks of love they had reached last night, whispering and softly kissing, they tumbled down to the bottom this morning. JFK drove them through the fields of forlorn malls, parking lots, and fast-food joints, like forts, on their edges. They went by a pond on which a couple of swans floated with their heads bowed, but Pronek could not tell whether they were plastic or real. The possibility that the world could never respond to his desires tortured him.

A short final chapter, dealing in pseudo-spooky historical concordances, is the novel's only misstep; before that comes the true climax. Rachel ultimately invites Pronek into her apartment, the grubby, vermin-infested sanctum sanctorum, which she shares with a cat and a roommate who plays the trumpet. She pours him a drink and kisses him, then leads him (for he must be led) to her bedroom. The displaced man, struggling for a foothold in a city



he was forced by circumstances to declare his home, seems at last to be closing his grasp around everything that has taunted him with its unavailability—security, love, an American identity. And it's at this very moment that something astonishing happens, both to Pronek and to the structure of the novel. It solves the mystery of the narrator-figure even as it ratifies for good that figure's estrangement, his diminished reality, his nowhere-ness. And it's too good to give away.

Hemon's true literary fathers have nothing directly to do with the immigrant experience. Both *Nowhere Man* and "Blind Jozef Pronek & Dead Souls" begin with lengthy epigraphs from Bruno Schulz, another writer with the misfortune to have his homeland erupt under him in wartime (though Schulz made the luckless decision to stay in his native Poland as his other, more worldly artist colleagues fled). Hemon shares with Schulz a commitment to stare deeply at the objects of the mundane world until they yield up some fantastic essence, an essence withheld from those artists who stop at the gate of the literal.

But Schulz's excursion beyond the literal was much more complete than Hemon's; his version of "exile," for instance, in the great uncollected story "Fatherland," finds him in a hypothetical provincial town where his "unrecognized and rejected artist's perennial hunger" is gratified, and he is appointed conductor of the town's philharmonic orchestra. Hemon's genius is to carry that dreamlike sensibility into much more specific historical and personal circumstances; in that respect, his work bears an even stronger family resemblance to that of the indispensable, woefully undervalued Yugoslav writer Danilo Kiš, whose novel *Garden, Ashes*—also about a kind of imaginative refuge from wartime—is one of the great works of literature to emerge not just from the Holocaust but from the twentieth century. Kiš, too, patiently tunnels into sensory detail, sentence by sentence, in pursuit of those spiritual truths that are concealed in the material world. Like Schulz, Kiš died far too young. After a brief and somewhat condescending vogue in this country as an anti-Soviet dissident, his reputation has languished; *Garden, Ashes* is chillingly listed by its American publisher as "out of stock indefinitely."

Nowhere Man, it should be said, is as funny as it is grim, and Hemon does have something of a Nabokovian eye for American foibles. ("Small bowl—large gumbo," instructs Pronek's boss at the Boudin French Sourdough Bakery, in *The Question of Bruno*. "Big bowl—jumbo gumbo.") And he brings an alien eye to even the blandest of American landscapes, until a quality of dispassionate menace, to which we've become inured, is patiently re-exposed:

> It was cold in Ohio. The van pushed against the wind, smashing snowflakes on its windshield. Snow whorls fidgeted on the fringes of the road. A silhouette of a person followed by a silhouette of a dog walked across a prairie patch, a cloud of snow twirling around them. A silvery train glided across the horizon. In a car passing them, there was a boy asleep in the back seat, strapped and peaceful. Then a monumental truck cast its shadow over them, the word MOVING appearing in Pronek's window, letter by letter.

There is a slight, residual stiffness ("smashing snowflakes on its windshield") to this passage—not the only moment of such stiffness in Hemon's writing—that makes the Nabokov comparisons at best premature. Perhaps the most significant difference, though, is that, unlike Nabokov, Hemon grew up in a Europe virtually immersed in the global tide of American culture; thus the most unexpected of the austere pleasures of Hemon's work may be how well he writes about rock and roll. Its status as global corporate enterprise somehow only intensifies its parallel existence as a kind of grail of authenticity for teenagers everywhere; Pronek and his teenage Sarajevan buddies give a precise, hilarious demonstration of just how far young people are willing to go, in terms of estranging themselves from their own experience, in pursuit of that mysterious authenticity:

> They spent the summer of 1980 practicing more Beatles songs. Faults, however, already started occurring. Ringo tossed his tambourine on the floor and declared that he was bored playing only the Beatles songs—he had rec
> Clash album from his cousin in M
> and wore Vibrators and Buzzcock
> tons on his (deliberately) torn sh
> The final blow came when P
> brought in his own song. . . . M
> through the song, devoted to Pron
> yet unmet eternal love, Ringo s
> gagging. . . . [The band] never reco
> Ringo changed his nickname to S
> became the drummer for a punk
> named *Depresija*. Shortly after B
> departure, George informed ther
> his brief existence in this world as C
> came to an end, because his
> teacher ordered him to drop the gu
> it was ruining his touch.

"Blind Jozef Pronek & Dead S
as it happens, is what Pronek rer
his band after he develops—
search for a ready-made ratificat
his tragic self-image—an affini
American blues.

Hemon himself has taugh
lish as a second languag
has worked in a bakery;
canvassed for Greenpeace. But t
genuity with which *Nowhere M*
dresses the autobiographical que
puts most other first novels to sh
What's most exciting in this c
not that Hemon has told his sto
that he has found his form. Pr
an engaging, funny, sympathetic
acter dogged by historical misfo
is also a spy; his life has twinne
in a way he can never undo, and
escapable lot is to be compelled
first and foremost, on himself.

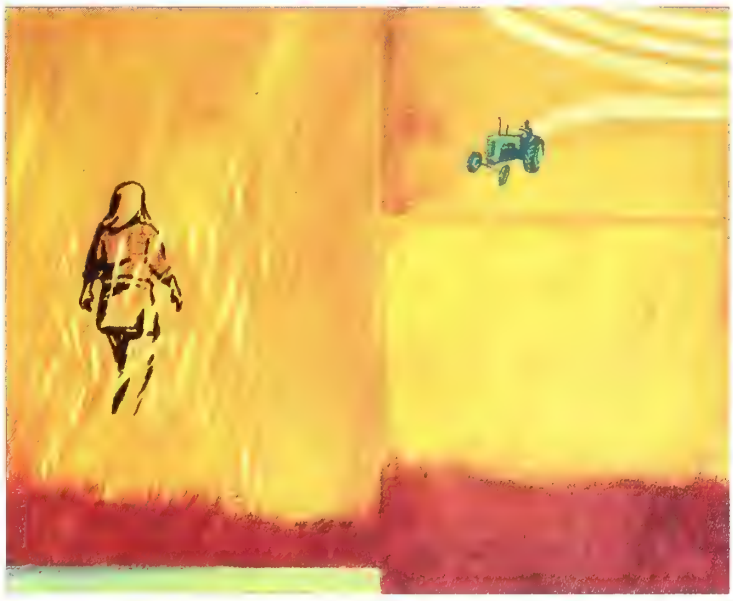
The "autobiographical questic
any case, is really a question o
those admirers like myself in wh
tinge of anxiety is produced
thought that this young writer,
extraordinarily original eye take
might have seemed like wel
American ground and transfo
into an interior landscape all hi
has cannibalized an already au
graphical story from his first book
der to find material for his secon
provenance of the material is les
sue than the idea that continu
mine it must surely be a matter
minishing returns. Will he mal
leap, as Nabokov did, and beco
essential American writer? A n
accomplished and innovative and
syncratically moving as *Nowher*
leaves one eager to find out.

THE HAY BEHIND THE HOUSE

By Frederick Busch

This would be the time in my life, en thought while it went on, that uld remember as the year, or half ear, or fiscal quarter—there was ly no telling—when I lived with tin Gold on Central Park West in hattan, and cooked in copper pots ate on Spode that figured in blue and oon, lifting flatware eavy as fire irons. said, "I am taking walking shoes, but don't really need to l anything into that. ou did, it would be re about you than "

He couldn't let the tement pass, of rse. I knew it when aid it. He would e to answer, and it uld tell me more ut him. And what said was, "You can't slate what I under- nd when you do nething, Cara. You e your most impor- t pair of shoes with you when you take off for the weekend, or conceivably for the rest of your life—'We'll know more in a few days' is what you said ten minutes ago—and it means something. It means something if you go. It means something if you come back pretty soon, and it means something else if you stay there longer. And it means something if you take your brown, ugly, scuffed-up, broken-down, walked-out walking shoes with the extra-wide toe box and the fat yellow trail-boot laces."



One of the reasons I was drawn to Martin was his ability to sometimes talk his way out of trouble and, almost as often, back into it, and then to deny that there had been trouble in the first place. He was a short-order orator, with a limited but interesting menu. He could whip it up and dish it out: nasty sentences, or elegant and generous paragraphs, and, not infrequently, small, desperately seasoned speeches of uncertain intent. It was possible, I thought, that we had lived together in his Aunt Susan's vacant apartment too long. We had lived together for five weeks. And that was too short a time to think of as so long. On the other hand, we had lived together, as he had put it, *only* a little more than a month, not long enough to know how we felt, and anyway it was my parents' dilemma more than my own, he suspected, that drew me to leave behind what mattered most, or ought to: him.

I had started walking in college and I'd kept on after school. Often, on an afternoon, I hiked up the

derick Busch, *Fairchild Professor of Lit- ure at Colgate University, is the author wenty-five books. His new novel,* A mory of War, *will be published in Feb- ry by W.W. Norton.*

tration by Hadley Hooper

Upper West Side, for example, toward the northern border of Central Park and then through Spanish Harlem, over to Fifth and down Embassy Row to the fountain at the Plaza, then along Fifty-ninth to Broadway, then over to a place near John Jay where cops who went to school there would sit around with coffee and open notebooks; I found them [illegible] because they seemed as worried as they were tough, and so, I think I fancied, was I. I wore the same shoes I had worn in college a dozen years before, the welts of which had been restitched, the lugs replaced once, the laces three times. The walking kept my weight down, my eyes open, and my endorphins up. I worked alone, in other words, at turning myself on, and why, Marty wondered, did I need to?

"And you might ask yourself," he said next, after commenting on the aesthetic disgrace of my walking shoes, "why you need to walk so much. Charles Dickens sometimes walked twenty-five miles a night. But that was in London. And he was neurotic. It's crazy to walk so much. And, anyway, he was a genius."

"'It's a dark and stormy night,'" I said, accurately if weather was the subject.

"Disraeli," he said.

I raised my brows and said nothing. He loved it when I did that.

"A different writer," he said, "who is never, *ever*, confused with Dickens."

"I never read either of them. The stormy night's from a *Peanuts* cartoon."

He slowly shook his head, expressing pity with his wide, astonished eyes, and then disgust with his very terrific broad mouth. "Not even *A Tale of Two Cities*? Come on, Cara."

"No," I said. "We were supposed to read it for English in high school, but I saw the movie on TV. It was a far better thing than reading it."

"Far, *far* better thing. Come to think of it, there's a hell of a lot of walking in that book."

"And there's probably an even chance that whoever lived with Dickens didn't give him grief about his shoes. Or even his walking, maybe."

"I don't know," he said. "I don't know."

"That's a good start. It's the third thing you've admitted to not knowing since I moved into Aunt Susie's place." He was going to ask me what the other two were, but I was already bending back the upraised fingers of my left hand with my right forefinger. "One: 'Marty, are you *sure* the F train doesn't stop at Bergen Street?' Two: 'I can really take these Percodan with a bottle and a half of wine?'"

"Your heart did not stop beating," he said. "You felt like it stopped, but it didn't. You fainted because you hadn't eaten. And your tooth was abscessed. And you were tired."

"And my heart stopped beating," I said. "You think I wouldn't notice a little absence like that? My own heartbeat? Marty: my *own*."

"That is so pedagogical," he said.

"I'll be back in a couple of days. Or maybe a little more. I'll let you know."

"You're driving on a night like this?"

"Say it, Marty."

"A fucking dark and stormy fucking night, Cara."

"It is 3:15 of a sour Saturday afternoon," I said. "It'll hardly be night when I get there. And don't read so much into the walking shoes. I was afraid you would."

"You were hoping I would," he said, beginning to look like a sulky, adolescent version of a thirty-four-year-old Legal Aid attorney with no parents, a generous, wealthy aunt who traveled most of every year, and a girlfriend with exceptional leg muscles who wrote cooking columns for newspapers, magazines, and the Web.

I kissed him on the cheek beside his mouth. I kissed him on the upper lip and nibbled it. I nibbled on the lower lip. I squeezed his not entirely firm belly. "Thank you for letting me take her car," I said.

"And thanks for sitting around to wait and see if you come back?"

"I have to come back," I said. "I'm leaving my stuff here as hostage. And since you live here you're naturally going to be around to see what I do." I couldn't say the part about coming back or not.

"Great," he said, "consider me consoled." Then he said, "You're not leaving your terrible shoes here, though. I'm going to think about them."

His next words would be "da[illegible] night."

He opened his mouth, but [illegible] out the door.

My parents lived upstate, 200 [illegible] north of the city, and that was [illegible] I was headed in Aunt Susan's [illegible] old, shiny dark-green Mercu[illegible] waddled softly, and you aimed it [illegible] than drove. I listened to a Pink [illegible] retrospective until I was on the [illegible] isades Parkway, still for much [illegible] length a road that was narrow, [illegible] handsome, tended plantings th[illegible] ways made me think of 1940, a [illegible] knew next to nothing about e[illegible] that both my pa[illegible] had been born in it

My mother was trying to te[illegible] a funny story. I knew that I was [illegible] ing, very slowly, around the kitch[illegible] *her* kitchen, I kept reminding mys[illegible] looking through heaps of mai[illegible] magazines and bills, examining re[illegible] on her corkboard over one of the c[illegible] ters, sweeping salt or bread crum[illegible] garlic skins off a cutting boar[illegible] into my palm. I should be looki[illegible] her face, I thought, to memorize [illegible] to understand its expression. I oug[illegible] be communicating, with my ow[illegible] pression, so that I was not the ne[illegible] ic daughter descending with her [illegible] mous rigidity into their—could [illegible] still call it middle age? Was sixty [illegible] the middle of *anything*? Were the[illegible] enough for me to call them—at [illegible] behind their backs—old?

"Wait, Mom. Wait. What dic[illegible] say?" I said. "He left you what?"

"It was a note. Thumbtacke[illegible] the whatever you call it that'[illegible] wood at the top of a door. The ja[illegible]

"Isn't that the wood at the sid[illegible]

"I think maybe it's also at the[illegible] Anyway—sweetie, *listen*—at th[illegible] of the door to our bedroom, t[illegible] was a note from your father. It[illegible] hanging there."

"On the jamb, if that's wha[illegible] called. Is lintel a better word f[illegible] Or could it be the architrave?"

"Sweetie, don't be ridiculous. [illegible] is about something funny. Ar[illegible] *was* very funny. When I told [illegible] so—this was later on—when I [illegible] him, he said, 'What did I call my[illegible] The Rememberer?' In fact,' [illegible] mother said, "he'd printed out, '

e Reminder Reminding You.' It
about something to pick up
I went to town. And I told
'Oh. I don't remember. I didn't
that clearly. I didn't have my
s on.' And we looked at each
, in this mutual silly fog of for-
g and nearsightedness, and we
began to laugh. I'm going to re-
er it, if I *do* remember it, as our
oint joke about getting . . . on."
miled and nodded, but I want-
cry. I'm afraid my expression
o.
'hat, sweetie? What's wrong?"
nook my head and smiled what
y once described as my black-
white-movie heroine's smile: she
's that the last chance is gone,
ne hero hasn't seen that yet.
re you having a bad time with
Marty?"
shrugged. My mother came
s the kitchen to me and opened
rms, and I, who had come to be
harbor, headed in and docked,
n her shoulder and arms around
vaist so that she could wrap her
around my back and hug.
er tending made me brave. I said,
v is it with Daddy and you?"
'e're okay," she said. "His health
l be better. I guess everyone's
l be. Not that he takes it easy."
lot the splitting wood thing?"
le bought a new ax by mail from
company in New York. He cuts
of kindling, but he doesn't do
n cordwood splitting anymore."
e stepped back from each other,
sing each other, as if care were a
of shackling. She removed her
es, wiped her eyes, smiled, shook
ead, and put her glasses back on.
magnified her very dark eyes and
e her seem frail. She raised her
s, and I felt my own go up in re-
se. She was pretty, and, except
ome white streaks, her hair was
he light brown it had been in my
lhood. She was half an inch taller
I, and she looked slender and
g in my father's Black Watch–
l flannel shirt worn with the tails
nd the baggy sleeves rolled up.
neck was a mess of cords and wrin-
skin; it was where she looked old-
nd she saw me study it. She lift-
er chin, an instant, as if daring
o comment.

I said, "Daddy sounds—upset. Sometimes, on the phone, he sounds sad. Would that be a fair way to say it?"

She was pouring coffee beans into the little grinder, then filling the kettle, taking a filter from the drawer she had always kept them in, and I suspected that all the motions of this routine provided her with someplace to hide. When she was done, she turned to me.

"Yes."

"Yes?"

"A fair way to say it, as long as you aren't saying it to him. All right? He noticed, suddenly, that he's a good distance from young. He did this before."

"I remember. Forty."

"No. That wouldn't be your father. He did it his own way, which was to not even *care* about turning forty. Or he pretended not to care. If he did, he completely fooled me. But when he turned forty-one, he went down low, into his shoes. He was miserable for months."

"He tortured you," I said.

"He did not torture me. He was unhappy."

"He snarled. He growled at you. I remember, Mom. It was unbearable."

"It was not unbearable. I bore it. Do you say 'bore' for that? I think so. I handled it. I dealt with it. It became all right. You know, I sometimes still want a cigarette. If I could have a cigarette with this cup of coffee, I think I would really enjoy it. Do not, Cara, open your mouth and tell me not to smoke. Don't."

"I'm becoming a pain in the ass again."

"Not you. But don't manage me right now, sweetie, is all."

"Not me," I said. I know that I blushed. She was able to make me blush more than men could. She was the smartest person I knew, and Marty Gold was brilliant. And so was my father. My brother, Douglas, was in charge of his own particle accelerator in Seattle. But Jessica Terranova was the champion at understanding directions that came with complex machines and at puzzling people out. She had been a social worker in Utica, but she could also, if she'd wanted, have been the head of, say, the Food and Drug Administration.

"And don't, please, give me a tip about placing eggshells in the bottom of the coffee pot or anything."

"That's a household-management tip from a hundred years ago, Mom. I write about *cooking*. I am being a pain in the ass, though."

"You might become one. You came up here with either saving me or saving Daddy in mind. Or getting saved. I'm all right about saving someone. I'm the lifeguard type. Parents get trained to do that. But I have to admit how terrible I am at getting saved. And you've got a saving-people gene loose inside you. It's from your father's father. He was a lifeguard at Coney Island. The oldest, sexiest lifeguard of his time, according to Daddy. Until he was fired for playing house while someone almost drowned."

"'Playing house'?"

"I think you know what I mean."

"Well. Making out? Screwing teenage girls? Feeling up the over-fifty set? Was Queen Victoria still alive?"

"That would be in England, Cara."

"'It was a dark and stormy night,'" I recited.

We drank coffee and talked about bone mass in middle-aged women, and then, just a little, about living with someone as a way of figuring out whether or not to live with them. The family eyebrows rose and fell, and we moved on from coffee to chilled vermouth. I made a marinade of white wine, olive oil, marjoram, and red-pepper flakes for the swordfish my mother had defrosted, and I was cooking us a potato galette with scallions and grated parmesan when my father came home from his hospital.

"What kind of job gets you home at nine at night?" he asked. "The younger doctors get home on time. To hell with it. I'm going to retire."

"Good," I said, "you're getting old."

"You sound like Mom," he said, hugging me, kissing me on the mouth and once on each cheek and then hugging me again. "I'm glad you're here."

"Is something wrong?"

"Yes. My daughter grew up, my son moved to a different time zone, my wife doesn't treat me with respect,

and my physicians' patients consistently refuse to send in their stool-sample cards."

"No bowel jokes," my mother warned.

His five-o'clock shadow was gray-white, and his skin seemed pale. I thought I could smell hospital soap on him, and ink, both of which I probably imagined. He spent most of his day with paper and verbal complaints. "Sorry to be late," he said. "Half the staff's been sick or on vacation. A nurse retired and another went into private service. And we have a genuine money hemorrhage. Do I have time for a drink?"

My mother pointed to the glass of red wine she'd set on the table.

He pointed to his mouth, and she walked over to kiss him. He hugged her and patted her bottom. They stayed like that, and I turned away to work the galette onto a dinner plate so I could flip it over back into the pan. The swordfish steaks were in the broiler, and I instructed myself to remember to buy them a nonstick pan with ridges so they could grill on top of the stove.

"Cara," my father said, after drinking a little of his wine, "what brings our far-flung correspondent home?"

"It's been a while, Daddy."

"True. But?"

"Why now?"

"All right. Why now? Martin Gold, Esquire, attorney-at-law? Is he a reason?"

"Marty's a reason."

"It's not working out for you down there, up in the aunt's penthouse?"

"Not a penthouse, Daddy. Just a big apartment. Very big. God. You could have an overnight for a Girl Scout troop in the living room. The piano is long enough to use as a tugboat. I will never live like that again in my life."

I turned to see him looking into his wine. I'd have bet that he was imagining me in a bathrobe, walking down a long, carpeted hall from the shower to a vast and opulent bedroom. He slowly shook his head.

"And Lawyer Gold?"

"He's a sweetheart," I said. "Otherwise, I wouldn't have moved in with him. Otherwise, I wouldn't stay."

"I'm sure that's true," he said. "Of course, since it's you, the fact of your having decided to move in with him could be enough to *force* you to stay. If anyone were to try to analyze anyone else, or understand their motivations, et cetera. Instead of shutting up and drinking their wine." He took a sip.

Because my mother hadn't shut him up while she was making the salad, I knew that she was thinking something similar. So, of course, was I. We drank the jug wine that tasted like mothballs in vinegar and we ate swordfish, galette, and green salad, and there was a lot of banter I was happy to hear again from my parents. My father looked weary but undefeated, and, as he stood, he seemed powerful again. I became so tired from the drive, and, I suppose, from what had set me traveling, and, more than likely, from being there and with them and feeling—there was no other word for it—safe, that I thought I would sleep where I sat. You came home, at my age, to work on behalf of your parents or to let go of what you gripped and steered while you were away from them. Not knowing precisely what had really brought me, I closed my eyes and let my hands go loose, and they acted as if it were twenty years before, marching me to the stairs, so that I would go to bed.

I don't remember dreams, though I did waken several times, and each time I thought I heard them whispering, first downstairs and then in their bedroom at the other end of the hall. I heard no specific words, but I woke on Sunday morning to remember with certainty that their conversations had been about me.

What woke me was the high, loud, ragged voice of Stanley Sobriski—I knew it at once—as he called to my father, who probably stood two feet away from him, as if they were separated by half of the hayfield back behind the house that Sobriski paid my parents in order to cut and bale for his dairy herd. "Honest ta God, Docta Terranova, I'm gonna pay every penny. Honest ta *God*!"

I was glad for the hubbub, because it kept me from reexamining my childhood room and permitting or even requiring a sentimentality I had n tience for. I was too old for it, a were my parents. And Stanley So ki, I knew, was behind in his payn again. He lived five or six miles the road and across a county hig on a steep hillside where he kept my father had described as a tilted on which the cattle stood crooked graze and where the mire and sti the barnyard had entered the batt small farmhouse where his tiny and illiterate son—he somehow kept him from school and raised as an agricultural laborer—lived i cycle of debt and failure that ch terized so many little upstate fam

When I had showered and dr and come downstairs, my father Stanley were gone from the hous small bottle of Scotch stood or kitchen table, where it caught morning light and glowed am There was a green-and-red striped bon tied at its neck. I thought of S ley Sobriski's little wife, in a sm dark kitchen, tying the bow. My m er stared at it from where she sto the sink, with a spatula in her ha

"Are you making pancakes?"

"No. Would you like some?"

"What are you cooking?"

"Nothing," she said. "Why?"

I pointed at the spatula.

"Oh. Oh, I think I picked it up cause it was the nearest weapo thought they were going to ha fight. Your father kept rubbing arm, it got so bad between them.

"What's wrong with his arm?"

"It's where people his age themselves when their hearts— angina, sweetie. It radiates from chest. You know."

"Daddy?"

"You push a hospital against tide all day, that's what happ The tension gets to your heart. father had the same thing."

"I knew I was right to be worri

"Well, of course it's right t worried."

The structure of her face colla then, into vertical lines, horizo wrinkles, loose flesh, red skin, those eyes that her glasses seeme times to enlarge so grotesquely. I absolutely not a word in mind which to comfort her, or comfort self, or simply break the silence

d to harden and to separate us. as alone on her side of it, I ied, sensing her loss of him and ginning of a fierce, long loneli- And then it all fell back into , and she was my powerful r. But I had seen who she was she was in her privacy. She be far from pleased that I had. shook her head. "He's lucky I take him apart with my spatu- e said, tossing it into the sink. anley's not paying?" I asked her. 's bringing the half a bottle of ie Walker Red. And honest- d, Docta Terranova, this year ing to pay. Just forgive him for aying over the last three years t him start cutting today. You what he's like."

's a deadbeat," I said.

is."

d Daddy's a pussycat."

ntil he told Stanley about business practices, and Stan- id then how come he's driving ospital into the ground and body who goes there gets sicker count of Daddy not buying the sary equipment, and your fa- rabbed his arm and started that low city-Italian muttering he when he's crazy with anger."

he having some kind of attack?"

he's dead next time we see hen probably he was."

u're so tough," I said, watching ep her face composed.

hat's where you get it from, ie."

would like a fried-egg sandwich, e," I said. "On pulpy white , please, with ketchup."

all I make more coffee?"

hink chocolate milk," I said.

t she didn't go to the refrigera- r eggs. She wore dark clogs and wn faded jeans and a different —Stewart, I think was the —of his long-tailed flannel that was open enough for me e how the edges of her breasts gone crepey. It was like old s, I thought, her exposed like and me noticing. I remembered smooth her chest had looked, tight her breasts had seemed to when I was trying, through r and manipulation, to coerce wn to grow. She leaned against the stove and yoked her hand's webbing, from thumb to forefinger, against her own throat, as if compelling herself to stand still. She said, "I worry about him every day. I don't think there are any hours anymore when I don't worry about him. And I know he's the same about me. It's so stupid. We're together so much, and you know what we do? We worry about each other dying and the other ending up alone. So we do that, and of course it creeps into the being together. Every time there's light, we make it dark. We admitted it one night. He got home on time, and we drank too much wine with dinner and we said things. These aren't things you and Marty Gold would be saying, I hope."

I shook my head. She didn't see me.

"This is precisely what I made myself promise I wouldn't say to you when you told us you were coming home."

"It's why I came."

"Sweetie, that's terrible. You shouldn't have to come home like we're dying and you need to comfort us and see to our medication. You ought to be able to come home because life is miserable for *you*." She put her hand on her mouth, and then she laughed. It was real laughter, and I enjoyed hearing it.

"I'm a *little* miserable," I said.

"Good girl," she said. "Thank you."

I nodded, and then she did. "So I can't help," I said.

"You always help. Come be here with us once in a while. That's lovely. There's no real *helping* what I'm talking about. It's like the ocean, only slower. It comes in."

"We need Grandpa Terranova, if we could pry him away from the hotsy-totsy girls at Coney Island."

My father, coming into the kitchen, said, "Why?"

"Tide's up," my mother said. "How are the local relationships?"

"He didn't punch me out when I insulted him. So I'm still the lord of the manor."

"And he hates us," my mother said.

"That he does. But it's always like that if somebody depends on your favors for feeding his family. They always hate you if they need you to be good to them. And I was trying to be *bad*."

"Did you fire him, Daddy? Or

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whatever you do to tenant farmers. *Is* he a tenant farmer?"

He shook his big head. He wore an old crewneck sweater of a peculiar mud-green color that made the skin of his face and even his wrists and fingers look gray. I watched my mother's dark eyes on him. "Nothing that grand," he said. "He's supposed to pay us a few dollars a bale. Windrows, they call them now: those giant wheels of hay they wrap in white plastic and litter the world with after they unwrap them for the herd. He's supposed to make it grow"—he gestured toward the large field behind the house—"without putting toxic chemicals into the groundwater."

"He hasn't paid in years," my mother said. "So we decided, since we weren't making anything on the field anyway, we'd just as soon do without his tractor going back and forth all day on the way to and from the field. And God knows what kind of deadly stuff he's put into the ground. Let's have it quiet again, we thought. That's what Daddy told him this morning, when he came with his little bottle of whiskey and his excuses about paying."

My father sat to drink the coffee my mother offered, but he only held the cup in the air, away from the saucer but also away from his mouth. "I told him he could take any bales he'd cut last year, but that I didn't want him cutting any more."

"So he's gone?" I asked, sipping coffee I didn't want.

"No, he's up there, being sly. He'll take any bales he finds, for sure. And maybe he'll cut more. It's a fine summer day. I'm trying to decide whether I want to drive around and hike across from the access road just to catch him in the act."

"No," my mother said.

"No?" he said. "Why not?"

"Because it's Sunday, and Cara's home, and I'd just as soon you didn't throw an embolism or blow your heart through your chest and spoil her weekend with us."

"Medical talk," he said to me, jerking his thumb at her. "Ask her what an embolism is."

"Not me," I said. "I don't want to know. Anyway, if you kick off, I won't be able to solicit your advice."

He leaned back in his chair and put the coffee down.

My mother said, "Did you really want eggs?"

I shook my head.

"Because you do look very pale," she said.

"Mommy, I never get pale."

"Are you sick?" my father asked. "Are you—"

He waited for me to supply him with words: Loveless. Pregnant. Fettered by despair.

"I'm not sure," I said, "about living with Marty too much longer."

"Is that a dilemma?" my father asked.

"You mean a choice I can't make?"

He shrugged. "I don't know *what* I mean," he said. "I never lived with anybody except your mother. She didn't—" He looked up. "Yes, you did," he said.

She shook her head.

"You told me no, but I always wondered about the Frenchman. A hockey pro, a semi-professional hockey player? In Utica. Before us. Le-something. Leblanc."

"Lafleur," she said.

"Mommy."

"We never lived together in the same apartment or house or anything." She looked pleased by her recollection. "I told you the truth."

He said, "But you maybe also lied a little?"

Her neck was red. She shook her head. "Don't be silly," she said. "His family had a camp up north, in the Adirondacks, near one of the lakes. We stayed there a couple of times." She turned to look out the kitchen window. My father and I were staring at her shoulders and buttocks and back. I wondered what he was thinking while I considered how she might have lain beneath a broad, tall hockey player who, even as they celebrated his power, was losing his career.

I thought of Marty as he sat in his plaid boxer shorts and knee-length businessman's socks studying the laws of New York State while he dressed to go to one of two courtrooms where he waited to be necessary to people who were poor and accused. He was a lovely man, and bright, and h done his share of scuffling i tougher precincts of the city. going to write a column, I th when I got back, about *past tanesca*. It was a fall or winter but it would have to do for early mer. I wanted, just then, to wri ly about the food of people who as close to the bone as Stanle briski, and cooks consulting m umn would learn "whore's pas garlic and capers, tomatoes, N olives and anchovy fillets, or and red-pepper flakes. With *tanesca*, you think you're getti everyday sauce, but then you' prised.

The intensity of the silence be my parents increased. When my er said, "He was a nice boy. H gentle, which you wouldn't e when you looked at him," and my father turned toward her bu nothing, I excused myself and upstairs for my walking shoes. I br my teeth and came down to an ty kitchen in which dishes left table, and chairs pulled away fr suggested interruptions and ne ties. I put a banana in the hip p of my jeans, and I went out the door, past Wellingtons that lean ward one another and rain ja heavy on their hooks, to walk the back field that had put Stanle briski into debt and my father such discomfort. I hadn't walked this field for years—across the m ground on its way down into a and then up, across more marsh then higher, quite steeply, unt ground hardened and curved to a of plateau that went on for ac the hedgerow that marked the e my parents' holding.

It was wet walking at first, didn't mind. My shoes were w proofed, and because I was we them I felt canny and adeq When I was a girl, I used to f the stream down to a basin o where I had dammed the flow had created my own small la was important to call it my and my father had agreed t could, if I made a spillway wit fieldstone dam that would direc slow trickle away from the l edge of their gardens below

e. Then I was across the marsh- and walking against the steep- of the hill. I could hear my ths, and I realized that I had d my breathing into something e familiar rhythm of Marty and ıs we panted together on his rous aunt's walnut sleigh bed.

ell, didn't you get to me, I said to Marty.

And aren't you surprised, I heard as if in his voice.

he slope of the hill must have interrupting the sound that I sud- y heard when I was walking al- on the level, forcing my way ıgh the tall, tender grass that had n higher than my elbows. I saw a man—Stanley Sobriski, I was in, hunched and round with mus- taut with purpose, on top of his tractor—was cutting hay. The es spun clean and powerfully, and grass was flung behind him with a organized heaviness. I thought of ather, rubbing his left arm as he Stanley argued about the word ı and the word broken. I thought ıch man feeling the certainties surpassed their words: Stanley the gers of his bony cattle, and the , growing unavailable, that was all he in his debt could rely upon to en the debt; and my father feeling is chest and arm the sense, I had , of being crushed.

anley saw me as I stood in the tall, ıt grass, and he did something ter- . He had been cutting in rows that e or less followed the contours of hill. Seeing me, he had slowed, then he'd sped up. He drove to- l me against the grain of the hill- , violating the shape the swaths ıld have made. He tore the field t as he drove to me. It was a de- ıent, a punishing of the order that nated from the farmhouse to the ers' field. And it frightened me.

e stopped the tractor a safe—you d even say a polite—distance from and he left the motor idling. He ed that way awhile, his head back, he were smelling the stink of diesel or something else in the air, while ıinted into the late-morning sun. ally, he shut the tractor off and e down the slope through the grass, ch came almost to his shoulders. He stood before me, his curly red hair stippled with bits of stem and leaf, his white teeth exposed in what he might have thought of as a smile.

"I ain't seen you for a long time," he shouted, though we were only a few feet apart. He wore a stained rust-colored cotton shirt, its sleeves rolled high. Bits of grass were tangled in the light hairs on his forearms. "Honest ta God, you grew up good."

I said, "Hi," and then said what I thought, and what I thought I perhaps shouldn't say. But I was thinking of my father and the pressure in his chest. I was thinking of my mother's face when it fell. I said, "Are you supposed to be cutting hay here anymore, Mr. Sobriski?"

"He sent you?"

I shook my head. Then I decided to say, "Never mind who sent me, please. Are you?"

"Am I what, Miss Landlord?"

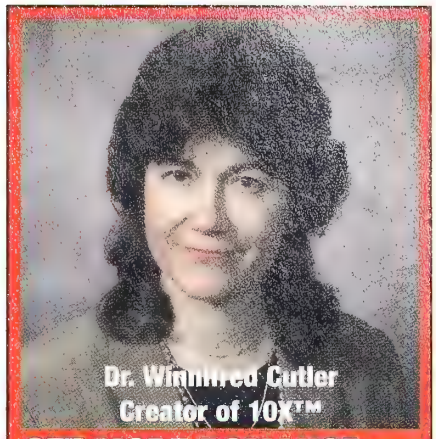
"Supposed to be cutting?"

His eyes shifted from side to side, not engaging mine. They were cruel, like a clown's, when they finally fell upon my face and locked still, and he smiled without pleasure. "Sure. He said, your old man said: 'Go up there and finish it off.' 'At's all I'm doin' here. I'll be outa here, a couple hours, you won't know you saw me. Whaddya say?"

"I think what I should say is no. So: no, Mr. Sobriski. My parents don't want you cutting on their property." I thought I sounded pompous. I thought I sounded arrogant. I thought of his wife in their dark kitchen.

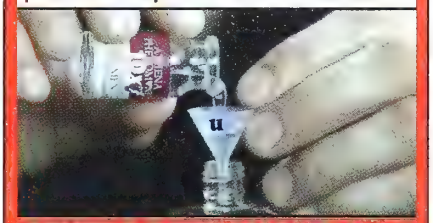
"It's always money with you people," he said, finally looking at me. He didn't seem to me, anymore, to be a clown. He looked like a man who was going to punch someone. I was one of *you people*, and *you people* were the ones who needed a little smacking around, and that's why I jumped and gave a timid little hiccup of fear as his hands came out very quickly to seize my shoulders. I felt his fingers against the bone. "Payments. Installments. Due tomorrow, due today, kindly remit. *Kindly* fucking remit."

He worked the right shoulder backward, then forward, then backward again. He did the same with the left. I tried to pull away from him, but of course I couldn't. He was



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powerful, and his bulk was immovable. He was going to set me down in the tall grass, where we'd be invisible, and he was going to furrow and reap. Instead of practicing one of the veteran city woman's surefire maneuvers of self-defense—keys (back on my girlhood bureau) extended between the knuckles of the clenched hand; swift knee to the groin; finger in the eye and not relenting *no matter what* until the eyeball's out of its socket; knuckles of second and third finger, repeatedly, hard into the larynx; high-pitched scream for assistance; stab at the heart with an unpeeled banana—I closed my eyes and I choked back my weeping.

He let go of my shoulders, and I heard the grass whisper against him, so I opened my eyes. It was my mother, of course, holding before her with both hands what seemed to be a smallish ax with a long steel head. That, I guessed, would be my father's new kindling ax.

She said, in what I suppose was the toughest voice of Utica, New York, "You want to fight, Stanley? You want to try something with my kid?"

"Hi, Mommy."

"What *did* you think you were doing?"

"No," I said, "I was just walking."

"We'll talk about that," she said, as she had so many times in my childhood when I had trespassed or strayed and had needed her help.

"Hey, missus," Stanley said, "honest ta God, I was just—I think I lost my composza. This morning with the doctor, that was bad for everybody. But no harm intended, unnerstand?"

"I'm going to the state police," my mother said. "We're going. We're filing a report on you. Attempted—" and she couldn't say the word. "I'll go to the sheriff too. I won't leave you alone after this." She lifted the ax, as if she expected him to jump and run.

He did neither. He looked at her and then at me. He lifted his face so that his nostrils were pointed toward us. He breathed in deeply, as if he could distinguish our scent, on the breezes in the field, from the smell of mowed hay or diesel fumes. He turned and walked through the grass, which closed behind him, and then [illegible] on his blue tractor, and then he was driving—still mowing, tearing the field apart—as he went toward the access road at the far western edge.

I sat down where I'd stood. My mother sat beside me, her eyes closed, her head shaking a little, though she didn't weep.

"You were going to chop up weeds?"

"I took the ax with me because I thought maybe if he couldn't find his new toy, he'd skip cutting kindling we don't need. What we need is for him to rest."

"What were you coming out here for?"

"I wanted to talk with you. You had that look you used to get as a kid, all taut lips and grim eyes: Cara moving toward something inadvisable. I wanted to talk to you before you got there."

"I didn't know you saw me," I said. "It was just a walk. I was trying to figure things out. That was all it was."

She let her breath out noisily. She fiddled with a leather thong attached to the handle of the ax. "Things with Marty Gold?"

"Him. Daddy. You. What kind of food stuff I should write about when I get back. I wasn't looking for trouble. God, he was so angry. I think he would have done it."

"I think he would have done it," she said. "That, and stealing hay, maybe watching Daddy have a heart attack—what else could he have done? But what about Daddy and me—what you were trying to figure out."

"How to handle missing you."

"Come home more. Or we could visit you down there. It might be good if I could get him out of town more often."

"Not that kind of missing," I said. "The kind where you miss people sort of in advance. While they're still around."

She ran her finger along the pale wood of the ax handle. She shook her head and said, "That." She hefted the ax, then set it down on the crushed grass. "No," she said, "I don't know anything smart about that kind. No."

"No," I said, "I don't either."

We sat in the clearing we'd made with our bodies, surrounded by high grass, while the sun rose to noon. Birdsong came in, and the hunting cry—that half-whispered menace [illegible] hawk too high to be seen.

"I'm betting that you didn't [illegible] your place," my mother said. "[illegible] right? So you'd have someplace [illegible] back to?"

I smiled for her certainty.

"You'll leave him," she said [illegible] glasses were off, and she was ru[illegible] her eyes. She looked up, and each [illegible] knew she was exposed to the oth[illegible]

"But we do stop leaving the [illegible] said. I untied each yellow lace [illegible] then tied each knot again.

"Well, of course." She replace[illegible] glasses.

"Of course."

She stood, a little stiffly, holdin[illegible] ax at her side, and she reached dov[illegible] my hand. I pulled against her to s[illegible] Her grip was dry and powerful. [illegible] then we get all the scaring we a[illegible] were right to be scared of," she s[illegible]

January Index Sources

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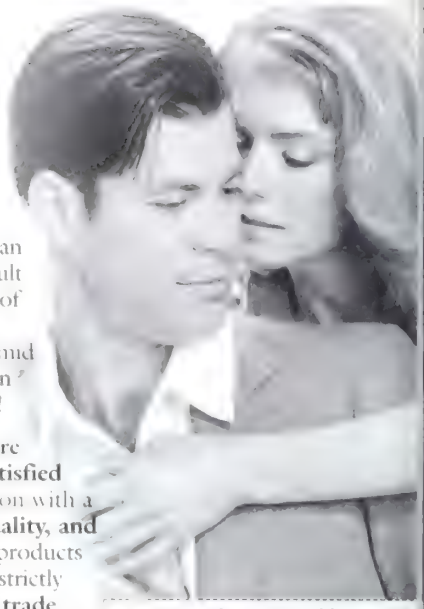
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T	S	E	H	C	D	L	E	I	F	R
A	E	S	T	A	G	E	R	V	I	E
I	H	S	I	L	O	P	S	E	G	A
L	C	E	L	B	A	I	F	I	S	S
C	E	N	D	G	L	U	I	N	G	S
A	L	I	E	N	S	S	R	E	E	U
M	A	G	N	I	S	U	R	E	P	R
P	C	A	R	L	E	N	E	G	S	A
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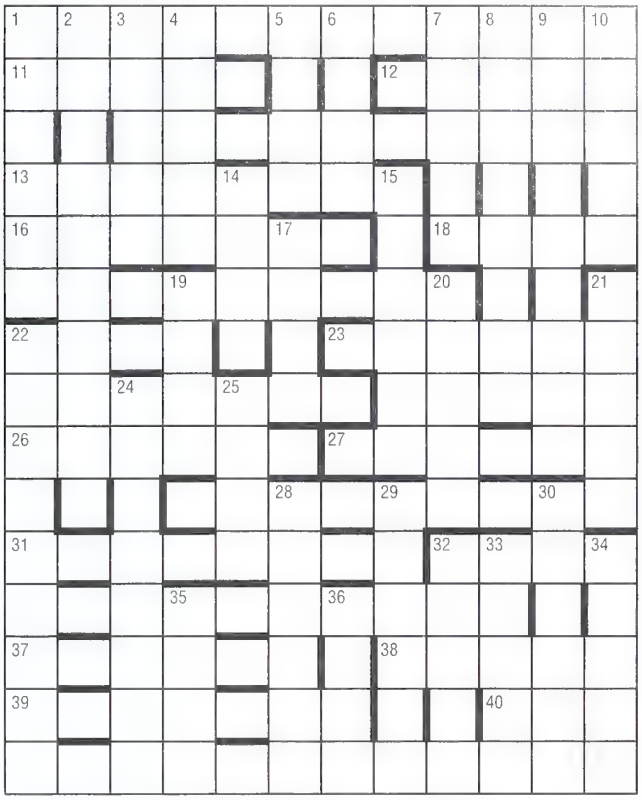
NOTES FOR "QUO VADIS?":

Puzzle editing by Dan Asimov.

Anagrams are indicated with an asterisk (*).

ACROSS: 1. Lear-ned*; 2. tableware (hidden); 3. see (2 mngs.); 4. r.-01 (rev.); 5. aw* 6. ket(t.l.)es* ; 7. L.I.-vein; 8a. set (hidden); 8b. stave (2 mngs.); 9. ever (hidden); chest-erfield*; 11. d(ear*)ies, in "side," out; 12. fig(ure); 13. reassurances*; 14. (s) 15. stage[r]; 16. go(lf)als; 17. (ha)v[e]; 18. images*; 19a. Polish (2 mngs.); 19b. (homonym); 20. mas-que; 21. C-Lassi(e)-f(1)able; 22. lit-he; 23. b.-lack(ball)ing; ca(m)p; 25. gluings*; 26. (tran)scend; 27. a(lie)ns; 28. queers* (reques[t]*); 29. A (hidden); 30. un-settle; 31a. per-using; 31b. pegs (2 mngs.); 32. PE-as; 33a. Car-l; c-aleches*; 34a. gee, g(overnment); 34b. gene (hidden); 35. S-E-N-S-E; 36. co(ATT- 37a. Cal-is-the-nic(e)-s(inging); 37b. caginess*; 38. terrif(y); 39. hue (homonym); re(are)d; 41. deters*; 42. u(NCO)oL, (Lou, rev.).

PUZZLE



De-construction

By Richard E. Maltby Jr.

Eight Across entries, clued separately, are common words that can be deconstructed in a similar way. The deconstructions given do not include definitions. Solvers must determine where the eight words are to be entered.

Other clues are normal and include two proper names and one foreign word. As always, mental repunctuation of a clue is the key to its solution. The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 90.

DECONSTRUCTIONS

A. Fashion magazine ends with words that might have a ring to them!
B. Two names describing Gold, the late-bloomer
C. Direction for covering doily
D. For example, limiting anorexic
E. Alternate dialogue in manuscript
F. Two features replacing one in the Screen Actors Guild
G. One supporter in a hundred-year span
H. What's right about living loving *Guys and Dolls?*

ACROSS

11. A building having old rafters initially can't stand (5)
12. Eyelashes sound foolishuh? (5)
13. Like a hovercraft that doesn't stop? (8)
16. Give an encore that is keeping time, time, time (7)
18. In the country, Small Fork is a symbol of whiteness (4)
22. Plumb tired but not angry, rude but not down (4)
23. On this part of making up, she retouched (6)
26. In capital I circulated biased writing (6)
27. Long for one slain, dismembered, dead (6)
31. Sending out a piece of email? (8)
32. Lead soldier's lead sailor (4)
37. Something from remote origins! (6)
38. Gives a buzz to squares in some sports (5)
39. Sorry guys, it could be treason, senator (7)
40. Interminably appear to make out (3)

DOWN

1. Male insect lives in another insect (6)
2. Obstetrician able to read waste (10)
3. Article referring to a soothing word (5)
4. Goalpost finished, keep in suspense? (5)
5. Exotic medium? Less than that! (4)
6. Puts down old songs (4)
7. Bridge in Rimini hills makes you zip in Italy (5)
8. Got something out of someone Wallach quoted (8)
9. Rat spilled the beans, which gets one in a suit (9)
10. Depressed state, after gaining $2,000 (5)
14. Pour liquor in place with no piano (4)
15. Novel penetrating family member's source of power (6)
17. Siamese connector, say (4)
19. Sway constituency in re-election (4)
20. Question that makes bad girl start listening (5)
21. Hoodlum becomes wordy after fight upset (5)
22. One of the blood-letters formed in brain stem (9)
24. Cooler broadcasts do air art (8)
25. Inclination from auditor just goes by us! (4)
28. Lucky guy, to make a mistake in a company chart (6)
29. Makes money, little at first, then takes it in (6)
30. Bit of righteous indignation from Zion worker, perhaps (6)
32. Baby louses up time period doing something (5)
33. Present, for example, for nervous teens (5)
34. Turn siren up (5)
35. Crooked gambling activity takes small number in (4)
36. Same only different—that's the height of flatness! (4)

Contest Rules: Send completed diagram with name and address to "De-construction," *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Entries must be received by January 11. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive one-year subscriptions to *Harper's Magazine*. Winners' names will be printed in the March issue. Winners of the November 2002 puzzle, "Take a Letter: Memo to Lewis Lapham," are Shirley Bentley, Peoria, Illinois; David Ingraham, San Diego; and Laurie Peterson, Sunnyside, New York.



HARM'S WAY

1. What weapon appearing in a 22,000-year-old Spanish cave painting represents the earliest known depiction of armed combat?

2. What ancient epic's narrator declares, "Being mad, I take to arms, even though there is little reason in arms"?

3. At the suggestion of Carthaginian general Hannibal, containers of venomous snakes were fired at what allied Roman targets?

4. What staple of modern weaponry is said to have been invented by ninth-century alchemists and was originally used only for celebrations?

5. In the fourteenth century the Tartar army catapulted cadavers infected with what disease over the city walls of a Black Sea port?

6. What is an eighteenth-century viceroy of New Spain said to have given natives to induce them "to lose their skill in handling the bow"?

7. The British namesake of what venerable U.S. college ordered that items infected with smallpox be given to Delaware Indians at a peace-making ceremony?

8. In what city rises a 144-foot monument consisting of 1,200 enemy cannons soldered together, and who commissioned it?

9. What emperor said, "Four hostile newspapers are more to be feared than a thousand rapiers"?

10. The giant German cannon used during World War I to break through the fortress at Liège was called "Big Bertha" in honor of the matriarch of what enduring German manufacturing empire?

11. What 1914 H. G. Wells novel explores nuclear energy and describes "atomic bomb" blasts in "the middle of the twentieth century"?

12. What head of state did the CIA once plan to assassinate with an exploding seashell?

13. Whom did U.S. agents attempt to flush out with recordings of dental drills, rabbits being slaughtered, and Billy Ray Cyrus's "Achy Break Heart"?

14. What Latin American poet wrote, "But from each crime are born bullets/that will one day seek out in you/where the heart lies"?

Contest Rules: Send numbered answers with name and address to "Quiz," Harper's Magazine, 666 Broadway, New York, NY 10012. If you already subscribe to Harper's, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Entries must be received by January 13. The sender of the first correct set of answers opened at random will receive a one-year subscription to Harper's Magazine. The winner's name will be printed in the March issue and be available at www.harpers.org in February. All subscription winners are eligible to compete in an annual quiz whose first prize is a complete set of the Oxford English Dictionary. The answers to last month's quiz, "Season's Reasons," appear on page 67

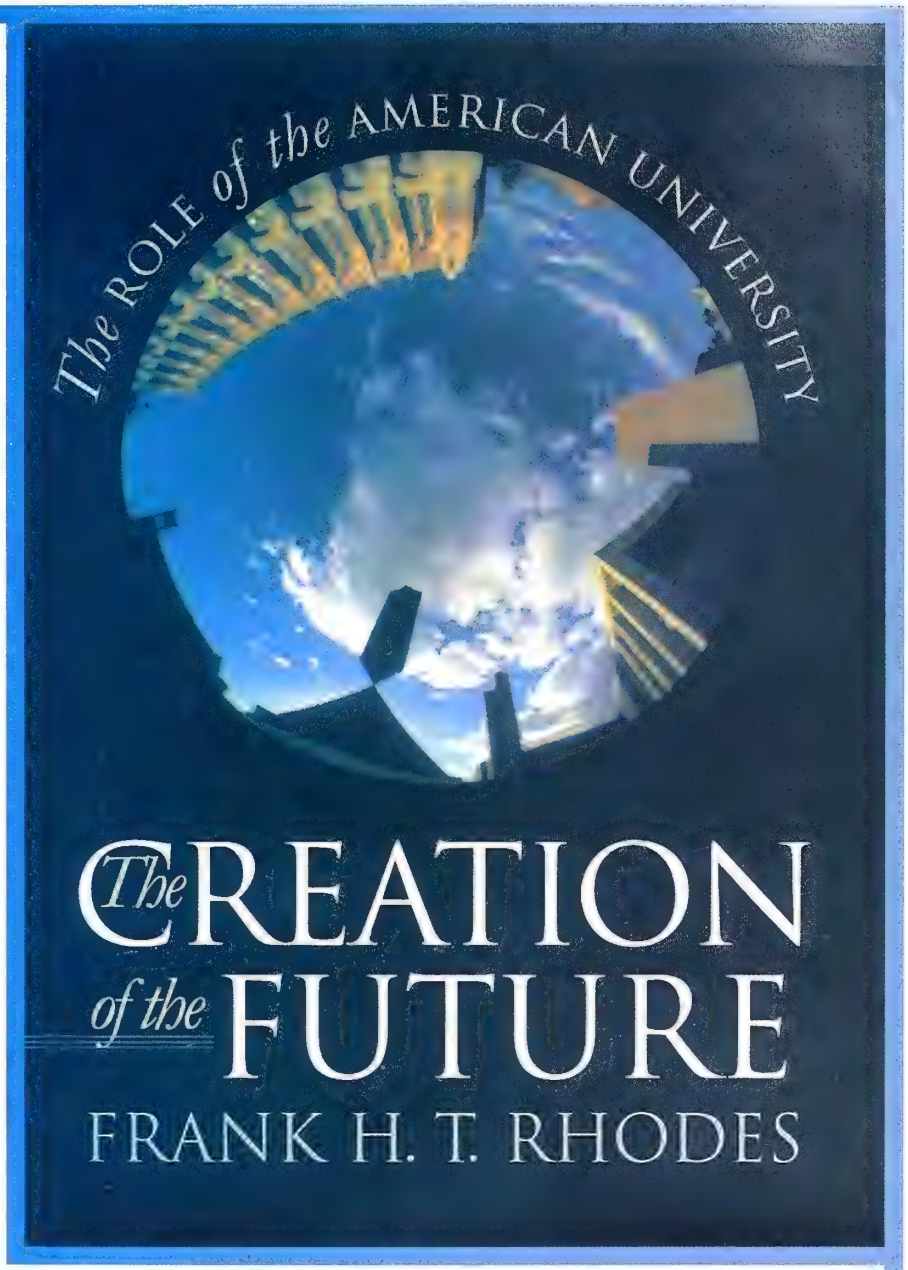
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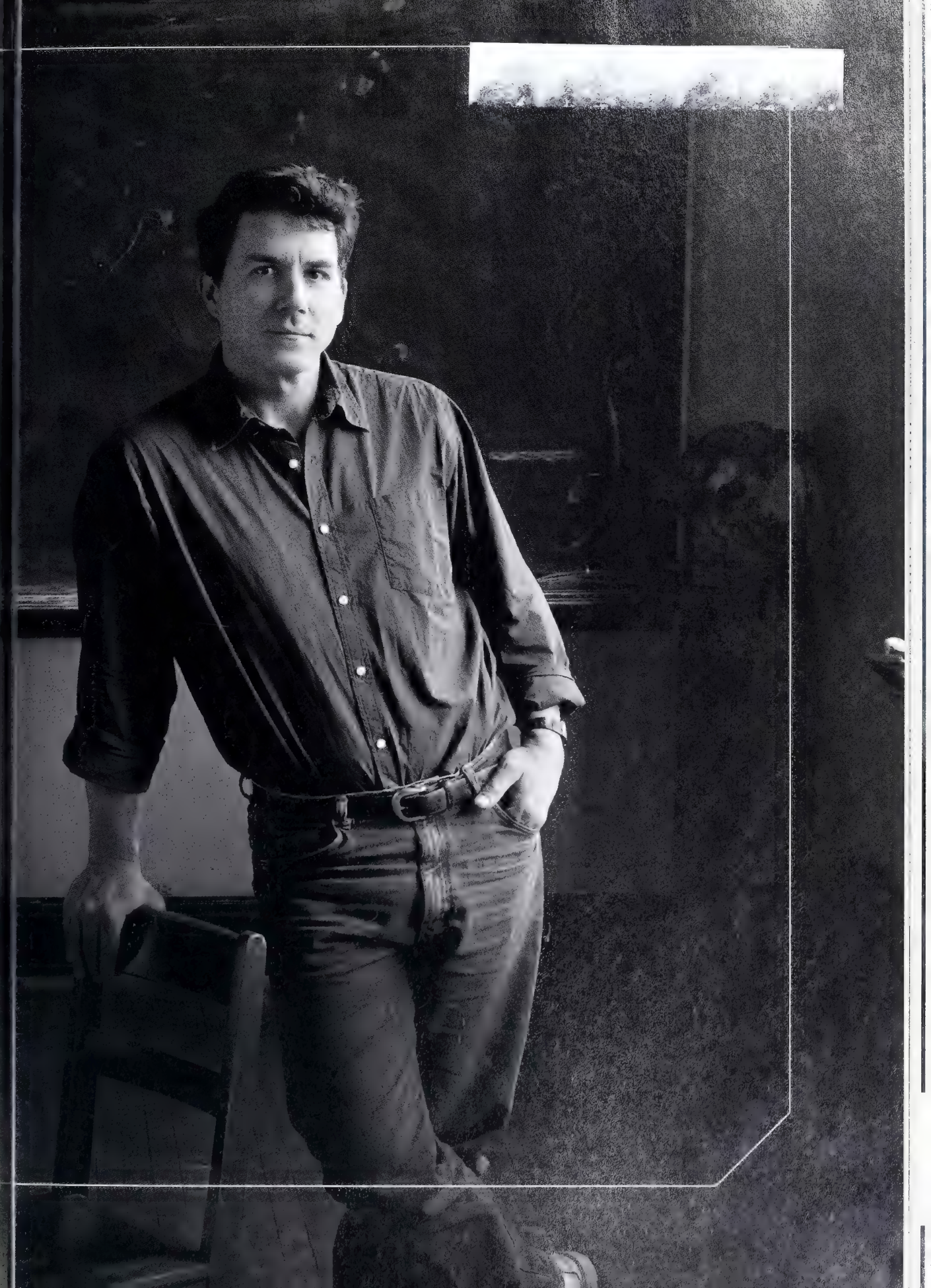
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FEBRUARY 2003

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LETTERS

Sanctioning Tyranny?

Joy Gordon's thesis that Iraqis suffer because of economic sanctions and not because of Saddam Hussein ["Cool War," November 2002] is sadly mistaken. Iraq's economy was already in shambles when I left the country in July 1980. Saddam was spending whatever money there was on weaponry. Rundown schools and hospitals were everywhere; water and electricity shortages were common. Yes, education was free, but only because Saddam used it to spread his propaganda. Yes, Saddam offered free medical care, but health care was used to buy ideological loyalty. To be treated in one of the better hospitals, you had to have a letter from a Baath Party official stating that you were a loyal member.

Iraq's economic situation became much worse when the war with Iran turned into a costly stalemate lasting eight years. In less than three years, the Iraqi currency, the dinar, lost more than 50 percent of its value

Harper's Magazine welcomes reader response. Please address mail to Letters, Harper's Magazine, 666 Broadway, New York, NY 10012, or email us at letters@harpers.org. Short letters are more likely to be published, and all letters are subject to editing. Volume precludes individual acknowledgment.

the time Saddam invaded Kuwa
1990, the Iraqis were becoming
creasingly destitute.

The U.N. sanctions initially m
an already bad situation worse, b
is not accurate to say, as Gor
does, that the Oil for Food
gramme "has actually worsened"
situation. I was in Iraq three y
ago for two months, and again
year for nine months. I trave
widely. The most significant c
plaint I heard in Baghdad and o
cities still under Saddam's con
was that the regime uses the rat
as a weapon to punish some an
ward others.

It is sad to see a scholar tryin
conceal the full weight of Sadd
tyranny.

Sabah A. Salih
Bloomsburg, Pa.

I had a vague idea that U
sanctions were taking a horrible
on Iraq's hapless people. Wh
hadn't realized is how many po
of flesh were being exacted by
sanctions and, more importa
the degree to which successive
administrations, with cold calc
tion, have engineered the s

n of hundreds of thousands of
le. Joy Gordon's study reads
n brief for a war-crimes trial. Is
wonder the Bush Administra-
aggressively opposes the inter-
nal war-crimes court?

el Abraham
born, Mich.

ordon responds:

number of studies have noted
contrary to Sabah A. Salih's
is, Iraq invested heavily in so-
nd economic development be-
he Persian Gulf War, even dur-
ne Iran-Iraq War. In 1980, Iraq
ted a program to reduce infant
child mortality, which, accord-
a 1990 UNICEF report, rapid-
d steadily declined as a result.
rding to the World Health Or-
ation, prior to the Gulf War, 90
nt of Iraqis had access to safe
and 93 percent had access to
h care. According to academics
humanitarian agencies, there
nearly universal access to prima-
hool education, Iraq won inter-
nal recognition for its literacy
paign in the 1970s and 1980s,
the vast majority of households
access to electricity. Whatever
government's reasons for these
ures, the results were impressive
remendously beneficial.
lid not argue, as Salih contends,
the Oil for Food Programme has
ened the situation in Iraq. It
inly has not. The U.N. staff in
and in New York are, by all ac-
ts, doing excellent work under
ult circumstances. I did report,
ever, that according to the U.N.
humanitarian situation in Iraq
inued to worsen in some ways—
as decreased access to potable
r—after 1995. There have in-
been concerns that the distrib-
n of goods is not equitable, but,
n how little Iraq has been per-
ed to import—an average of
per person per year—the most
volent and efficient government
inable could do little to relieve
xtreme impoverishment.

Fire This Time

nelby Steele ["The Age of



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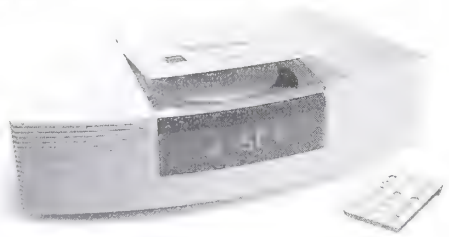
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BLIND HUBER
Nick Flynn

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—Library Journal



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"In *Blind Huber,* Nick Flynn has collaborated with a swarm of honeybees and a sightless old French beekeeper of a distant century to produce a cycle of poems exposing the fierceness and wonder of the dance of life in the natural world. This is a work of the creative imagination unlike any other, so deeply grounded in its field of observation that it reinforces William Blake's emphatic pronouncement: 'To particularize is the alone distinction of merit....For Art & Science cannot exist but in minutely organized Particulars.'"

❁

Nick Flynn's *Some Ether* was one of the most acclaimed first poetry collections in recent years. Flynn received numerous awards for it, including the "Discovery"/*The Nation* Award and the PEN/Joyce Osterweil Award for Poetry.



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White Guilt," November 2002] has done an admirable job of addressing affirmative action and this era of "white guilt." I agree wholeheartedly that the Afro-centrism and group mentality Steele discusses often work as self-imposed shackles. It is also no secret that affirmative action is an institution in need of review. Steele, however, does not provide a fair presentation of race relations in places less liberal than the San Francisco Bay area, and he should grant that the oppression, even after it ends, affects, at the very least, the next generation. I would caution that Steele's essay is too broad in its conclusions and too narrow in its purview.

Sean Watts
Santa Barbara, Calif.

Shelby Steele sets up a number of jive dichotomies: white racism versus white guilt; protest intellectual versus artist; individual versus group. Like most of human experience, identity is a dialectical process. The individual emerges from the tension between self and society. If living in France, and being free from the demands of the group, were so liberating for James Baldwin, why wasn't he more productive during his last decade there?

Robert Hinton
New York City

Shelby Steele, in his critique of James Baldwin, states that "professors who resist the Baldwin model risk the Ellisonian fate of invisibility." Steele ignores the fact that Ellison published one book (fortunately for us it was a great one) and during the rest of his life was unable to create another coherent work of art.

Ellis Breaux
San Francisco

Shelby Steele rightly argues that people should be treated as individuals and not as members of a race. People of color, however, are not the only ones in this country who have been elevated beyond their abilities by a corrupt system of privilege. We need look no further than the White House to see that white people have been using this type of affirmative action far more effectively, and far longer.

Ricardo Hinkle
New York City

In the mid-1960s the Stanford University medical school adopted an affirmative-action program. As a member of the faculty who has worked on admissions, I have certainly seen troubling failures in the selection process. Those hostile to the success of the program paid close attention to maintaining standards. It was as though they were hoping that failures would tar the effort. On a national scale, we live with similar efforts to bring discredit to affirmative action: witness the elevation, with the support of the conservatives in Congress, of Clarence Thomas to the Supreme Court. The selection of fellows and other staff at conservative institutions such as the Hoover, here at Stanford, also appears to be a way of discrediting affirmative action.

Leon T. Rosenberg
Palo Alto, Calif.

Shelby Steele's argument that black individualism, and individualism in general, must surely be questioned with, especially now that "diversity" and "multiculturalism" have been normalized in our universities. But we still live in a totally hierarchical society. By all means, we need more free thinkers and fewer conformists, but until the working class, minorities, and the oppressed rally together and demand democracy in place of oligarchy, unless we continue to act collectively, progressives will have no political future, which will suit conservatives in Washington just fine.

Bradley Butterfield
La Crosse, Wis.

Continued on p.

NOTEBOOK

Regime change

By Lewis H. Lapham

y that can give up essential liberty to
in a little temporary safety deserve
ıer liberty nor safety.

—Benjamin Franklin

Unrelenting in its search for Osama Laden and the roots of all the d's evil, the Defense Department e months ago established an In-ıation Awareness Office that took ıs letterhead emblem the all-seeing of God. Although still in the ear-ages of development and for the ıent funded with an annual budget ıly $200 million, the new medium ıass investigation seeks to "detect classify" every prospective terror-foreign, hybrid, mutant, or native ı) setting foot on American soil. door or envelope unopened, no se-unexposed, no suspicious suitcase 'uatemalan allowed to descend un-ced from a cruise ship or a bicycle. o give weight and form to a para-l dream of reason not unlike the that sustained the sixteenth-cen-Spanish Inquisition, the govern-ıt apparently means to recruit a ɔd of high-speed computers capable ifting through "ultra-large" data ehouses stocked with every elec-ıic proof of human movement in wilderness of cyberspace—bank, lical, and divorce records, credit-l transactions, emails (interoffice extraterritorial), college tran-ɔts, surveillance photographs (from ıeras in hospitals and shopping ls as well as from those in airports hotel bars), driver's licenses and sport applications, bookstore pur-ses, website visits, and traffic vio-ons. Connect all the names and ɛes to all the dates and times, and e the systems become fully opera-tional, in four years or maybe ten, the protectors of the public health and safety hope to reach beyond "truth maintenance" and "biologically inspired algorithms for agent control" to the construction of "FutureMap"—i.e., a set of indices programmed into the fiberoptic equivalent of a crystal ball that modifies "market-based techniques for avoiding surprise" in such a way that next week's nuclear explosion can be seen as clearly as last week's pornographic movie. In the meantime, while waiting for the technical upgrades with which to perform "entity extraction from natural language text," the clerks seated at the computer screens can look for inspiration to the mandala on their office stationery—an obverse of the Great Seal of the United States similar to the ornament on the back of the $1 bill, an Egyptian pyramid and mystic, Rosicrucian light buttressed by the rendering in Latin of the motto "Knowledge is power."

When reports of the IAO's existence belatedly appeared in the mainstream press in November of last year, nine months after the headquarters' staff began moving the first electronic robots into an air-conditioned basement in Virginia, the news didn't capture the attention of the Congress or excite the interest of the television networks. No politician uttered a discouraging word; no prominent historian entertained the risk of a possibly unpatriotic question. The talk-show gossip of the moment dwelled on the prospect of war in Iraq and the setting up of the Department of Homeland Security (soon to be equipped with its own domestic espionage service), and, except for an occasional lawyer associated with the American Civil Liberties Union, most of the people in New York to whom I mentioned the Pentagon's gift for totalitarian fantasy were inclined to think that intelligence gathering was somehow akin to weather forecasting—a routine and necessary precaution, annoying and possibly unconstitutional but entirely appropriate in a time of trouble.

William Safire entered an objection on the opinion page of the *New York Times* ("Orwellian scenario . . . sweeping theft of privacy rights . . . exploitation of fear"), but elsewhere in the large-circulation media protests were hard to find. The general opinion so clearly favored the Bush Administration's policies of forward deterrence and preemptive strike that I wasn't surprised by the absence of commentary, much less complaint, when it was announced in early December that the FBI had been jettisoning the baggage of due process while pursuing the rumor of an underwater terrorist attack against an unknown target somewhere along the 95,000 miles of the American coastline. From hundreds of dive-shop operators everywhere in the country the FBI demanded the names of the several million swimmers who had taken diving lessons over the course of the last three years. Only two citizens refused the request, the co-owners of Reef Seekers Dive Company in Beverly Hills, California. When word of their noncooperation showed up in a newspaper story, they were besieged by vindictive telephone calls expressing the hope that their shop prove to be the next locus of a terrorist bombing.

The incident speaks to the nervous temper of the times—hundreds of dive shops, only one refusing to give up its client list; the voice of the people

tuned to the pitch of an angry mob—and illustrates the lesson in obedience well and truly learned by a once free people during the second half of a century defined in the history books as America's own. I'm old enough to remember public speeches unfettered by the dogma of political correctness, a time when it was possible to apply for a job without submitting to a blood or urine test, when people construed their freedoms as a constitutional birthright, not as favors grudgingly bestowed by a sometimes benevolent government. I also can remember the days when people weren't afraid of tobacco smoke, sexual intercourse, and saturated fats; when irony was understood and money wasn't sacred; when even men in uniform could be trusted to recognize a joke.

The spacious and once familiar atmospheres of liberty (wisecracking and open-ended, tolerant, unkempt, experimental, and democratic) didn't survive the poisoning of Hiroshima or serve the purposes of the Cold War with the Russians. The easygoing, provincial republic of fifty years ago gradually assumed the character of a world-encircling nation-state, its plowshares beaten into swords, borrowing from its enemies (first the nonexistent Communist empire, now the unseen terrorist jihad) the practice of restricting the freedom of its own citizens in the interest of what the increasingly oligarchic governments in Washington proclaim to be "the national security." Begin the narrative almost anywhere in the late 1940s or early 1950s—with the National Security Act of 1947, the hearings before the House Un-American Activities Committee in 1951, President Harry Truman's decision to build the hydrogen bomb, the composition of the Hollywood Blacklist, or Senator Joe McCarthy's search for Marxists marching in the Rose Bowl Parade—and the plot development moves briskly forward in the direction of more fear and less courage, toward the substitution of White House intrigue for congressional debate and the professions of smiling loyalty preferred to the clumsy and impolitic fumbling for the truth.

Bear in mind the conclusion of the Church committee hearings as long ago as 1976—"too many people have been spied upon by too many Government agencies and too much information has been collected"—and space permits only a brief acknowledgment of the various police powers seized by the government under the rubric of the war on drugs (the use of anonymous informants, the taking of property without conviction or arrest), of the illegal surveillance of American citizens by their own intelligence agencies (the CIA between 1953 and 1973 producing an index of 1.5 million suspicious American names, the FBI compiling a list of 26,000 individuals to be summarily rounded up in the event of "a national emergency"), of the Justice Department's long campaign against the civil rights granted by the First, Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, and Eighth amendments to the Constitution, and of a system of public education that offers its best-attended courses of instruction to the student populations in the army and the prisons. Add to the constant threat of nuclear extinction the sum of the wiretaps infiltrated into the American consciousness across the span of three generations, and it's no wonder that by the late 1990s, even in the midst of the reassuring prosperity allied with a buoyant stock market, and well before the destruction of the World Trade Center, the public-opinion polls found the bulk of the respondents willing to give up a generous percentage of their essential liberty in return for safer streets, secure suburbs, well-lighted parking garages, and risk-free cocktail waitresses.

Since the shock of September 11, 2001, the American public has quickened the pace of its retreat into the shelters of harmless speech and heavy law enforcement. If I were to measure the general level of submissiveness by my own encounters with the habit of self-censorship and the general concern with social hygiene—acquaintances reluctant to remark on the brutality of the Israeli army for fear of being thought anti-Semitic, public scolds who damn me as a terrorist for smoking a cigarette in Central Park, college students so worried about the grooming of their résumés that they avoid rock concerts on the off-chance that their faces might show up on a po
department videotape—I mig
tempted to argue that Ame
winning of the Cold War result
the loss of its soul. In place o
reckless and independent-mi
individual once thought to en
the national stereotype (child
ture, descendant of Daniel B
hard-drinking and unorthodo
now have a quorum of nervou
reerists, psalm-singing and
behaved, happy to oblige, eag
please, trained to hold up
hands and empty their pockets
passing through airport secur
entering City Hall.

John Quincy Adams understo
terms of the bargain as long a
1821, speaking as the secretary of
against sending the U.S. Navy
arrange Spain's colonial empi
Colombia and Chile. America, h
"goes not abroad, in search of
sters to destroy." Were the coun
embark on such a foolish adven

> she would involve herself beyo
> power of extrication, in all the v
> interest and intrigue, of indiv
> avarice, envy, and ambition, whi
> sume the colors and usurp the st
> of freedom. The fundamental m
> of her policy would insensibly
> from *liberty* to *force*. . . . She mig
> come the dictatress of the worl
> would no longer be the ruler of h
> spirit.

The Bush Administration ec
the American spirit with powe
with liberty. During the months
the fall of the twin towers it h
sumed the colors and usurped the
dard of freedom to jury-rig the fi
work of an autocratic state; bowi
the constituencies of fear and pa
ic sentiment, a servile Congre
proves the requested legislation
gerly as if it had been called up
save a sinking ship with the rapid
ming of steel doors. First the US
triot Act (authorizing the govern
to arbitrarily decide who is and w
not an un-American), then the
ident seeking the prerogative t
clare any citizen an "enemy cor
ant" (subject to being impris
indefinitely, without charge or ba
forbidden access to a lawyer or a
review), then the formation o

and the several reconfigurations
›th the Justice Department and
'BI (always with the purpose of
iplying their pretexts for an ar-
, and then, most recently, on No-
›er 25 of last year, the establish-
: of the Department of Homeland
rity.

ıe supporting legislation runs to
pages, which Senator Robert C.
of West Virginia flung down on
esk with a gesture that reminded
w *York Times* reporter of "the fury
oses smashing the tablets." One
ly nine senators who voted against
ill, Byrd denounced it as a foolish
ınlawful seizure of power unlike-
do much harm to America's ene-
but certain to do a great deal of
ı to the American people. "With
tle plan like the Bush Adminis-
›n is proposing," Byrd said, "in-
l of crossing the Delaware River
ıpture the Hessian soldiers on
stmas day, George Washington
d have stayed on his side of the riv-
.d built a bureaucracy."

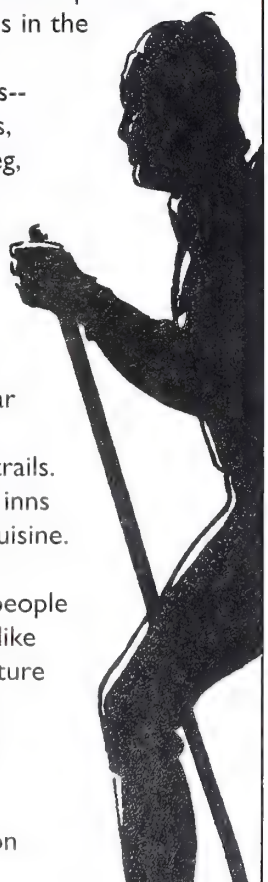
›t having read the small print in
Homeland Security Act, I can't
; at the extent to which it will fur-
subtract from the country's store
vil liberty, but if I understand cor-
y its operative bias (170,000 func-
ıries undefended by a labor union
serving at the pleasure and sole
etion of the president of the Unit-
tates) I all too easily can imagine
v department of bureaucratic con-
hat incorporates the paranoid sys-
; of thought engendered by the
l War with the dogmas of political
ectness meant to cure the habit of
speech, and deploys the surveil-
e techniques made possible by the
miracles of modern telecom-
munications technology.

don't count myself a believer in
lystopian futures imagined in Al-
; Huxley's *Brave New World* or
rge Orwell's *1984*, but I think it
ld be a mistake to regard the trend
ents as somehow favorable to the
e of liberty. President Bush likes
esent himself as the embodiment
ıe spirit of 1776, but to the direc-
ıip of the Pentagon's new Infor-
on Awareness Office he appoint-
ice Admiral John Poindexter, a
list ideologue, a convicted felon,
and a proven enemy of both the American Congress and the articles of the Constitution. As national security adviser to President Ronald Reagan in 1985, the admiral supervised what came to be known as the Iran-Contra swindle—the selling of missiles to the despotic ayatollahs in Iran in return for money with which to fund, secretly and illegally, a thuggish junta in Nicaragua. After the scheme collapsed under the weight of its criminal stupidity, the admiral repeatedly lied to the congressional committee investigating the farce (thus his convictions on five felony counts), and when called upon to account for his false testimony he said that he considered it his "duty" to conceal information too sensitive to be entrusted to loud-mouthed politicians.

Not an honest or liberal-minded man, the admiral, but unfortunately representative of the arrogant corporatists currently in charge of the government in Washington. Glimpsed in the persons of Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, Vice President Dick Cheney, and Attorney General John Ashcroft, the senior managers of the Bush Administration make no secret of their contempt for the rules of democratic procedure (inefficient, wrong-headed, and slow), their distrust of the American people (indolent and immoral, corrupted by a debased popular culture, undeserving of the truth), and their disdain for the United Nations and the principle of international law (sophomoric idealisms popular with weak nations too poor to pay for a serious Air Force). I don't for a moment doubt the eager commitment to the great and noble project of "regime change," but on the evidence of the last eighteen-months they've been doing their most effective work in the United States, not in Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, or Iraq. Better understood as radical nationalists than as principled conservatives, they deploy the logic endorsed by the American military commanders in Vietnam (who found it necessary to destroy a village in order to save it), and they offer the American people a choice similar to the one presented by the officers of the Spanish Inquisition to independent-minded heretics—give up your liberty, and we will set you free. ■

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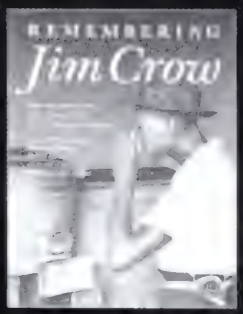
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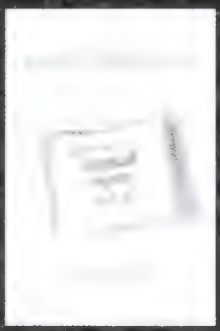
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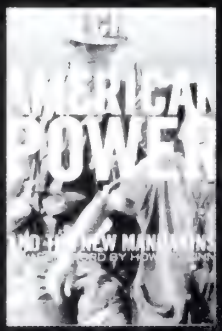
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HARPER'S INDEX

Minimum number of U.S. cities, towns, and counties that have passed resolutions opposing the USA Patriot Act : 20

Chance that an American says the new Department of Homeland Security makes the nation "a lot safer" : 1 in 8

Percentage change since fall 2000 in the number of documents classified by the federal government : +44

Number of countries the Justice Department has advised since 1981 on the creation of freedom of information policies : 73

Chance that a Briton polled online believes that the United States is a bigger threat to world peace than is Iraq : 1 in 3

Number of years the New York Police Department's new Deputy Commissioner of Intelligence worked for the CIA : 35

Number of the 44 U.S. residents detained as "potential grand jury witnesses" in terrorism cases who have yet to testify : 20

Number who have been charged with crimes : 2

Number of California inmates serving 25 years to life under the three-strikes law for thefts worth less than $400 : 344

Percentage change since 2000 in the average value of goods stolen in each U.S. shoplifting incident : +53

Percentage of Americans surveyed in October who chose the word "hopeful" to describe their feelings about the economy : 37

Percentage who chose "angry," "worried," or "confused" : 59

Minimum amount S&P 500 corporations owe in retirement benefits for which they have set aside no funds : $458,000,000,000

Amount Democratic candidates raised last year from individuals who gave at least $1 million : $36,000,000

Amount Republican candidates raised last year from individuals who gave as much : $3,000,000

Minimum number of yachts that were donated to U.S. charities in 2001 : 527

Price for a single berth on the February 2001 "Freedom Cruise," including a tour of Grenada led by Oliver North : $1,906

Percentage of Jamaicans who say they would be "better off today" had Jamaica remained a British colony : 53

Percentage of black South Africans who now have a positive view of the way their country was governed under apartheid : 20

Percentage of Moscow residents who say that city residents from Chechnya or the rest of the Caucasus should be expelled : 25

Minimum number of soldiers killed or severely injured each year in the Russian army's initiation hazing : 2,000

Rank of the size of Russia's and Turkey's standing armies, respectively, among Europe's largest : 1, 2

Number of warring factions for which the world's estimated 500,000 child soldiers have been enlisted to fight : 72

Minimum percentage of Angola's soldiers who are HIV-positive : 40

Percentage of all Angolan adults who are : 6

Factor by which Russia's tuberculosis rate exceeds that of Western Europe : 7.6

Number of deaths in 2001 that the Japanese government classified as having resulted from overwork : 143

Percentage change in the number of graduate degrees awarded in China since 1981 : +680

Chances that a new student at the University of California at Berkeley last fall had at least one foreign-born parent : 2 in 3

Percentage of African Americans who have dated at least one white American : 43

Percentage of white Americans who have dated at least one African American : 17

Percentage change since 2000 in the number of syphilis cases among U.S. men and women, respectively : +15, –18

Number of female characters with supernatural powers on major U.S. network-television programs last season : 20

Estimated number of asteroids whose orbits Earth crosses each year : 20,000,000 (see page 40)

Ratio of U.S. spending on tracking asteroids this year to spending on missile defense : 1:1,900

Ratio of the amount the U.S. will spend on missile defense this year to the amount it spent in 1988 under Reagan : 4:3

Percentage by which the average sperm count of an urban U.S. male exceeds that of a rural U.S. male : 60

Chances that a U.S. man between the ages of 18 and 34 shaves all or part of his chest : 3 in 10

Chances that a man says he is interested in chest-hair removal : 6 in 10

Minimum number of neutered pets worldwide that have been implanted with fake testicles : 100,000

Figures cited are adjusted for inflation and are the latest available as of December 2002. Sources are listed on page 66.
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AN AMERICAN ALBUM

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1850 - 2000

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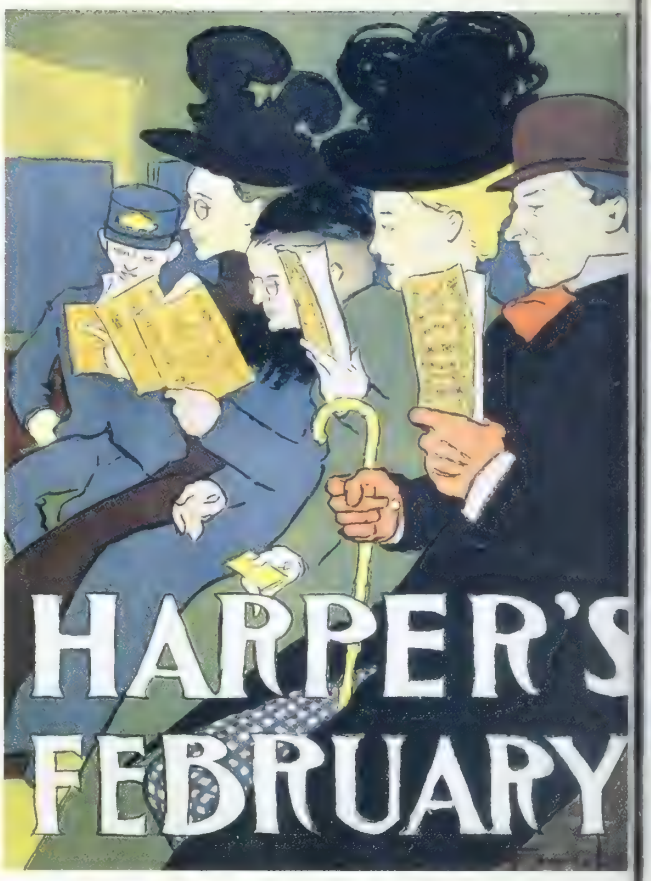
This year marks the sesquicentennial of *Harper's Magazine*–the nation's oldest monthly magazine–and in honor of the occasion, the editors have published a magnificent 712-page, richly illustrated volume of the best writing from the magazine's pages. For 15 decades of uninterrupted publication, *Harper's* has explored the American experience with a fiercely independent spirit and spectacular writing. Now that experience is available in *An American Album: One Hundred and Fifty Years of Harper's Magazine*.

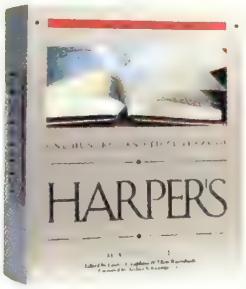
The Table of Contents is stunning in its range: Herman Melville, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Walt Whitman, Mark Twain, Edith Wharton, Willa Cather, Eudora Welty, John Cheever, Philip Roth, John Updike, Norman Mailer, David Mamet, Annie Dillard, and Tom Wolfe–and scores of other writers and artists who have made an indelible impression on America's literary history.

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READINGS

[Testaments]

WE WERE CALLING TO DEATH

The following stories from the Rwandan genocide were collected by Madeleine Mukamabano, a journalist at Radio France Internationale. Beginning on April 7, 1994, shortly after the death of President Habyarimana in a plane crash and continuing for about three months, Rwandan Hutus killed between 800,000 and 1 million people, mostly Tutsis but also opposition Hutus and Pygmies. More than a million Hutus are thought to have participated in the massacres. The accounts appear in Autodafe *number 2, published by the International Parliament of Writers and Seven Stories Press. Translated from the French by Hélène Poulet.*

SYLVIE, A SOCIAL WORKER: Fis was part of our first drawing class. The theme we assigned was for them to draw themselves and their life at the center. Fis drew himself as a soldier with a truly scary look on his face. He identified with the aggressor. He would say, "That's me as a soldier, and the others, they don't scare me." In his second drawing, he didn't want to draw life at the center, or anything about the center. He couldn't. The figure he drew was shapeless and seemed to float in the air with a pool of blood coming from his back.

At that point, we realized that this child had really been through something. He did not even comment on his drawing. Because his voice . . . he trembled.

At the second class meeting, the theme was to draw a good memory and a bad memory. For the bad one, Fis drew soldiers killing his father. As he drew the scene, he cried for the first time. He cried so much that he did not manage to do the second drawing; that is, the good memory. He cried during the entire session. But he did manage to say, "They're killing my father, and I'm in the car, I'm watching and I didn't even scream."

And on his first drawing, when he drew himself as a soldier, he had big eyes and a mouthless face.

LEA: After the announcement on the radio of President Habyarimana's plane crash, going out of your house was forbidden. Everyone was told to stay at home. So I stayed in, waiting for who knew what, but we were not allowed to go out. We waited there, but in fact the massacres had already started. I heard from our Hutu neighbors, who were allowed to go out, that there were killings going on everywhere. But as the carnage increased, the Hutus, our neighbors, eventually fell into it, too. They too started killing. They would form groups; they had weapons, machetes, and clubs. Sometimes they were accompanied by soldiers with guns. They went into houses and told everybody to come out. They were crazed, as if they were drunk, their eyes all red. They were in a frenzy. They were singing, shouting, but you could tell they were not normal people. After killing one or more people they seemed to feel an unbelievable pleasure. That's when they would really get into singing and shouting. I left my home, or else they would have killed me. I found refuge at some strangers' home. We went through the neighborhood but couldn't go very far. We crossed a boulevard, and there were dead bodies everywhere. We walked over the bodies to escape.

They didn't find us right away, but a week

later they found out where we were. They came again and we tried to give them everything we had: money, jewelry, everything, we gave them everything. Every day that they came we gave—until there was nothing left. And so once again we ran away. Each time they came they would take people with them who never came back. They killed them. We knew we were next. Among the people who were with me at that time, I believe that I am the sole survivor today. There were about ten of us. They began with the men (maybe for fear that they would fight back) and then the women. And the women . . . in the beginning . . . were saved for rape.

If a militiaman or soldier walked by your house and heard you listening to something other than Radio des Milles Collines [the Hutu extremist station], like the national station or some foreign one, you were dead right then. You had to please them, listen to what they wanted the population to listen to. The radio was calling on Hutus to massacre all the Tutsis. They would even give some people's addresses, following up with: "Have you been to such and such a house?" and immediately they would go to whoever's house had been identified on the radio. We were listening to it—I will never forget. "The Tutsis are not meant to live, they must be killed. Even pregnant women, they must be cut in pieces, ripped open to get the baby out." And that was done. "We must kill the Tutsis to the root to prevent them from growing up, from going abroad and coming back later." That was their argument: "If we had killed them in the sixties, they would not have come back in the nineties." In between there was music. But the music had the same purpose. There were slogans, people singing for those occasions; the songs were a call to hatred. The songs and what the journalists said were all the same.

We were scared, but I think we had also gone beyond fear. We were like sleepwalkers. You were without feeling, as if you were already dead from fear. At night we would hear shooting, to the left, to the right, and sometimes we would leave the house to put ourselves in the path of the bullets. You told yourself, at least I'll die from a bullet instead of being hacked to pieces. We were calling to death. And we were waiting for it.

FRANÇOIS, CENTRAL PRISON, KIGALI: I am in prison for killing four people. A car drove by with a loudspeaker saying that all Hutus had to defend themselves, that there was a single enemy: the Tutsis. I heard that. It was morning. I jumped out of bed, I grabbed a club, I went out, and I began killing. There was an old woman nearby, with two young children who had not reached school age yet. We took them outside and made them stand by a pit. A man named Sibomana handed me a club. I killed the children, and he killed the old woman. Then we climbed back out and found an old man hiding behind a house. I knocked him out with a club. When we left him, he was dying. I did not know the people I killed very well. All we were told was to hunt down the Tutsis, and we began to slaughter them. In my case, nobody forced me to do it. It's something that germinated on its own in my head. I saw people invading the hills, saying they were tracking down Tutsis, and I rushed to join them.

Everywhere I went a crowd encircled Tutsis. I was the first to kill. I didn't think I was doing anything wrong at the time. It was when I got arrested that I realized I had committed crimes. While I was killing, I thought there was no problem, no consequences, since the authorities said the Tutsis were enemies. My neighbors were Tutsis, we used to

[Poem]

SHEEP'S HEAD GULLY

By Mark Ford, from Soft Sift, *to be published in April by Harcourt*

After years on the trail I could barely
Distinguish friend from enemy: they lay
Together like pebbles, immune to the seasons,
While I tramped about collecting odd remnants, ingesting
Their knowledge of knowledge. God-fearing bandits agreed
To disdain this porous earth that yields up nothing but itself
To bewildered intruders. Whispers drift
Across the sapping wastes, the clefts and lizard-like
Ridges; creepers flicker in the passing breeze; heaps
Of chalky bones reveal how some died
In their footsteps, land-hungry, scheming, at long last
Resigned. There proved no turning back, and hope
Came to seem the jaws of a lurid, furious monster
Glowering from the shadows. I notice that my right hand
Is cradling my left, and how the sky arcs
Overhead. In the distance crows wheel
Above each other in ever-shifting formations;
A glaucous haze envelops the scrub
Beyond, and seems to beckon like a vast sieve in which
I must shed my coat, my trappings, the scarf about my throat.



e Road in the Distance," a photograph by Kathryn Szoka, was on display last month at Robin Rice Gallery, in New York City.

share everything, like water. There weren't any conflicts between us. I don't know why all those things happened. Wickedness was in fashion.

GASPARD: You're asking if I talk to the people who killed the members of my family? Of course I do, why wouldn't I? I can't live in isolation. I talk with them; I'm not spiteful like they are. We visit each other, we drink beer together, even sleep with their daughters. There are only a handful of survivors here. You must have seen all along the road that there's nothing but ruins. There are only three Tutsis left. All the Hutus here took part in the genocide. All the remaining houses belong to Hutus. All the youths you see around here have killed. Pointing my finger at the killers who are free is not something I want to do. That task is the responsibility of the authorities. I can't point them out. I don't want to get you mixed up in all that. If I did it would stir things up in the population. People are going to think we informed on them and that you are here to avenge us.

ENATA: I had nine children, five were killed. I also lost my husband, my father, my mother, my brothers, and all their families. Here are my children, they followed me when you called, they are always clinging to me. When the war broke out, I was with my husband and my older brothers. We fled to the hill, where everybody was gathering. We would hear that such and such a hill had just been attacked, that everything was burning, that a woman had been killed not too far away, and that massacres had begun in our village. Everybody started to run. Somebody would tell you that your child had just been killed back there, you took it in, you were told of your husband's death, your father's, your brother's—until you heard they had attacked and destroyed the church where many people had sought refuge, that they had slaughtered many people inside the church. The following day, those who still had the strength went to the church to retrieve a child or an adult who had survived among the dead bodies. On the eve of the attack on the church, soldiers had come and asked, "Who are you running from?" We answered, "We're running from the Hutus."

They asked if there were any Hutus in the church and we said there were. So they separated us. The Tutsis inside the church and Hutus

outside. The soldiers freed the Hutus, took them with them, said that they'd be back to decide on our case. Around two in the afternoon a group of attackers showed up. We tried to defend ourselves by throwing stones. Everybody was wounded, men and women. We were screaming, we cried, "It's the end." Some people managed to run from the church, but most perished inside. Those who fled went first to the top of a mountain. The next day another group came to attack us. We rushed down the mountain. I still wonder how I managed to save my three children. We reached the Akanyaru River. Many committed suicide by jumping into the river. Karangwa, my brother-in-law, jumped with all his children. He was surrounded by militiamen wearing daggers on their belts. Automatic-weapons fire was coming from everywhere. People were screaming all over the place, "We're getting wiped out! Fight back!" But we had only stones for weapons. We ran all the way to the papyrus marshes. All along the way people were committing suicide. They attacked us in the papyrus too. Machetes came raining down, hacking people up. They yelled, "Get out of there, we saw you, get out!"

They pulled me out of my hiding place. I clutched my baby. They started hitting me with a spiked club. A piece of flesh fell over my eyes. They tore my baby away from me and ripped my sweater. I thought I'd close my eyes, but decided I'd rather die with my eyes open. Another blow from the club! I must have passed out. When I regained consciousness, I was naked and covered with blood. I was lying on a girl who had been killed and fallen flat on her stomach. I heard my baby crying! He was still alive! I saw two men coming back with machetes. They cried out, "Look at her, she's still alive, check out that Tutsi's little waist!"

I had gone for days without eating. They hit me on the back of the neck with their machetes, my head, my fingers. They didn't need to take off my clothes, that had already been done.

ANSILA: I was arrested for genocide. I fled with my children and they died. I killed. I cannot hide a crime that was made public. I ran from the war, the war turned into a genocide. My husband was Tutsi. I am Hutu. He convinced me to go back to my parents. He said, "We're the ones they're after, they want to kill us. Flee with the children, try to save them." My husband and my father-in-law fled the other way. I left with my five children and my mother-in-law. We spent the night at someone's home, but some people started to lurk around the house saying the owner was hiding Tutsis. My mother-in-law said, "The situation is becoming critical, take the children and go to your parents." I first went to my aunt's, and when her husband saw me, he cried out, "My God! Those children will get killed here, you'd better go to your parents." My parents had fled; the killers were after them because my brother had married a Tutsi. I decided to stay at their place anyway. Then those tracking down Tutsis arrived. They said, "Woman, what are you doing with those children?" I didn't answer. "You ran away with them, and they are the ones we are looking for. Kill them."

I was overwhelmed. They left me there; they did nothing. I cannot say that they are the ones who killed my children. I am the one who killed them. I remembered that my parents grew vegetables and must have pesticides. I broke the padlock on the shed where they were stored. I grabbed a bottle of pesticides, and I had my children drink it straight. And they did. Four of them died. I killed my children, but I didn't hate them. I panicked. I was afraid that the others would come back and find us there. I thought that everything had to be finished before they came back. I had nowhere to go. My aunt's husband had kicked me out. I would have been better off dead, but I'm not dead. Nothing's right in my head. I hardly sleep. My children are always on my mind.

ELIE MPAYIMANA, A PYGMY. *His Tutsi wife and two children were killed during the genocide. He recently became a member of the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission*: I don't like to talk about the fate of my family, my own situation, my wife and children. Because I have bitter memories. I shall never tolerate the negativism of those who see the genocide as a news item. For me, the genocide is something that gnaws at my heart. I was young, married at twenty-two, we had a life where we loved each other, not only in marital love but in the love that showed how well the Rwandan people lived together and could weave and reweave an existence of unique love. It was my wife's getting killed during the genocide and my twins, a boy and a girl. My son's name was Liberté Eloi and my daughter's Liberté Edith. When someone talks about the genocide, it's about the Kigali massacres, the murdered Tutsis, the Hutus who were killed because they didn't espouse the line of the genocidal Hutus. See, I'm deliberately skipping a chapter in order not to dwell on this feature that has marked my days of love, my days of dreams, my days of patience, of the people who rallied round my marriage, all dead.

That's why I keep an album, which I look at often. I have an album at home, which I have labeled with capital letters. I seldom pronounce these letters: EXTINCT STARS. These extinct stars are poems, which I've called necrologies and dedicated to my friends. So, the genocide, for me—I often feel I keep going so I won't let myself, in my heart, surrender to necrological moments and erase everyone.



COURTESY CLEMENTINE GALLERY, NEW YORK CITY

Valley Farms, Island in the Center, *and* Canyon Columns, *three drawings by Lordy Rodriguez, were on display last October at Clementine Gallery, in New York City.*

[Catalogue]

WHEN KILLING JUST WON'T DO

From "Nonlethal Weapons: Terms and References," a report published by the United States Air Force Institute for National Security Studies. According to the report's introduction, many of the weapons are still in the proposal stage.

ACOUSTIC

Acoustic Bullets: High-power, very low-frequency waves emitted from one- to two-meter antenna dishes. Results in blunt-object trauma. Effects range from discomfort to death.

Curdler Unit: A device that is plugged into a sound system to produce a shrill, shrieking, blatting noise. It is used to irritate and disperse rioters and has a decibel range just below that of the danger level to the human ear. It is used in night operations to produce a "voodoo" effect and breaks up chanting, singing, and clapping.

Infrasound: Very low-frequency sound that can travel long distances and easily penetrate most buildings and vehicles. Long-wavelength sound creates biophysical effects: nausea, loss of bowels, disorientation, vomiting, internal-organ damage, or death may occur. By 1972 an infrasound generator had been built in France. When activated it made the people in range sick for hours.

Squawk Box: Crowd-dispersal weapon field-tested by the British Army in Ireland in 1973. This directional device emits two ultrasonic frequencies that when mixed in the human ear become intolerable. It produces giddiness, nausea, or fainting. The beam is so small that it can be directed at specific individuals in a riot situation.

ACOUSTIC & OPTICAL

Photic Driver: A crowd-control device that uses ultrasound and flashing infrared lights to penetrate closed human eyelids. Potential for epileptic fits because of the stroboscopic flashing effect.

Psycho-Correction: A technology invented by a Russian scientist that involves influencing subjects visually or aurally with imbedded subliminal messages.

BARRIER

Coating, Slick: Teflon-type lubricants that create a slippery surface. In the 1960s the term "Instant Banana Peel" was coined to describe the capability provided by Riotril. When applied to a hard surface and wetted down, this dry, relatively inexpensive white powder becomes ice slick. It becomes virtually impossible for an individual to move or stand up on a hard surface so treated.

Foam, Sticky: A name given to a polymer-based

super-adhesive agent. The technology first began appearing in commercial applications such as "superglue" and quick-setting foam insulation. It is extremely persistent and is virtually impossible to remove without a liquid solvent that has a pleasant citrus odor. Sticky foam came to public attention on February 28, 1995, when U.S. Marines used it in Mogadishu, Somalia, to prevent armed intruders from impeding efforts to extricate U.N. forces from that country.

OBSCURANT

Smoke, Colored: Colored-smoke concentrations produce greater initial psychological and panic effect than white smoke. Caucasians are said to have a greater repugnance to brilliant green smoke, whereas Negroids and Latins are declared to be most adversely affected by brilliant red. Rioters confronted with a strong concentration of colored smoke feel, instinctively, that they are being marked, or stained, and therefore lose anonymity.

MARKER

Invisible: One concept envisions a fluorescent powder sprayed into crowds from a pressurized container. Particles adhere to clothing and are visible only under ultraviolet light. Another concept envisions sponge grenades impregnated with infrared dye so that rioters can be later identified.

RIOT-CONTROL AGENT

Tear Gas, Invisible: Invisible tear gas cannot be seen by rioters once it emerges from a grenade or mechanical dispenser, and therefore has a greater psychological panic-producing effect than tear smoke.

ELECTRICAL

Police Jacket: Police jacket that jolts anyone who touches it.

BIOTECHNICAL

Biodegrading Microbes: Microbes that turn storage tanks full of aviation fuel into useless jelly. Such microbes may produce acids or enzymes that can be tailored to degrade almost anything, even concrete and metal, so their potential use as nonlethal weapons could be extensive.

Genetic Alteration: The act of changing genetic code to create a desired less-than-lethal but long-term disablement effect, perhaps for generations, thereby creating a societal burden.

Neuro-Implant: Computer implants into the brain that allow for behavioral modification and control. Current research is experimental in nature and focuses on lab animals such as mice.

Project Agile: Series of military-science studies in Asia conducted in May 1966 for the Advanced Research Projects Agency. One such study centered on developing "stink" bombs that were race specific.

Pheromones: The chemical substances released by animals to influence physiology or behavior of other members of the same species. One use of pheromones, at the most elemental level, could be to mark target individuals and then release bees to attack them.

HOLOGRAMS

Prophet: The projection of the image of an ancient god over an enemy capital whose public communications have been seized and used

[Explanation]

CALLING KEVIN BACON

From a November 7 letter by Bob Currie, director of the Community Protection Department of the City of Westminster, to Charlotte Renwick, manager of the Ship Public House, a London pub. In Britain, dancing is prohibited in establishments without a license for "public entertainment." The letter was featured in The Publican, *a newspaper for the British pub industry.*

Dear Ms. Renwick,

On both occasions when Officers visited your premises they observed persons dancing to the recorded music that was being provided—nine (9) on the first occasion and six (6) on the second—resulting in the issue of two "Unsatisfactory" inspection forms.

In general terms, dancing would be described as the rhythmic movement of the legs, arms, and body, usually changing positions within the floor space available, whether or not accompanied by musical support. However, in law, whether or not a person was dancing is subject to the "reasonable man" test, the weight of evidence presented by the prosecution, and the decision of the court.

It may be of interest that in London there is legislation that requires a dance licence to be granted for still nude posing.

I acknowledge the measures you are taking, namely displaying NO DANCING signs and instructing staff to ensure that persons heed those signs. The Officers also suggested you change the style of music to dissuade customers from dancing.

Yours sincerely,
Bob Currie

against it in a massive psychological operation.

Soldier Forces: The projection of soldier images that make an opponent think more allied forces exist than actually do, make an opponent believe that allied forces are located in a region where none actually exist, and/or provide false targets for his weapons to fire upon.

Death: Hologram used to scare a target individual to death. Example: a drug lord with a weak heart sees the ghost of his dead rival appearing at his bedside and dies of fright.

[FAQ]

KILL THE MESSENGER

From the website of Afterlife Telegrams, which offers to deliver messages to the dead for a price of $10 a word (with a five-word minimum). The service hires terminally ill patients, who deliver the messages upon "passing into the afterlife."

What uses are there for "Afterlife Telegrams"?

You can:

- Apologize to someone you feel you have wronged while that person was alive.
- Invite someone to a séance that will take place at a certain time and place. (We sincerely doubt this will work, but it's your money.)
- Let someone know about an important event that they might have missed, such as a wedding.
- Let someone know that after they passed away you adopted their pets and you are now taking care of them.

How can you guarantee that the telegram will get through after the messenger has passed on?

We can't. The truth is no one knows what happens when someone dies. All that we can guarantee is this:

- The messengers have memorized their telegrams before passing on.
- The messengers have promised to do what can be done to deliver their telegrams to the addressees after passing.

Unfortunately there is no known way for the addressee to reply to the sender's telegram, nor can we prove that it was even successfully delivered. Please keep this in mind when deciding whether or not to use our service.

Reasons why, despite our best efforts, your telegram might not get through:

- Reincarnation could cause a problem. By the time the telegram can reach the addressee, he could already be back on Earth.
- The afterlife could be so chaotic and confusing that it might be impossible to find a specific person.
- The addressee might have changed his name.
- If the afterlife is segregated into heaven, hell, and purgatory, it is possible that the messenger will not be sent to the same place as the addressee.
- It might be against the "rules" in the afterlife to seek out people you don't know.
- We cannot rule out the possibility that there could be no afterlife at all.

Where do the fees go?

The $10-per-word fee is held in our PayPal account until the messenger has passed away and the telegram is "on its way." Then half of the fee, depending on the wishes of the messenger, is either given to a relative, donated to a charity, or used to pay for medical bills. The other half is retained by AfterlifeTelegrams.com.

Who are the terminally ill messengers? Can I meet them?

No. At this time we have one messenger. She/he wishes to remain anonymous. The messenger's identity will be revealed after she/he has passed away. Prior to that, only government officials and consumer-protection agencies will be permitted access to the messenger's private information.

How are the messengers supposed to deliver the telegrams after passing?

The messenger, after his passing, is obligated to seek out the addressees of the telegrams he has been entrusted with. How, exactly, this will be done is unclear. Here is a list of "tips," based on pure speculation, that we give messengers to help them deliver their messages after passing into the afterlife:

- As soon as possible, get a pen and paper and write down all of your telegrams while they are still fresh in your mind. There may not be "pens" and "paper" in the afterlife, but there might be something equivalent with which you can record information.
- Make contact with the first intelligent person you find and request advice as how best to complete your task. By "person" we mean not only people such as you, who once lived on Earth as humans, but anyone else who might be helpful. There might be other entities, such as angels, spirits, demigods, or fairies, that are indigenous to the afterlife and who might be willing to help you.

- It is possible that the trauma of passing will cause you to have some memory loss. Should this happen, try to deliver as much of each telegram as possible.
- On Earth, people are separated by political, economic, and ideological boundaries. For example, it is safe to deliver a telegram to someone living in Canada but very dangerous to deliver a telegram to someone living in Iraq. It is possible that there are similar boundaries in the afterlife. While you are obligated to do what you can to deliver your telegrams, please use your best judgment as to the amount of risk you should take, without help, when traveling in the afterlife.
- More than likely there will be social, economic, and informational infrastructures available to you, and we encourage you to use these when possible. Keep in mind there might be rules in the afterlife regulating how and who you may contact. Do your best with what you have.
- There are a great many unknowns. Therefore the best advice we can give you is to be focused, resourceful, creative, and (if necessary) aggressive. Good luck.

[Travel Guide]

NEW YORK ON $5,000 A DAY

From an English-Japanese phrase book written by Dewi Sukarno, the Japanese widow of Achmed Sukarno, president of Indonesia from 1945 to 1967.

I spilled wine on the sheets. Would you mind changing them with new one, please?
The hair dryer caused a short circuit. Would you mind changing that with new one, please?
Could you please hurry as possible?
Would you make a reservation at a beauty parlor for me, please?
Could you please style my hair gorgeous because I'm going to a party tonight?
I'd like a facial, neck and shoulders care mainly, please.
I'd like to have massage on my waistline mainly, please.
I'm looking for a lipstick of fragrance-free.
What kind of dress shall I wear?
Could you please recommend the boutique for party dress?
I'd like some more sexy design.
I'd like something decoratively trimmed with more laces.
Do you have the same designed panties as this garter belt?
Please remind your business.
I'd like you to find the best nail color for my dress I wear today.
Do you have a bag of leather embossing finish of an ostrich?
Would you deliver it to my hotel Plaza, please?
It would be wonderful if you keep the table with a good view for me.
Oh, your plan is very attractive!
I'm sorry to have kept you waiting. It took me long time to decide my dress.
Good appetite!
I'm taking lessons in tea ceremony and flower arrangement. What kind of things do you have interest in?
I don't know but something keeps me a little bit shy now.
May I excuse for a while? I'd like to powder my nose. I wish to be perfect when I'm with you.
Thank you for sparing me your precious time.
Excuse me, but I made stain on my dress.
Could I have a wet towel so I could remove the stain, please?
Could you please bring the warmer soup?
I'd like to have a glass of champagne, please.
I'd like to go to an interior-decoration shop. I wonder if you'd mind taking me there.
May I excuse? I'm going to have another drink.
I'm sorry, but I'm afraid I don't know much about it.
Well, I don't remember that exactly.
Well, I don't think so really.
Oh, I'm old enough to know better.
I'm not sure I know what you mean.
Oh no! I can't believe what you are doing!
I must say I do not know what to do.

[Rules]

INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUN

From the instructions to Eternal Debt: Who Can Beat the IMF? a board game by Ruibal, a company based in Argentina. Translated from the Spanish by Marc Rosenthal.

OBJECT OF THE GAME

Take advantage of the raw materials that Latin America produces, industrialize them, and introduce the finished products to the big markets of the North. The capital is administered by the IMF with everything that



Hattie Kauffman, Nez Perce. National network news correspondent. Emmy Award-winning reporter. Treasured bookwork artist. Grandmother.

Reservations can have an 85% unemployment rate. But a year after graduating, 91% of our students are working or pursuing a higher degree. For more on tribal colleges, call 800/776-3863 or go to collegefund.org.



That's as Fair as I Know How to Make It, *by David Rathman. Rathman's work is currently on exhibit at the Walker Art Center, in Minneapolis.*

implies: conditions, devaluation, etc. The object of the game is to overcome those obstacles and to beat the IMF.

THE BOARD

The board is divided into North and South. In the North are the more developed countries, a dozen industries, and the IMF. In the South is LATIN AMERICA, with raw materials—such as iron, copper, grain, livestock, etc.—that are exported without added value. Each player chooses a piece to advance across the board and places it in the square LATIN AMERICA. The players can build up to three national industries in each territory of the South and another three multinationals in the North. At the start of the game, the IMF has all the money and all the property.

GOLD RESERVES

Each player begins with three gold pieces. Gold reserves cannot be used to pay for:

- debt principal (only the interest can be paid)
- monopoly creation
- capital flight
- military coups

MONOPOLY

A monopoly is based on one player's ability to purchase another player's property, even when that player does not wish to sell. The IMF authorizes the sale and profits from the monopoly by taxing it.

Let's imagine that "Pedro" has WHEAT with two national industries and one multinational. When "Maria" lands on WHEAT she should pay "Pedro" $700, but "Maria" decides to

monopolize the wheat. She should pay the IMF the "monopoly tax" of $2,000, and afterward she should buy the territory, which will include all of the investment made by "Pedro." In total, "Maria" pays $2,000 to the IMF and $2,550 to "Pedro" and becomes the owner of WHEAT.

Monopolies can be created only in the South. (In the North monopolies just develop over the long term.)

DEBT

In order to make all of the necessary purchases, players can ask for as many loans as they like from the IMF. Interest rates are set at 10 percent. Every time a player lands on or passes over the IMF square, he pays the interest to the IMF.

When a player accumulates a debt of $10,000, he is able to renegotiate his debt with the IMF. The player pays interest on the remaining debt, and the IMF devalues his currency. The player's currency then has less value, and he advances more rapidly and is forced to pay more often. The maximum debt a player can accumulate is $30,000. When a player accumulates that much debt, he will receive no more loans, and an economic embargo begins.

ECONOMIC EMBARGO

In order to get the money that he needs, the embargoed player gives the IMF his property. The IMF auctions this property to the other players at a base price of 50 percent of the initial investment. If there are no offers, the IMF will keep the property and pay the embargoed player 50 percent of the investment. With the money recovered from the auction, the embargoed player can pay his debt and continue playing normally. If the money recovered is not enough, he can turn in additional property to the IMF, and the process can be repeated.

SPECIAL SQUARES

CAPITAL FLIGHT: The player that lands on this square rolls a die, and each point rolled equals $1,000 that he must pay the IMF.

MILITARY COUP: Landing on this square means that a player has to turn in all of his cash.

OCTOBER 12, 1492: Discovery of America; the player turns in a gold piece.

THE END OF THE GAME

- If one player or a team of players gains control of half of LATIN AMERICA, having built at least two national industries on each territory in the South and two multinational industries in the North, they have obtained power equal to that of the IMF. That player or team will retire with all of the glory, not counting impending debt.
- If a player or a team is able to industrialize twelve territories of the South and create at least one multinational industry in each country of the North, they will be able to establish entrepreneurial conditions. The IMF will not be able to pressure them any longer, and they would merit applause from all of the players.

It is also possible that players, alone or united, suffer financial collapse during the course of the game, and that the IMF embargoes all of their property and everybody loses. In this case, placards with anti-IMF slogans will be raised and a new game will begin.

[Memo]

BANKERS OF THE WORLD, UNITE!

From a research note circulated in November by Morgan Stanley to its North American clients.

At the risk of encouraging the ghost of Joe Hill to come back and haunt us, we suspect investors should avoid heavily unionized industries today more than usual. From a long-term perspective, unionized areas have not been market-leading industries, and today heavily unionized industries stand directly in whatever the opposite of the sweet spot is. Consistent with our "buy the 800-pound gorillas" theme, nonunionized companies competing in heavily unionized arenas probably stand to accrue large relative gains.

What does history suggest about investing in heavily unionized industries? Avoid them. While the recent carnage in stock prices and brouhaha over excessive options issuance has kept investor focus squarely on the incredible shrinking tech sector, folks may be looking in the rearview mirror when it comes to where risks lie today. Yesterday's options problems in technology may be a lesser evil than tomorrow's pension and health-care funding requirements in rust-belt industries. In all kinds of respects we are living in a brave new world, but a decidedly old-world phenomenon—unions—may weigh on some new-world issues in the year ahead.

Look for the union label . . . and run the other way.

BEHOLD THE COACH

By Will Eno, from the Spring/Summer issue of Post Road.

The Coach

A press conference. A podium with microphones mounted on it. Periodic flashbulbs.

THE COACH

[He enters. Cameras flash.]

All right, everybody, let's just get going. You people know what I've come here to say. This should all come as no surprise. The phrase, of course, you are familiar with. It was a "building year," this last year was. We suffered some losses, sure, we suffered some, last season, and we've had to start out all over, in a fashion; we've had to come at this thing as if it were some kind of a—and you folks in the press will have to tell me if this is a pleonasm—a new beginning. We made some changes here and there and here and we made these, mainly, mostly, with the fans in mind, because we wanted the fans to be happy, in our minds we wanted the fans to love us. And I think they should be happy, I think they should love us. Listen, last year was not the easiest year. The plan was it would be for building, for rebuilding, for replacing what was lost, replenishing what was gone. Our strategy was, in theory, to betray that which had become merely habit, to betray our very fear, that thing which has in theory kept us alive, that thing which says to us: Don't cross the street without looking everywhere in the world first; Don't speak your mind and certainly never your heart. That fear which keeps you from calling, from calling out into the game night, from dropping to your weakened knees and screaming from the bottom to the top of your burning smoking lungs: "Jesus, please! Could somebody just—Christ! I am going to die, to drop dead, some slow-news Saturday, an off-season Monday, so much not yet done, goodbye, forever, as I die an unremarked death. I don't know what color pants go with what color shirt. I don't know the meaning of my own bleeping heart. My personality is killing me. Would somebody please just please help me and everybody live!" *[He pauses.]* That is what this year was. We had to look hard at a few things and, surprise surprise, we found that they looked hard back. But I think we have to be happy. We broke a few attendance records. We sold a few hot dogs. We played some ball and got some sun. It was the life, it really was, and, granted, this was not the greatest year, no, I guess it was really kind of a shambles.

I had no idea how hard hard was until this year came around. My God, Jesus, so hard. Nights, whole nights, weeks of nights, in a row. I bet I walked a thousand miles on my street alone. I came home and went out, walking. My eyes running, me thinking of the Dark Lady of my own incompetent sonnets, me saying just above my breath, "I remember you. I almost completely remember you. In the year since you, there hasn't been anything but ashes and paperwork. A year of cigarettes and minor car crashes. And I will never love any thing or body again. And I am not young and handsome. And I could not coach a gallon of water out of a paper bag." *[He pauses.]*

So you see, I've had my doubts. I've had what you people call Personal Problems. But I tried. To run things different. With a little elegance, a new uniform, with some sense of calm amid the—I don't know, you tell me, you lived through it, too. What was this year, what happened? Who, or—Christ Jesus Christ Christ Christ. *[He directs the question toward a person in the audience.]* What was it? What did you feel this year? Of what would you be speaking, if you were standing here, this year, speaking of the last? And did any one of us have what he would call a winning season? And what would that look like? And could someone tell me, while we're at it, when is High School over, when comes High School to its high-schoolish end? Because I really don't understand when the seriousness is supposed to start. And I am so filled with wanting, I so crave to know, to know a little, to be sure, just a little anything, a fact, a meaning, a song or jingle. A lullaby to be put to bed by, to sleep, to sleep off my life. A gentle anthem—a bluenosed tribute to the old man at the helm. *[He pauses.]* It was a real hell of a hell of a time, this year. That's exactly what it was. A trying time. A building year. An endless gorgeous endless loss. Which now is now over. And we have how many more left for us to lose? *[A pause.]*

Now, I know you guys in the press are going to have a field day with some of the things I've said up here today. And I know you're probably thinking, "Something seems to have kind of crushed the fire this guy had when we hired him." Or: "Could someone in this red-eyed poet-souled state ever win the division and go on to seize the brass ring, what with the distraction of his heartbroken relation to a fragile lass of a woman of a girl, who cannot even say with any authority what her own last name is?" Well, I'll tell you, because I came here to tell

you a few things. I came here to feel the burn from your flashbulbs, and to speak a few things—my losing heart included. And the answer is, I don't know. I don't know if I can lead anyone to victory, or even lead anyone anywhere. I don't know if my plan is a good one, or even if I have one.

You have to let me turn my season-worn face toward our record-breaking American heaven, to the stadium blue air overhead of the world, and let me say, you've got to please let me declaim, and I quote: *[He pauses.]* I don't know. In general. And, in particular, in particular. But I do know that someone has to be everywhere. And I am the one who is standing here now, before all of you who are sitting there, there. I am the one in the position I am in. I see a man bowed like Atlas under the weight of his whistle. I see him smoking himself blind, poring over blank pieces of paper. I am that man. I lived as that man through this last year, past. And I think I should be happy. I think we should all be very terribly proud and happy, and happy and afraid, and afraid and thrilled, really, to death at the upcoming year and all of the life it will naturally contain.

This is my feeling.

We have time for one question.

[Cameras flash. Blackout.]

[Taboos]

TESTS FOR NOTHING

From a set of guidelines provided by The Princeton Review to writers preparing practice versions of standardized tests.

TOPICS TO AVOID IN PASSAGES, ITEMS, AND ART

Violence (including guns, other weapons, and graphic animal violence)
Natural disasters
National tragedies (terrorist attacks, death of a president, etc.)
War, dying, death, disease
Drugs (including prescription drugs)
Alcohol
Tobacco and smoking
Individuals who may be associated with drug use or with advertising of substances such as cigarettes or alcohol
Name brands, trademarked names
Junk food
Fad diets
Abuse, poverty, running away
Divorce
Socioeconomic advantages (e.g., video games, swimming pools, computers in the home, expensive vacations)
Sex, including age-inappropriate stories about marriage, engagement, and having children
Belching/burping, farting, spitting, etc.
Religion
Slavery (We can include slavery in history/social-studies materials if the state curriculum standards cover slavery. Avoid it in reading passages. The term "enslaved people" is preferable to "slaves.")
Rap music, rock concerts
Complex discussions of esoteric topics
Extrasensory perception, witchcraft
Fortune-telling, superstition
Dice and games involving dice (For math questions, use the term "number cubes" instead of "dice.")
Halloween, religious holidays
Aliens and UFOs
Anything disrespectful, demeaning, moralistic, chauvinistic
Anything depicting racial or cultural stereotypes (e.g., Native American in headdress and war paint)
Anything depicting sexual stereotypes (e.g., girls shopping, a mother cooking dinner for a working father, girls overly concerned with dating or what boys think of them, anything accepting of a boy's aggressive behavior)
Children coping with adult situations or decisions; young people challenging or questioning authority
Losing a job, being fired
Rats, roaches, lice, spiders
Dieting, other concerns with self-image
Evolution, prehistoric times, age of solar system, dinosaurs (We can include these topics in history and science materials if the state curriculum standards cover them. Avoid them in reading passages.)
Any topic that is likely to upset students and affect their performance on the rest of the test

TOPICS TO AVOID BECAUSE OF OVERUSE

People:
Johnny Appleseed
James Smithson (Smithsonian Institution)
John Muir
John James Audubon
Phillis Wheatley
Roberto Clemente
Alexander Graham Bell
Helen Keller
Harriet Tubman
Louis Armstrong
Jane Goodall

Marie Curie
Jacques Cousteau
Amelia Earhart

Places and Things:
[illegible]
sports
fad or extreme diets
Galápagos Islands
Inca civilization, Machu Picchu
NASA

Themes
Child moves to new town
Child starts new school
Child gets new pet
Child ends story by saying, "That wasn't so bad after all!"

[Fiction]

MOTHER IN THE TRENCHES

By Robert Olen Butler, in the 2002 issue of StoryQuarterly. *The story is based on an antique postcard depicting a woman standing in a trench above the handwritten phrase "Mother in the trenches."*

With a world full of foolishly dangerous men, what's a mother to do? Like all the mothers of the world, I am stuck with the barbarian Kaiser Wilhelm, a man full of himself but as hollow as a soufflé, and that well-meaning fool of a schoolmaster Woodrow Wilson—I have known men like this all my life, being around preachers and teachers and also around my father, rest his soul, who was himself a bit of both, men who are certain they grasp things that no man can grasp for certain—and Blackjack Pershing, another kind of man, like the one I married, a man with quick, sure hands, I'd wager, and a single-minded bond with other men under whatever flag it may be—American, for General Jack and my own Jack—and there's nothing in the world to weaken that bond or soften those hands. My son is a man, too, according to the Selective Service Act, but God help me if I'll let him be a man yet without a fight.

This is something I know as any mother knows. The boy is not fully a man if I can remember so clearly lifting his wee body up and placing it on a rectangle of cotton clean from the boiling pot and warm from the sun and I swaddle him up and hold him against me and he is gentle and he is quiet and I carry him away, carry him through the world, and all the while he is taking in the things I know as his mother, as a woman, but cannot say, cannot even put into words except to hold him close and whisper softly to him that he is a good boy and I love him.

They eat rats. I have heard people speak of this. They live in foul water so their feet swell and rot away. They cannot sleep for fear of the guns. They kill each other. My son was taken away to this kind of life. And so I packed a bag because my husband, Jack, was dead of influenza now and could not stop me and I boarded a ship and went to Paris and I hired a man who had already paid for all this madness of other men—one of his arms was merely a stump, from the early days of this war—and he drove me in a cart into the countryside and we slept in the fields along the way and it was June and there was no rain and he spoke a little English, and on one of the nights, as we neared the front, he said, from the dark a ways off, behind some other tree, "Madame. You look at your son, yes?"

I knew what he meant. "Yes," I said. "*Oui*."

There was a long silence, and then he said, "You are mother of me also, yes?"

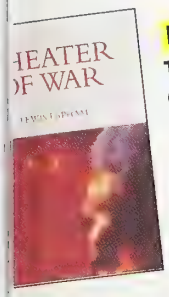
"I have my hands full," I said, which I'm not sure he understood. But he said no more.

I could hear a very faint thumping on the horizon down the road.

The next day there was a thin stream of civilians passing us. Most of them had already left this place up ahead, I assumed. These refugees did not have the sense of urgency one might expect, but moved with a terrible weariness about them. A mother on foot, carrying her infant, lifted her face as we passed, and her eyes seemed very old, though she was quite young. She was perhaps as young as my son. I could have been the infant's grandmother. I glanced over my shoulder as we passed and she, too, had turned her head.

I looked before me again. Edward was my only living child, Private Edward Marcus Gaines of the 108th Infantry, 27th Division, Company such and such. I had it written down in his letter. In a trench in a place in France. He had no infant child. He and I faced something together here in this foreign place. The end of our blood. I thought of the young woman we'd passed and of holding her child, just for a moment. Stopping the cart and she would have stopped, too, and I would climb down and she would come to me and she would say, perhaps in her own language but I would know what she meant, *Here*, she would say.

HARPER'S BOOKSHELF



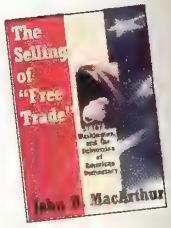
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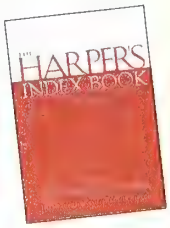


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Hold him. And so I would, and then I'd give him to his mother and I'd say, *Carry him off now. Quickly.*

There was a smell of burning in the air. The cart creaked in the ruts of the road. With each turn of the wheel there was a sound as if it would break. This one-armed man next to me muttered under his breath, I assumed to his horse. The explosions had ceased up ahead. I drifted into sleep and for a time I was in Yonkers, tending my roses, and the morning was bright and quiet and it was hot already. It was summer. The air hung heavily about my shoulders. In the dream it was only me and the roses and I was clipping the faded heads. I worked steadily but the garden was full of dead roses. The scissors chinked and chinked with a sound like a turning wheel.

And I awoke to tents passing and the rumble nearby of motorized vehicles with armor plating upon them and I got down from the cart and found my way through a trail of foolish men who were astonished to see me but compliantly helpful, and at last I was with an officer who had the authority to deal with my needs. We sat on reed chairs in a tent that smelled of grass and earth.

My son had written, *Mama, the men suffer here greatly, those who have been here a long while. These are the French and the British and the Australians, mostly, where I am. I am filthy already, though it is all right because I feel like one of them.* This colonel before me was not filthy at all. He was quite properly clean and starched and his uniform rustled with gentility as he leaned forward and offered me tea.

"You've found the right place," he said, sitting back and holding his own cup with a steady hand before his face. "But I must ask you why. What is it that you wish to do here for your son?"

I had not put the question to myself with this sort of bluntness. The colonel reminded me of my husband. I had learned long ago, with Jack, to be prepared for the direct question. But he would ask for answers that were rarely as simple as he wanted them to be. I had not prepared myself for this similar moment with a stranger.

I sipped my tea.

The colonel waited, lifting his own cup to his lips. After both our cups settled back in their saucers and I kept silent for a moment more, he asked, "Are you opposed to our entry into the war?"

"I am an American," I said. "I am a patriot, as is my son."

"I'm sure you are," the colonel said. He nodded very faintly to me.

His face was long and heavily jowled, the face of a man with grandchildren.

I was still trying to find an answer to his question. For myself, as well. *I know there are things that need to be done,* my son wrote to me, *and I'm glad to be the one to do them instead of another fellow. But I have always spoken the truth to you, Mama. I am afraid.*

"My son did not ask me to come," I said. "He is a brave boy."

"He has a brave mother," the colonel said.

"I want to see him, is all." I could think of nothing to add to this.

The colonel seemed to consider taking another sip of his tea, but I knew men like him. He didn't actually like tea. He didn't like sitting in this delicate way with another person. He didn't like having to deal with emotions he could not understand. The colonel put the cup of tea on the table beside him. He squared around to me. It was time to get down to the business of a decision. "I cannot guarantee your safety," he said.

"I understand that," I said.

"How can I in good conscience put a civilian—a woman, no less—in harm's way?"

"It is a choice I have made for myself," I said. "I simply want to see him, to encourage him. And his friends as well." This last came to me all at once. I knew that military officers cared greatly for the morale of their men. "It will make them do better," I said, wandering even further from some true answer to his question.

The colonel pursed his lips and lifted his chin. He looked away from me, out of the tent. Many men were moving around out there. I could hear their footsteps. And the hard whine of vehicle engines. But I kept my eyes on this man's face.

A long moment passed and finally the colonel said, "The trenches here are well established. There are three lines of them. One at the front. You can't go there, of course. Even if your son has been rotated forward already, which may be the case. You can't go to the support line, either. The German guns reach there quite easily, though it's not impossible for even this tent to receive a hit. I'll let you pass as far as the reserve line. You can return before dusk and the bombardments."

And so I was put in an automobile and a young officer drove me forward and we bounced hard in the rutted earth and there were large tents and the sign of the Red Cross and there were cries—muffled, but clearly men crying out—and I closed my eyes and put my hand on my chest to calm the fluttering inside me. And I thought of my son. Not Edward. It was the summer before he came into this world, when I lost my firstborn, George. I lost him in his second summer. So very many mothers lost a child in its second summer. It



Hanging Garden, *by Yun-Fei Ji, from the Altoids Curiously Strong Collection, is currently on display at Southern Exposure, in San Francisco.*

was the killing time for children. I should have given him a different name, or at least called him Georgie when I had the chance. He never had a child's name. He was named for my husband's father and Jack called him his *little man.*

And then at last I approached a vast wilderness of earth, dead to the near horizon and a distant line of trees, and the earth was full of narrow pits stretching off as far as I could see and they were all broken and angled and ragged, never going for more than a dozen yards before breaking off briefly in some other direction. The young officer led me from the automobile and I insisted on carrying my own bag and he brought me to a set of rough wooden steps and I descended into the earth, as if we'd gotten it wrong all this time, the preachers and their followers: this thin man with bad teeth, dressed in a drab uniform, was all there was of angels, and you packed your bag and you followed him down some log steps into the earth and it was suddenly over, your life, you could not draw a breath, the air was thick with the stink of bodies and decay and the shadows were heavy on your eyes and the strip of blue sky above was just a faded memory of the life that was gone from you. I staggered a little bit and put the bag down.

"Are you okay?" the lieutenant asked, laying his hand on my arm.

"It comes to all of us," I said.

"Pardon me?"

I waved his concern away.

We moved along the trench, which was lined on its sides and underfoot with wooden planks. I watched where I put my feet, with puddled water all about, black shiny water, and there were little pockets of men huddled down together, a few sleeping in a lump, another group playing cards—a face lifted there and a man with a British accent said, "Mum," half in acknowledgment and half in wonder, and the other three faces lifted and they all watched me, startled but in an oddly muted way—and I moved on and another group of men were smoking and chatting softly and they too

looked up and nodded at me. A solitary man lifted his hand, black with grime, and crossed himself—forehead, chest, left shoulder, right.

We turned a corner and immediately ahead were some men gathered around a great ugly black pot at full boil. They looked up and gaped at me and the lieutenant went ahead to guide me to the side of the pot but I stopped and said to these young men, "Do you know my son? I've come to encourage him. And you too. He's Private Edward Marcus Gaines, 108th Infantry, 27th Division."

"Eddie Gaines," one of them said. "I know him."

"Can you encourage our slumgum?" another boy said.

"Is that your stew you mean?"

"Our stew."

I peered into the pot and it was the color of the Hudson River on a stormy day. "Do I want to know what's in here?" I asked.

"No," came a chorus of voices.

"Mrs. Gaines," said the first one, who knew Eddie. I looked up through a column of steam from the pot, and the boy had a camera and the others retreated and he took my photo.

We all stood in silence over the stew, and for a brief, odd moment they were just a bunch of boys, my son's friends, and they'd dropped by for lunch. Eddie'd invited them and hadn't told me, and there we all stood, awkward like that, in my kitchen.

Then I thought of my son and where, in fact, he was, and I moved around the pot and it smelled like the corner of a cellar and the boys were helmeted and dark from grime and this was another country and I moved up beside my lieutenant and we went along the trench until he touched my elbow and said, "Here."

We turned to the left and walked into a dark slash in the wall of the trench and he said, "Watch your step," and my eyes were rubbed hard by the dark, but I saw the dim downwardness of steps and I descended into a sharp cold smell of earth. I went down, as if this tattered angel had been from hell all along and hell was simply cold and dark, not fire at all.

But we came into a large dugout room and there was a pallet and a hurricane lamp and another thin man who rose from a small table with papers before him. The two men exchanged a greeting, though there was no snapping-to, no saluting, and the lieutenant gave this new officer my letter from the colonel and the officer angled it to the lamp and read it.

"This is Captain Morgan," the lieutenant said, and he went away. The captain glanced up only briefly at this and gave a faint nod and he studied the letter and I could see his hands trembling slightly. His face was strange in the lamp light. I could not tell if he was very young or very old. Young, I decided, from his skin, jaundiced by the lamp but smooth still, though there was something else, perhaps in his eyes, like the eyes of the young mother I'd passed on the road. Who can say what that is? Another contradictory thing. Deadness, from what they'd already seen, but a faint, forced animation as well, knowing that there was more to come.

Finally he said, "I've read this twice."

He paused, as if trying to find more words. I waited. He opened his mouth, closed it, twitched a little at the shoulders. "Yes?" I finally said.

"I'll see if he's not forward," the captain said.

He left me without another word.

I stood waiting there for what felt like a long while. I did not think to sit down. This place was the captain's and he'd not said to have a seat

[Protest]

STOP, CHILDREN

The following slogans were collected at the October 26 San Francisco peace rally by Josh Harkinson, a journalist in Berkeley, California.

Puppies for Peace
Smoke Iraqi Pot, Not Iraqi People
Beat L.A., Not Iraq! Go Giants!
SOCCER MOMS FOR PEACE
Make Doughnuts Not War
This Quaker Says No War
ANOTHER QUEER YOGIC JEW AGAINST WAR
ENGINEERS FOR PEACE
Unreasonable Women for Peace
Make sticks not war!
Real Men Work for Peace
Bombshells Not Bombs
Telluride, Colorado, 8,750 feet—2,400 miles for Peace
FUTURE LIBRARIAN AGAINST WAR—INFORMATION NOT DECIMATION
Baseball Not War
PRETZELS FOR PEACE
Transsexual Lesbian Vegan Epidemiologist Punk for Peace
Republicans for Peace
Eat Bush, Not Crawfish
Tango for Protest
Make Cookies Not War
Grannies Against Dead Children

or to make myself comfortable, he'd just gone up the steps and left me inside the earth. His desk was covered with papers and a map spread out, and a pistol lay there beside them as well. His bed was a pallet on a dugout's step of dirt. There was a table with a few books, some newspapers. A few photos were pinned to the earthen wall. I took a step toward them. The light was dim and the figures were small, standing on a porch of a wood-frame house with dormers and a maple tree.

Then I felt something in this place. I turned. No one had entered. But still I felt it. My gaze fell to the floor and there in the spill of kerosene light was a rat as big as a squirrel. He was sitting on his haunches and calmly licking his paw and then wiping at his face, like a cat. He was grooming himself, this rat that would go out later tonight and dine on sewage and corpses. I am not a squeamish woman. I did not cry out at this sight. But I touched my chest, held myself hard there to stop the fluttering. Then the rat paused and looked over his shoulder and lowered himself to all fours and scurried into the shadows.

A moment later, my son appeared. I took a step toward him as he descended.

"Mother," he said, his voice terribly flat.

This represented a change in him. I had always been *Mama*.

I was prepared to take him in my arms. But I stopped, as he had stopped at the foot of the stairs.

I found myself looking about for small talk. "Your captain," I said. "He seemed . . . burdened."

Edward furrowed his brow, not wanting to talk small and not knowing how to stop it. Finally he said, "He's been here nine months now. The officers are good for about six and then they start to fall apart."

I should have felt bad for Captain Morgan, but the sadness that dragged itself into my chest at that moment was for my son, for his having this knowledge of how it is that men fall apart. And for his calling me "Mother."

"What have you done?" he asked.

"You're not happy to see me," I said.

"I'm a soldier," he said. "I'm in France. The front line is a thousand yards away. I may die there tonight."

"This is why I've come," I said, though I hadn't thought of it in these terms, that my child, my one remaining child, was thinking of dying. But of course he was.

"I'm rotating forward in a few hours," he said.

For a moment I thought of taking him up and carrying him away. There was a surge in me and I felt as if I were suddenly strong enough to sling this overgrown boy over my shoulder and carry him away. We should all do that, all the mothers of the world, I thought. Just pack a bag and come out here and carry these children home. The German mothers, too. It would take all of us doing this at once. But instead, of course, we kissed them goodbye and told them we were proud and we packed a knit sweater in the bag they carried.

"Do you have your sweater?" I asked him.

"Mother," he said again, sharply, looking away.

I'd helped him pack his bag. I'd waved a flag at the train station. They'd given flags to all the mothers and fathers and sisters and brothers and wives and sweethearts and we waved them—with all the forty-eight stars now—and a brass band played and we shouted *hooray* for the war. We'd cleaned their faces and sent them away.

"I shouldn't have come," I said.

Edward shrugged.

"Can I have a hug and a kiss goodbye then?"

"Sure," he said, and he crossed the space in two steps and his arms were around me, this grown child, this soldier, this man. We hugged and I kissed him on both cheeks and he kissed me on mine and he smelled bad, my son. He needed a bath, and then he was gone, up the steps, and I thought of lifting him dripping from his bath and wrapping him in a towel and I stopped this memory at once. That was a long time ago.

I sat down on the edge of the captain's bed. I could not stand. I looked at my bag where I'd left it in the middle of the room. I sat that way for a long while and I watched the circle of light on the floor, waiting for the rat to return, but he did not.

Then there was a sound at the top of the stairs. It was the captain.

"Is it all right?" he asked.

"Yes," I said.

He came down as quiet as the rat and he stood before me. I found that I wanted to cry and I worked on that, holding back the tears, before I looked up at him. Finally I did.

The captain's face was dark, with the lamp behind him, but I could see his eyes, darker than the shadows, and he said, "He hasn't been here long enough."

I didn't understand. He sensed it.

"To appreciate your gesture," he said.

I clenched back the tears for a final time. Captain Morgan jittered before me, trying to hold still, obviously, but he shifted ever so slightly from foot to foot, and his hands were shoved hard into his pockets, perhaps to keep them from trembling.

"Where is your mother today?" I asked.

"Omaha," he said.

I patted the pallet next to me, and for a moment he hesitated. "Please," I said. He sat down. I lifted my arm and put it around him. I could feel him trembling. Then he laid his head on my shoulder. Softly, very softly, I said, "You're a good boy. Your mother loves you."









From "Monks and Nuns," a series of photographs by Roland Fischer, exhibited last fall at Von Lintel Gallery, in New York City.

Artwork courtesy Von Lintel Gallery, New York

A COMET'S TALE

On the science of Apocalypse

By Tom Bissell

I don't really think that the end can be assessed as of itself, as being the end, because what does the end feel like? It's like trying to extrapolate the end of the universe. If the universe is indeed infinite, then what does that mean? How far is all the way and then if it stops what's stopping it and what's behind what's stopping it? So "What is the end?" is my question to you.

—David St. Hubbins, *This Is Spinal Tap*



APOCALYPSE

We have all read it, or think we have. It does not take long to read: forty-five minutes, by my reckoning. The Bible's concluding chapter begins directly, as a letter, quickly sashays into garish incoherence, occasionally breaks into startling verse, and above all promises to show "what must soon take place." It has been used most often, by religious charismatics, as a kind of divine itinerary: Jesus catching the 7:15 out of heaven, arriving in flames at Jerusalem's holy Mount anon. Although America enjoys an early tradition of apocalyptic thinkers (the saintly Roger Williams among them), a visiting Anglican priest named John Nelson Darby was the first to smuggle into the New Canaan an organized vision—known as Premillennial Dispensationalism—centered around the book's theology of blessed annihilation. That was in 1862. An American apocalypse, perhaps not entirely coincidentally, was in the process of erupting. Despite chronic humiliations, Premillennial Dispensationalists are with us still. A recent poll disclosed that 59 percent of the American public believes that the events projected by one John of Patmos will come true. Ancient Christians apparently shared as strong a belief in the sturdiness of John's prophecies. An annoyed Augustine of Hippo advised that "those who make calculations" based on John's auguries should "relax your fingers and give them a rest."

The vernacular name by which this queer book is often known, Revelations, is wrong. It is Revelation, or The Revelation to John (and note that preposition). The book's Greek title is *Apokalypsis*, or Apocalypse, which at its peaceable etymological nativity meant simply "unveiling." Revelation comes to us from the Vulgate Bible, the translators of which bowed *Apokalypsis* into *Revelatio*, the nearest Latin equivalent. Drawing partly on the "small" apocalypse in the book of Daniel, partly on Jesus' premillennial dispensationalist discourse on the Mount of Olives, and partly on God knows what, Apocalypse has arguably influenced the Christian worldview more than any other book in the

Tom Bissell's last article for Harper's Magazine, *"Eternal Winter," appeared in the April 2002 issue. His first book, an expansion of that piece, will be published in September by Pantheon.*

The Second Trumpet and the Shipwreck (detail), *from the tapestry* The Apocalypse of Angers, *1373–87*, by Nicolas Bataille, *Musée des Tapisseries*, Angers, France/Lauros/Giraudon/Bridgeman Art Library

Bible—surprising for a gloomy phantasmagoria that the Good Book's fourth-century compilers very nearly omitted. Yet here we are, still helplessly attempting to clear away its two millennia of murk. The same bewildering poll that unveiled a 59 percent rate of American acceptance of Apocalypse also revealed that a quarter of Americans believe that their Bible—despite a conspicuous textual absence of airplanes, skyscrapers, or Muslims—predicted the horrific but hardly apocalyptic attacks of two Septembers ago.

In Apocalypse, most biblical scholars now agree, John of Patmos is actually describing a situation that, through archaeology and textual analysis, we are more or less able to piece together. Some churches are "falling asleep," others are behaving licentiously, and a great beast (probably Nero Caesar, whose name adds up to 666 when Hebrew letters are given numerical values; this is called gematria) doth loom astride the scattered Christians' beleaguered world. Apocalypse is an angry, fatherly chastisement that combines the "cosmic battle" scenario familiar throughout the ancient world with a more newly minted Christian persecution narrative. In other words, Apocalypse makes us privy not to the future but to John of Patmos's recent past and immediate present—a trick of perspective, often used by biblical authors, called *vaticinia ex eventu*, history disguised as prophecy. Apocalypse's numerological *idée fixe*—the Alpha and Omega, the slain Lamb's seven horns, seven seals, seven bowls, four horsemen, 666 itself—is symptomatic of nothing more than the ancient world's obsession with "whole" and "incomplete" numbers. Rest easy, Christians. Relax your fingers.

EARTH ITSELF IS THE MOST AMBITIOUS MASS MURDERER IN THE GALAXY. ITS FACE SHOULD BE ON A WANTED POSTER, AND SOON

Lest we rest too easy, however, here is a numerical sequence that does have bearing on the end of the world: 1950 DA. This is the designation given to an asteroid that after fifteen more near-Earth passes may eventually collide with our planet. If this rock fulfills its most dreadful cosmic destiny, John's prediction of a sky vanishing like a scroll rolling up into itself, his stars falling to Earth, his black sun and earthquakes and lakes of fire and bloodred moon, will all come quite horribly to pass, with one exception: there will be very few Christians, very few people, left to exult in this much-delayed fulfillment of prophecy.

BANG, WHIMPER, FIRE, ICE

Not excepting Robert Frost's famous eschatological either-or, the world will end in fire *and* ice. Our sun, now enjoying the solar equivalent of middle age, will, somewhere between two five billion years from now, run out of fuel an nova." It will first become what is known red giant, a faltering star with a surface ten ature much lower than that which it currentl This process will unfortunately cause the s expand many times beyond its present size cinerating everything between it and Ju The sun's burning wave of helium will be trav tens of thousands of miles per second, an Earth the sky will pass from blue to yellow t fire of atmospheric ignition in roughly the it takes to blink. Once this terminal solar s has run its course, the sun will collapse i small, cool, extremely dense star known white dwarf. The remains of the inner sola tem's flash-fried orbital matter will then b cased within icy spherical coffins hundre miles thick. Since very few species have managed to achieve a life span anywhere even one billion years, it is extremely unlikely recognizable inheritors of humanity's mantl be witness to this celestial endgame. "Goin va" is, for now, an intellectual indulgence f trophysicists and neurotic civilians whose simistic affirmations are most comfort expressed in cosmic terms.

What, then, do we mean by The End? I mean The End of the World Itself, we nee concern ourselves. Setting aside the afteref of our sun's demise fifty million centuries he Spaceship Earth is stubbornly resilient. In geo time, it is probably indestructible. Do we m The End of Life? If so, of what kind of life? T and a half billion years ago the primord molten Earth cooled enough to allow for the bilization of its chief chemical components. result was swarms of prokaryotic cells that planetary sway for two billion years. One a half billion years ago these simpletons becam karyotic cells, replete with fancy new cytop and nuclei. Another billion years passed b the occurrence of anything resembling mult lular development. The story of life on Ear largely the story of stromatolites, organisms likely to have believed that the god of their derstanding reserved a special place for eac them in heaven. Do we mean by The End o World, then, The End of Multicellular Life? the world has, by any practical definition, alr ended. Two hundred and fifty million years during the later Permian period, 95 percent Earth's life was suddenly eradicated. Do we m something as anthropocentric as The End of man Life? If so, how many of us have to die to nal the collapse of the human endeavor? Perh we should ask the ghosts of European Jewry, the citizens of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the w certainly appeared to end on August 6 August 9, 1945. For the people of China

d ended with equally inarguable force in
, when the worst earthquake in recorded
ry tore open, lifted up, and smashed back
place the Shensi province, in the process
ing out 800,000 lives. More dramatically,
00 years ago what is known as a volcanic
r-eruption occurred in modern-day Suma-
The resultant volcanic winter blocked pho-
thesis for years and very nearly wiped out the
an race. DNA studies have suggested that the
total of human characteristics can be traced
to a few thousand survivors of this cata-
he.

rth itself is the most ambitious mass mur-
r in the galaxy. Its pleasant, cloudy face
ld be slapped onto a WANTED poster, and
: this lunatic is out to get us. As the volca-
gist Bill McGuire notes in *A Guide to the of the World*, an elegant volume of nervous-
down-inducing persuasiveness, "The Earth
been around just about long enough to en-
that anything nature can conjure up it al-
y has." As recently as 1902, Mount Pelée in
inique exploded, vaporizing the town of
Pierre with a glowing avalanche of skin-
ing gas and lava flowing as fast as a cheetah
ll sprint. Thirty thousand people died; the
's two survivors were likely to have regard-
ny notion of the world's end with seared,
inking eyes. Earth is cratered with some-
e between 1,500 and 3,000 volcanoes, and
ast one explodes each day. Most of North
erica's volcanoes have been dormant for
uries—one particularly angry specimen det-
ed 450 million years ago and evaporated an
the size of Egypt—and this is certainly
l news. The bad news is that the volcanoes
have gone speechless for the longest peri-
of time tend to have the most to say when
finally break their silence. The long-
nant Indonesian volcano Tambora blew off
eak in 1815, with an explosion heard 900
s away. Twelve thousand Indonesians died
direct consequence of the eruption, and an-
r 80,000 perished due to famine. The at-
phere was crowded with so much ash and
ur that 1816 became known as the "year
out a summer." England saw its heaths
ed through July, allowing Mary Shelley the
the proper frame of mind to complete
the wintry *Frankenstein*.

hat such natural disasters seem, in the West-
mind, exclusive to primitive people in far-off
s is mostly a fluke of our current distribu-
al good fortune. This quietly unapologetic
ce, which braids laissez-faire eugenics with
tern exceptionalism, is in fact a highly cal-
form of disaster denial, for yesterday's village-
ing lava flow in Sumatra is tomorrow's
super-eruption in British Columbia. Human civilization as a whole has grown amid a long breather from the kinds of natural calamities that, 10,000 years ago, left our freshly de–Ice Aged planet broiling beneath junglish centigrade from Ellesmere Island to Admundsen-Scott Station. It would probably require a psychiatrist magically privy to the workings of the mass mind to explain why we as a species seem resistant to believing that such disasters could recur, especially when many feel so ominously near. The planetary conditions we are today seeing unfold —alarming rises in human population, sea level, and temperature (in 100 years Earth will be hotter than it has been at any time in the last 1,500 centuries)—could very well be the overture to nature's awful new symphony.

Yes, the old doomsday warhorses of overpopulation and global warming (which actually should be called anthropogenic warming) are still bedeviling us. Little more can be said of global warming, other than to note that it is well under way and that those who maintain otherwise are the meteorological equivalent of creation-



ists. In the case of overpopulation, no one can deny that the world's inhabitants doubled between 1960 and 2000. Whether this is merely bad or catastrophically bad is still unclear. Equally unclear is whether overpopulation (a term too often used as code for too many brown and yellow people) will result in a long-feared drain of world resources. But the truth remains that this sudden explosion of population is, most basically, unprecedented in human history.

One runs the risk of sounding like an idiot, or worse, when pondering the sandwich-board finalities of The End. Consider the most famous Cassandra of the 1970s, Hal Lindsey, author of *The Late Great Planet Earth*, the best-selling book of that deeply regrettable decade. (It still, some-

ius Erupting, by Johann Christian Clausen Dahl, 1823 © National Gallery, Oslo/AKG London

how, sells around 10,000 copies a year.) His predictions of the rise of a single world religion, a Soviet-Ethiopian invasion of Israel, and the obliteration of Tokyo, London, and New York, all systematically unfulfilled, have made him a laughingstock along the lines of pet rocks. It is with a sense of near torment, then, that I report Lindsey's Reagan-era sinecure as a consultant on Middle Eastern affairs. Our current decade's dissemmators of global doom, Jerry B. Jenkins and Tim LaHaye, authors of the projected twelve-novel cycle *Left Behind*, are hardly improvements. The series' ninth installment, the accurately titled *Desecration*, was the best-selling novel of 2001. These jaw-droppingly substandard books peddle a religion of fear and despair (passenger-laden airliners, whose faithly pilots are Raptured up to heaven, are allowed to crash), partake of some truly shocking Jew-baiting (Nicolae Carpathia, the books' antichrist, lately of the United Nations, is helped along by a sinister cabal of "bankers"), and pile up body counts with slasher-flick glibness (the nuclear immolation of Chicago merits a single paragraph). And just as Hal Lindsey filled the mental shoals of Ronald Reagan with his insights into the Middle East ("If you stumble over some of these unpronounceable ancient names, glance at your daily newspaper and notice the tongue twisters assigned to people today"), Tim LaHaye served as the co-chairman of Jack Kemp's 1988 presidential campaign.

Apocalypticism, it hardly need be said, drags out of humanity all that is small and terribl
mean. It also drags out what is worst about
for whom love seems an infrequent mood. Bu
apocalyptic vision speaks to us, and has spok
us, for thousands of years. It has allowed the
train-scribbling Nostradamus to live indefi
off the obscurantist residuals of human an
It has allowed some in the Muslim world to r
figures as disparate as Pope Innocent II
George W. Bush as the long-feared Dajjal.
allowed George W. Bush, arguably the worst
ident in American history, a surreally nonex
pretext for world war. It seems we are all go
little nova. In July of 2002, 13,500 men and
en of the army, navy, air force, and marine
gaged in a war game called Millennium C
lenge. That exercise, the largest of its type
conducted, was based on a rogue military
mander staging a coup in an earthquake-
Middle Eastern nation. Make that millenn
challenged: the rogue military commander
until the war game's rules were reset.

Is a war game rigged to ensure victory a
sonable depiction of The End? Or does
End consist merely in extrapolating the s
the volcano needed to turn Jakarta into a
der or calculating how many feet of water
England will be sitting under once the pol
caps melt? Is it discerning the arctic clima
Great Britain once the Gulf Stream vanis
projecting the megadeath of a nuclea
change between Islamabad and Delhi? It
be no easy thing to eradicate six billion hu
beings, the most wide-ranging, adaptable
notoriously intelligent creatures to whic
planet has ever played host. But whereas
man beings are tough, the civilizations
form are appallingly delicate. Here is
buried psychological certainty—*I may die*
human culture will endure—tha
apocalyptic vision upends.



Hell, by Hieronymus Bosch, 1450–1516/Hermitage, St. Petersburg, Russia/Bridgeman Art

Thus we have entertained, and still e
tain, The End at the hand of God. We have
plagued, and will be plagued, by The End a
hand of the planet itself. What seems most
ly is that The End of the World will mean th
duction of humanity to a dangerously puny
ber, whereupon our planet will become an
planet altogether, something we will live upo
that will no longer belong to us. Perhaps tha
ture will be simpler and more peaceful, pe
toothier and rougher. *Star Trek* or *Mad M*
we do proceed apace and engage in a global
of ICBMs, who among us could argue tha
did not have it coming? But imagine the d
ent, far less personal end embodied by ob
such as 1950 DA. Who among us would
that we had *that* coming?

This new End means the loss of God, an

because it creates a kind of philosophical yard in which everything must go. No, God will iscarded long before The End truly begins. We e already rummaged off not a few versions of ı. The hirsute old thunderbolt-hurlers to ım we long paid tribute—priapic Zeus, testy weh—cannot map the genome, or tell us our , or even explain our future. Only we can do . "Playing God" previously meant the abili- take life, a feat we too can now achieve spectacularly divine wrath. The old God, tever his alias, is dead, and the God we are left ı today is of little discernible help. Or perhaps l is nothing more than a mile-wide chunk of nos-wandering silicate, serenely floating right ard us. Was it all a mistake?

ARD THE LEARN'D ASTRONOMER

NASA's Deep Space Network antennae at Goldstone Deep Space Communications nplex are spread out along twenty-six miles on grounds of Fort Irwin, a United States Army ning center in the desert wastes between Los geles and Las Vegas. I am traveling to the nplex, which is fenced off from the surround- military base, with Steve Ostro, a radar as- nomer who works out of NASA's Jet Propul- ı Laboratory (JPL), in Pasadena, California. ro is a handsome, southern-California-fit man is early fifties. His resemblance to a more ning version of Russell Johnson's Professor ı *Gilligan's Island* is spoiled very slightly by his ses, which although not unflattering are as k as bulletproof glass. As we chat we pass by ll road signs that say things such as TANK , billboards that read THE ABCS OF SAFETY: aL- YS bE cAREFUL, and hard, dried-up lakebeds serve as landing strips. Often, Ostro tells he has seen military exercises, some of them -fire, playing along these bleak horizons: Black vk helicopters cruising 100 feet off the ground 30 miles per hour, tank columns advancing n coyotes and gophers while huge volleys of llery boom across the vacant desert sky.

Goldstone's centerpiece antenna, the DSS-14, built in 1966 to receive communications from, plot the movements of, early NASA mis- ıs to Mars. The monolithic dish dominates surrounding, studies-in-brown terrain due to h its twenty-four-story height and (despite a w infestation) its gleaming polar whiteness. ıen pointed straight up, as it is now, it strong- sembles a chandelier. The nine-million-pound enna rests atop a round pedestal and has a ating precision measured in something called lidegrees. Small, anonymous buildings wreathe antenna, some housing dozens of tall metal kers that contain telemetry equipment used ommunicate with deep-space vehicles, others nmed with chugging generators that provide the antenna enough wattage to power a small town. Inside these buildings it is kept very cold—a little less than fifty degrees—to prevent the computers from overheating. Not surprisingly, a low and vaguely doomed hum pervades Goldstone's every nook and turn, rather like what one hears aboard a cruising 747, only much louder, and many who work here complain of headaches. After two days I will be complaining of one myself.

For the last several years Ostro has been coming to Goldstone to map by radar our solar system's larger known asteroids. The DSS-14 sends out a beam far too thin to discover new asteroids. That duty is handled by the Near-Earth Asteroid Tracking project at JPL, which reports its findings to the Minor Planet Center, in Cambridge, Massachusetts. If the observed object is a new asteroid—occasionally older asteroids go missing and are mistaken on reappearance for new ones—MPC gives the object a number based on the year and month and order in which it was discovered. (1950 DA, for instance, was discovered in 1950 during the second half—each half-month is given a letter—of February. The A indicates that it was the first asteroid found in that half-month.) NEAT observes the new asteroid until its orbit can be reasonably determined, at which point Ostro takes over. Powered by a half-million watts, the antenna sends out into space a beam with the angular resolution of the human eye. The beam hits the targeted asteroid uniformly, scattering in every direction; only a small portion of the beam's energy ever makes it back to Goldstone. But this tiny fraction provides Ostro and his colleagues with enough information to determine the asteroid's velocity, size, and likely structural components. Often enough, they are able to use the collected data to create a grainy but nevertheless beautifully revealing image of the object.

PERHAPS GOD IS A MILE-WIDE CHUNK OF SILICATE, SERENELY FLOATING TOWARD US. WAS IT ALL A MISTAKE?

As we walk into the lab housed in the antenna's pedestal to meet with Ostro's colleagues, he tells me he finds radar astronomy "an unbeatable experience." What before had been only an infinitesimal point of light attached to an ungainly number suddenly becomes a tiny, detailed world. I begin to understand his remark, made way back on Interstate 15, that he stopped reading the sci-fi novels he loved as a teenager when the science he was involved in became more interesting to him than fantasy.

Inside the pedestal I meet Lance Benner, John Giorgini, and Ray Jurgens, JPL scientists highly adept in the different areas of astronomy and planetary science that allow the team to

apply an astonishing interpretive breadth to the antenna's radar readings. Jurgens, the oldest of the men, seems to be providing a good deal of support merely by standing on the lab's fringes and quietly observing. All of them are distracted, as the antenna's transmit-receive cycle is about to begin. I stand to the side, staring at a few taped-up computer-generated images of Goldstone-mapped asteroids.

Very little is known about asteroids. The spin states, shapes, geological compositions, surface characteristics, and collisional histories are, for the vast majority of identified objects, still a mystery. Only with radar imaging is much of this data, accomplished one object at a time, finally becoming clear. The asteroids' irregular shapes give each something resembling a personality: Kleopatra is shaped like a dog bone, Eros like a rutabaga, Geographos like a turd. Some rotate evenly, others like badly thrown footballs.

FACED WITH THE EFFECTS OF 2^9 MEGATONS OF ENERGY FOR EVERY PERSON ON EARTH, THE MINDS BEATEN INTO SOMETHING MEDIEVAL

The lab's equipment appears, to me, strangely antiquated. Somehow our technology improves but gets no closer to the touch-screen sleekness of cinematic futurism. Little red and white lights blink on the hulking computers' faces alongside small screens active with greenish waveforms. A spray of cables hangs from seemingly every panel. Jurgens, who has worked at Goldstone since the 1970s, walks over and explains that much of this equipment is twenty years old. Later inquiries as to how adequately NASA funds Goldstone's radar astronomy work—it is about one ten-thousandth of NASA's overall budget—will result in meaningful silences.

Ostro escorts me to another computer at the room's far end, the real-time sawtooth display of which will soon show us the electromagnetic Doppler frequency the antenna is receiving back from the asteroid. This information will be used, Ostro explains, to calculate the asteroid's orbit uncertainty. "We go through this process where we have a projected orbit. We see how good the prediction was, and then we make a better orbit and a new prediction of uncertainty. There's always uncertainty, and that's one of the really interesting domains of this whole problem. What is the uncertainty, and how do we reduce it? That's why we're here."

I am here, I remind him, to find out about the chances of one of these asteroids colliding with Earth. But this is where the uncertainty comes in, he tells me. Every asteroid travels along a path we can determine using orbital trajectories, but within that trajectory there exists an error ellipse in which we cannot be sure where the asteroid will be. This ellipse can many hundreds of thousands of miles in wi which makes reducing the uncertainty of an ject that passes near Earth that much more portant. Asteroid 1997 XF11, the asteroid will be observing today, has a curious histor uncertainty. Five years ago, 1997 XF11 was dicted to have a small but nonzero chance of ting Earth in 2028. Whether this was du hasty "back of the envelope" calculations or al uncertainty in its error ellipse is still deba What is known is that the media frenzy wa immediate ("Killer Asteroids!") that NASA ated the Near-Earth Objects Office to handl ture impact threats. It was later determined 1997 XF11 had no chance of hitting Earth, before the day ends we will know everything there is to know about this defanged rock.

"A lot of the confusion about this topic," tro goes on, "ultimately comes down to misc munication. All of this is unfamiliar and int sically arcane and inaccessible and beyond experience of humanity." (A sample from a per Ostro gave me: "This is simply saying th survey system with a limiting magnitude m_{lim} will achieve the same completeness of absc magnitude H = 20 objects as a system with —19 will achieve of H = 19 objects.") I ask tro if he personally worries about the day they cover an asteroid that has a high probability of ting Earth. He is silent for such a long time I ask again. "Let me rephrase your question, says. "Is there a God?" After some uncom able laughter on my part, Ostro tells me al 1950 DA, the only large asteroid currently kn that has a nonzero chance of colliding with E before the next millennium. If it does strike, it impact the North Atlantic just off the U.S. c in March of 2880. "It's a little bit of a stretc say it might hit the Earth—the probability is 300—but it's the most dangerous object we k Now, do we care about that? Should anyb care at all about the fact that an asteroid m hit Earth nearly a millennium from now?"

I imagine standing in a room with 300 pe then being told that one of us will be taken side and shot. I tell Ostro that I think I can about that.

"What if I had said, 'Well, we found an ot that has a pretty good chance of hitting the E in 500,000 years.' Would that concern Should we care about that?"

I admit that I have a hard time gathering emotional momentum that allows my con to travel ahead a half million years.

Ostro nods. "What it comes down to is that is a very new kind of topic, and it's hard t one's bearings thinking about it, much less fo ciety to decide whether to worry and spend m ey on it. And if so, how much, and how."

ne lab's small, encaged red light begins to in alert: the antenna is finally transmitting alf-million-watt, pencil-thin beam of ener- even million miles into deep space. Its d-trip time back to Goldstone will take a under eighty seconds. As we wait, I find lf thinking of Whitman's "When I Heard Learn'd Astronomer." In the poem Walt s so "tired and sick" of an astronomer's rts and diagrams" that he goes out "In the tical moist night-air, and from time to ,/Look'd up in perfect silence at the stars." nder what poem he might have written had known that some of those stars had the potential to end poetry, and everything else, for all time.

How did we get here? In 1178, a monk in terbury, England, recorded the testimony of men who witnessed a "flaming torch" spring ff the face of the moon, which "writhed, as it , in anxiety," then "took on a blackish ap- ance." What these men saw, some scientists be- (the issue is debated), was the formation by steroid collision of the moon's youngest known r, Giordano Bruno, named in honor of a de- ced Italian philosopher-priest. The explosion the estimated force of 120,000 megatons, l to 120 billion tons of TNT. Hiroshima was ere 15 *kilo*tons. The greatest man-made ex- ion in history, a Soviet nuclear test on the tic island Novaya Zemlya in 1962, was 60 atons. If every nuclear device on the planet e somehow to ex- le at the same mo- ut, no more than 00 megatons would nleashed. The for- ion of Giordano no, if that is indeed t the two witnesses , marked perhaps first time in record- istory that human gs observed what is known as a large- y impact. The next ld occur more than years later, when dozen fragments shattered comet ld explode on the ace of Jupiter. Not n the intervening turies of scientific ancement would al- us any true com- ension of the destructive potential of large- y impacts. Faced with the effects of 20 megatons xplosive energy for every man, woman, and child on Earth, the mind is quickly beaten into something misshapen and medieval.



The term "asteroid" means "like stars," stars being what earlier humankind most often mistook asteroids for. When an asteroid breaches Earth's atmosphere it becomes a meteor; when it strikes Earth's surface it is called a meteorite. A "shooting star" is typically envisioned as a midsized burning chunk of speeding rock, when in fact most shooting stars are no bigger than a grain of sand. The speed at which they travel, and the opposing force of Earth's atmosphere, cause the particles to explode. The streaks of light we see in the night sky are these particles' violently released energy.

The solar system's primary asteroid repository whirls in a formation known as the asteroid belt, which lies between Mars and Jupiter, the latter possessing our system's second most powerful gravitational force, after the sun. Most asteroids are the fragmentary remains of the same cosmic *deus ex nihilo* that discharged rock and matter across the galaxy several billion years ago. In our solar system alone, as many as a trillion pieces of debris once floated around the perpetually contained hydrogen explosion we know as the sun, most of which were bashed into oblivion by collisions. Only nine of these space rocks were large enough to form atmospheres, and only one is known to have developed complex forms of life. This did not make them invulnerable. A Mars-sized object slammed into the nascent Earth billions of years ago, for instance, and the drama of its effect can be appreciated by the fact that it threw off a huge, wounded, molten glob that froze, was captured by Earth's gravity, and eventually became the moon. Because of this ancient demolition derby, the solar system is presently a much more open place, and collisions are far less frequent.

The first identified asteroid, Ceres, was found in 1801. By 1900 astronomers had located 462 more. All but one (Eros, discovered in 1898) were asteroid-belt objects. In the last 100 years, 150,000 more have been pinpointed and the orbits of 52,000 accurately determined. Most of this orbital surveying was accomplished after 1968, when the asteroid Icarus passed within four million

r's *Sketch of the Explosion of a Meteor Witnessed by the Ship* Grandee *in the Gulf Stream*, 1887 © Bettmann/CORBIS

[illegible] Earth and first caused astronomers to ponder the possibility, if not the likelihood, of large-body impacts.

Asteroids are categorized into several classes. S-types, which dominate the inner half of the asteroid belt, are composed of stone and silicate materials. C-type asteroids, which take up most of the outer half, are dark rocks rich with complex organic compounds called carbonaceous chondrites. P- and D-type asteroids are the farthest away and, consequently, the most compositionally mysterious. The belt's nearest asteroids are M-types, highly reflective iron-nickel objects that scientists believe are tantalizing atavists of planetary cores. In Ostro's office at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory he handed me a black-and-gold chunk of a billion-year-old M-type asteroid. Although it was only a little larger than a compact disc, my hand nearly hit the floor. Its density, Ostro explained, was twice that of any object of terrestrial origin, and to cut it open would reveal an interior as bright as freshly forged steel. The smallest known M-type asteroid, 3554 Amun, with a radius of only 500 meters, is thought to contain $1 trillion worth of nickel, $800 billion worth of iron, and $700 billion worth of platinum. Since towing it back to Earth would be counterproductively expensive, and likely to result in the collapse of the world market for fine metals, these figures are, for now, lit with little more than [illegible] neon of sci-fi dreams.



In its journey around the sun Earth pa[illegible] through the orbits of twenty million aster[illegible] Many of these Earth-crossers are called near-E[illegible] asteroids. NEAs much smaller than 100 m[illegible] wide are basically undetectable but for a flul[illegible] stargazing luck; unfortunately, an object of [illegible] say, 90 meters possesses the collisional capab[illegible] of roughly 30 megatons of explosive energy, [illegible] ure that is dreadful but globally manageable. N[illegible] larger than 100 meters are thought to nur[illegible] 100,000, a fraction of which have been loc[illegible] in the event of an impact these could effect [illegible] ous global climate change. Around 20,000 N[illegible] are large enough, individually, to annul a c[illegible] try the size of the Czech Republic. The numb[illegible] NEAs bigger than one kilometer in diameter is[illegible] rently thought to be around 1,000. At astronor[illegible] current rate of detection—roughly one a da[illegible] survey of the entire population of one-kilon[illegible] NEAs will be complete within the next dec[illegible]

This one-kilometer threshold is important[illegible] asteroids above it are known as "civilizat[illegible] enders." They would do so first by the kir[illegible] energy of their impact, striking with a vel[illegible] hitherto unknown in human history. The ty[illegible] civilization-ender would be traveling roughl[illegible] kilometers a second, or 45,000 miles per ho[illegible] for visualization's sake, this is more than [illegible] times faster than your average bullet—produ[illegible] an impact fireball several miles wide that, [illegible] briefly, would be as hot as the surface of the [illegible] If the asteroid hit land, a haze of dust and a[illegible] oidal sulfates would enshroud the entire str[illegible] sphere. This, combined with the soot from [illegible] worldwide forest fire the impact's thermal r[illegible] tion would more or less instantaneously tri[illegible] would plunge Earth into a cosmic winter la[illegible] anywhere from three months to six years. G[illegible] al agriculture would be terminated, and hor[illegible] greenhousing of the climate and mass starva[illegible] would quickly ensue, to say nothing of the l[illegible] ly event of world war—over the best caves, [illegible] In the event of a 10-kilometer impact, ev[illegible] thing within the ocean's photic zone, inclu[illegible] food-chain-vital phytoplankton, would die, [illegible] this would hardly matter, as the deadly at[illegible] spheric production of nitrogen oxides, wh[illegible] would fall as acid rain, would for the next de[illegible] poison every viable body of water on Ea[illegible] Chances are, however, that the impact woul[illegible] a water strike, as 72 percent of meteorite land[illegible] are thought to have been. This scenario is l[illegible] better. A one-kilometer impact would, in [illegible] onds, evaporate as many as 700 cubic kilome[illegible] of water, shooting a tower of steam several n[illegible] high and thousands of degrees hot into the at[illegible] sphere, once again blotting out incoming sola[illegible] diation and triggering cosmic winter. The m[illegible]

[illegible] *Earth* [illegible] by Camille Flammarion, 1881; published in *Lo spazio*, the [illegible]
[illegible] *Asteroids: Targets for Exploration*, by Lynn Cantwell; Princeton University Press, 2002. Photograph by Chris Fecht.

itself would most likely plunge straight to the
n floor, opening up a crater five kilometers
, its blast wave cracking open Earth's crust to
rtain seismic effect. The resultant tsunami,
ating outward in every direction from the
t of impact, would begin as a wall of water as
as the ocean is deep. If a coastal dweller
to look up and see this wave coming he or
would be killed seconds later, as it would be
eling as fast as a 747. Of course, these are all
ections based in physics, and can be scaled ei-
slightly up or slightly down in their poten-
or global destruction. As the paleontologist
id M. Raup puts it, "The bottom line is that
sion with a . . . one-kilometer body would be
t unpleasant."

lthough one-kilometer impacts (at least sev-
thousand megatons) are thought to occur
every 800,000 years, with 200-meter objects
00 megatons) striking once every 100,000
s and 40-meter objects (10 megatons) strik-
nce every 1,000 years, only a handful of pro-
onal and amateur astronomers are currently
hing the skies. Nearly half of the asteroids be-
ed capable of destroying one quarter of hu-
ity remain uninventoried. Not until 1998 did
U.S. Congress direct NASA to identify, by
3, 90 percent of all asteroids and comets greater
one kilometer in diameter with orbits ap-
aching Earth. Unfortunately, the government
ncy—of any government, anywhere—that
ld react to and be expected to deal with the
lihood of an asteroid impact does not cur-
ly exist. The impact threat is what Ostro calls
v probability and high consequence," and bu-
cracies scatter like roaches from the kitchen-
ht possibility of severe consequences. We need
to consider the disgraceful games of admin-
tive duck-duck-goose played in the aftermath
mparatively smaller disasters, such as the ter-
st attacks of September 2001, to recognize the
ral unwillingness to counter its own congen-
laxity.

Nonetheless, as I wait with Ostro, Benner,
rgini, and Jurgens for 1997 XF11's first mea-
ments to appear on-screen, I experience some-
ng like patriotism. The United States is cur-
ly the only nation in the world doing anything
ut the possibility of asteroid impacts. I am
ding with a group of interstellar Paul Reveres.
en I mention this to Ostro he shrugs. "The
ld owes a great deal more to the United States
n is commonly supposed," he says, staring at
screen. "And the United States should be
y proud of itself for supporting the research it
s, and being the first to take this seriously."

The bandwidth begins to come alive, and af-
a little while Ostro is excitedly pointing things
. "It looks like it's a fast rotator; it looks like
more or less spheroidal; it's not an elongated
object. We guessed its size at a little more than a kilometer, and that looks to be about right." While Benner begins the slow process of creating a pixelated image of 1997 XF11, Giorgini sits down at a computer console to exploit the new radar information to reduce the uncertainties of the asteroid's orbit by a factor of 5,000, using its current position to integrate its orbit backward and forward in time. Jurgens laughs and says that twenty years ago this would have required two years of computation. When I ask if that resulted in more or less error, Jurgens says, dryly, "There was a lot of error."

Giorgini's computer is essentially putting to use every practical thing that human beings have learned about mathematics and physics over the last 1,000 years. While we wait for it to provide a table of the asteroid's journey through time and space, I ask Giorgini if he ever worries about impacts. "It's unlike almost all other natural disasters," he says. "We can't do much about a hurricane, and we can't do much about volcanoes, but there's a predictability to asteroid impacts that will give us an interval, and the interval is comparable to a human lifetime. Some guy working alone in his basement could design some killer bacteria without anybody knowing about it. Whether an asteroid hits us before then, I don't know. You can't worry about everything." When I ask about the day 1950 DA's nonzero likelihood of impact came up on Goldstone's screens, he gives his head one brisk shake. "That was very exciting."

NEARLY HALF OF THE ASTEROIDS BELIEVED CAPABLE OF DESTROYING ONE QUARTER OF HUMANITY REMAIN UNINVENTORIED

Suddenly Ostro tells me that if 1997 XF11's impact hazard unexpectedly comes up nonzero I will be escorted into the desert and left for the coyotes. I ask whether impact "cover-ups" fall under the heading of right-wing or left-wing conspiracy. "Both wings flap together," Ostro says.

The information we have been waiting for begins to unscroll in several columns down Giorgini's screen. "So here we have the close-approach table," he says. I determine, privately, to call it the Holy Shit Table. "Notice these are all zeroes from the year 1900 up through the year 2100. And here in 2028"—its former impact year—"you can see it's about two and half lunar distances from Earth." He executes a few quick keystrokes and brings up another table showing the asteroid's close approaches, or "planetary encounters," every year from 1627, a year before Salem was founded on Massachusetts Bay, to 2228. Nothing but zeroes in the Holy Shit Table, not only for Earth but for the moon, Venus, and Mars as well. Until then, at least, we are safe from 1997 XF11.

This, Ostro says happily, is as close to time travel as we are likely to get. Thanks to one radar reading we have been awarded the virtual travel diary and itinerary of an object seven million miles away. We are safe.

THE GIGGLE FACTOR

Impact theories are not new. One of the first scientists to argue in favor of them was Dr. Grove Karl Gilbert, in 1893, though he went only as far as placing past asteroid impacts on the moon. The resistance to dealing with the implications of Earth-based impacts, however, is almost as old as science itself. The planetary scientist John S. Lewis, author of *Rain of Iron and Ice* (somewhat plaintively subtitled *The Very Real Threat of Comet and Asteroid Bombardment*), credits this resistance to the "giggle factor," a "half-suppressed hysteria that arises from an emotional inability to deal with the truth." Whereas Isaac Newton was obsessed with the end of the world, dusting relentlessly for the sulfuric cultural fingerprint of the antichrist, he dismissed the (even then) growing evidence for large-body impacts, believing that God had put everything in its proper celestial place. When a meteorite struck Weston, Connecticut, in 1807, two Yale professors verified the strike as extraterrestrial. Thomas Jefferson, after parsing their report, allegedly said that he "would find it easier to believe that two Yankee professors would lie, than that stones should fall from the sky."

Earth is home to more than 170 known impact craters, some as old as two billion years. Erosion has undoubtedly erased dozens more. For many years these craters, including the startlingly well preserved Meteor Crater in Arizona, were said to have resulted from "cryptovolcanic" (hidden volcanic) activity, though some argued that this was impossible. On account of the controversy surrounding Meteor Crater's origins, maps made of Arizona prior to its statehood in 1912 omitted it altogether, no small feat of obfuscation for a formation nearly one mile in diameter. Since the few impact studies being conducted at that time saw researchers dropping marbles into bowls of oatmeal and recording the ratio of displaced mush vis-à-vis the size of the offending cat's-eye, it is easy to understand why the crater's enormity and almost perfect roundness proved so baffling.

OF MAMMAL SPECIES, PERHAPS TEN OR FIFTEEN SURVIVED THE K-T MASS EXTINCTION. SIMILAR LOSSES APPEAR THROUGHOUT THE FOSSIL RECORD

Since 1812, when a twelve-year-old girl named Mary Anning found a seventeen-foot-long *Ichthyosaurus* fossil along the cliffs of Dorset, humankind has been forced to come to terms with the upsetting evidence that many hundred thousands of startling and, sometimes, frighing genera came before it. The secondary recognition—that something caused these creat to go extinct on a massive scale—soon follow Mass extinctions are clearly evident in the f record and were duly noticed by nineteen century geologists (or "undergroundologists they were then known). They made these tinctions the basis of division (Cambrian, vonian) within the geologic time scale. The q tion about mass extinctions was one of age Georges Cuvier, a brilliant French paleontol and until Charles Darwin the most famous entist of the nineteenth century, settled up "Doctrine of Catastrophes," which envisio violent "revolutions" that all but swept clean cient worlds of life. The events were "so stup dous," Cuvier wrote in 1821, that "the threa Nature's operations was broken by them and progress altered." Delighted Christians took as proof of the Noachian deluge.

The opposing view of the world's prehis was represented by the equally brilliant S tish geologist Charles Lyell, who began a admirer of Cuvier. Lyell believed that "we not authorized in the infancy of our science recur to extraordinary agents." Lyell's vie the fate of species, most forcefully explaine his *Principles of Geology* (1830), was deri from a theory of slowly accumulating p cesses. Extinctions, then, were gradual aff and not subject to fantastical caprice. Ly view became known as uniformitarianism proved so convincing that, within decades espouse any version of Cuvier's catastroph became the scientific equivalent of wearin tinfoil hat and claiming that streetlamps v issuing death rays. The gradualist interpr tion of the world—which has, in most di plines, served science well—came to domin the study of mass extinction. In this cen the demise of the dinosaurs has been asso ed with causes ranging from small rat mammals eating *Tyrannosaurus* eggs gamma-ray bombardment from an explod supernova to dinosaurs becoming too bi mount their partners to gradual clim change. (I remember vividly, as a young weeping over an educational cartoon films that showed *Diplodocus* staggering throug desert and collapsing.)

But on June 30, 1908, something happe that would slowly begin to change the tern this debate. Over the skies of a Siberian rive area known as Tunguska (a word that has "9/ like resonance among astronomers), a small st meteor no wider than sixty yards punched thr the upper atmosphere and, due to aerodyna pressure, detonated four and a half miles above

ace. The explosive force was that of 800 Hi-
iimas and shook the Earth with the ferocity
magnitude-eight earthquake. Seven hundred
are miles of Russian woodlands were incinera-
l in seconds. That evening Europe's sky was
right that there were reports of games of mid-
ıt cricket being played by uneasy Londoners.
azingly, only two people were reported to
e died in the Tunguska blast, as the area was
stly uninhabited. Had the asteroid been de-
ed by four hours, the explosion would have
urred over St. Petersburg (and, perhaps, pre-
ted Soviet Communism). Russia was under
siderable upheaval at the time—Czar Nicholas
ad dissolved two successive parliaments in
preceding two years—and no one journeyed
unguska to investigate the event before 1927.
until years after Hiroshima, Nagasaki, and the
eated irradiation of New Mexico and Kazakh-
ı were the physics of massive explosions prop-
understood, and the strangely craterless Tun-
ka site was subsequently adduced to have been
sed by an asteroidal airburst, an event more
mon than one might suspect. The U.S. De-
se Support Program's comprehensive satellite
em, ostensibly used to provide for the global
cking of enemy bombers and missile launch-
detects a dozen ten- to twenty-kiloton explo-
ns in the upper atmosphere every year. A 1963
st of 500 kilotons above Antarctica was ini-
ly mistaken for a nuclear test by South Africa.
til the popular emergence of UFO sightings,
se explosions were commonly observed and re-
ted by civilians.

Nonetheless, the danger posed by large-body
pacts was discounted well into the 1950s, a
e when a theory as elementary as continental
ft was seeing its first acceptance. Nuclear
apons were still in their nativity, after all, and
nankind had several thousand silos' worth of
erminating angels to worry over. By 1964 it was
nmonly believed that Earth possessed only six
ified impact craters, and the impact–mass ex-
ction link was ridiculed. In 1970 the Canadi-
paleontologist Digby McLaren went public
h his belief that the possible culprit of the
ss extinction at the end of the Devonian pe-
d, 365 million years ago, the fourth most in-
se mass extinction of all time, was impact-re-
ed. The Nobel laureate Harold Urey made
other claim for impacts and mass extinctions
he journal *Nature*, in 1973, but since Urey was
hemist his research was thought suspect. Then,
1980, Luis Alvarez, Walter Alvarez, Frank
aro, and Helen Michel published in the jour-
l *Science* an article entitled "Extraterrestrial
use for the Cretaceous-Tertiary Extinction."
The Cretaceous-Tertiary extinction, which oc-
s at what is known as the K-T boundary (C
ving already been secured by the Carboniferous
period), marks the sixty-five-million-year-old point at which the dinosaurs go AWOL from the fossil record. Even at their acme of diversity (small children should probably stop reading now) no more than fifty species of dinosaurs, a decidedly trivial portion of Mesozoic Era life, were alive at



one time. At the K-T boundary, as few as twenty-five saurian species were left. None survived past it. Of the mammalian species, perhaps ten or fifteen survived the K-T mass extinction, commonly thought to be the second most profound of its kind. Similar losses are mirrored in the fossil record of every species alive at the time.

The Alvarez group determined that the K-T boundary clay had an anomalously high incidence of the element iridium. Since iridium is roughly 5,000 times more abundant in extraterrestrial objects than in Earth's accessible crust, it seemed clear that something cataclysmically extraterrestrial in origin occurred at the K-T boundary, an event that showered Earth with the element. These findings were attacked for several years, leading the *New York Times*, in 1985, to issue a now famously dyspeptic editorial. "Astronomers," the *Times* scolded, "should leave to astrologers the task of seeking the cause of earthly events in the stars." (Stephen Jay Gould brilliantly ridiculed the *Times* by writing a fictitious editorial dated 1663: "Now that Signor Galileo ... has renounced his heretical belief in the earth's motion, perhaps students of physics will ... leave the solution of cosmological problems to those learned in the infallible sacred texts.") Not until the discovery, several years later, that the "shock metamorphism" of large-body impacts (and nuclear explosions) can form two separate minerals, stishovite and coesite, and that many suspected impact sites had high concentrations of both, did the hypothesis begin to win converts. A mid-1980s poll revealed that 90 percent of

earance of the Comet of 1811, Seen from the Quai de la Vallée/Musée de la Ville de Paris,
ée Carnavalet, Paris/Giraudon/Art Resource, New York City

American scientists quickly accepted that impacts occurred, though only 4 percent accepted an impact as the explanation for the K-T mass extinction. Previous beliefs that large-body impacts affected only the "lethal area" in the direct vicinity of the strike were, however gradually, abandoned. Impacts may happen, it was at last conceded, but they were freakish, remote events that did not script the fate of biology.

In 1990 the eminent late astronomer Eugene Shoemaker presented a paper to the Geological Society of America that demonstrated, as never before, the sheer number of Earth-crossing asteroids in our solar system, concluding that "Earth resides in an asteroid swarm." With these six words, Shoemaker finally, viscerally stated what scientists had been willing to accept only with decorous academic distance: millions of pieces of rock, some of them massive, were flying past Earth at staggering speeds, and sometimes these rocks hit us. All we had to do was have a look around at our beat-up planet for the well-documented proof. Opponents of the impact hypothesis suffered further attrition when, under the tip of the Yucatán Peninsula, near the Mexican port city of Progreso, a sixty-five-million-year-old crater 120 miles in diameter was linked decisively to the K-T mass extinction. The crater, called Chicxulub, had been found as long ago as 1978, but because its discoverer, an oil-industry geologist named Glen Penfield, was not an academic, converts were hard-won. By the early 1990s Chicxulub had become widely accepted as the scar of a large-body impact that finished off the dinosaurs and 75 percent of all other life on Earth.

Currently almost 1,000 potentially civilization-ending NEAs are known to have orbits passing within five million miles of Earth. It is statistically likely that most of us will live to see another impact, however small or large. In 1996, asteroid 1996 JA1 came within 200,000 miles of hitting Earth. We were provided with three days' notice. A week later, asteroid 1996 JG came within 2,000,000 miles of hitting Earth. We did not even see it until it had already passed. Both were twice as large as the Tunguska asteroid, and either could have killed one percent of Earth's human population; that is, 60 million people.

With the acceptance of the impact hypothesis has come another, related area of study: the frighteningly prominent role smaller impacts are n
thought by some to have played in known h
man history. Asteroids themselves have trad
tionally been subject to great, if puzzled, vener
tion. In ancient China, for instance, people us
to grind up and eat meteorites, and other cultur
took the metal from M-type meteorites an
smithed them into weapons. Simply put, it is ve
likely that smaller catastrophic impacts have o
curred far more often than most people realize.
1,000-megaton event in Argentina resulted
mile-wide craters not thought to be more th
about 10,000 years old. A small (not quite mas
extinction occurred 10,000 years ago, which fi
ished off, primarily in the Americas, larger te
restrial mammals such as the woolly mammoth a
the saber-toothed tiger. If we project forward a
other 6,000 years, we watch several fairly a
vanced civilizations, such as that of Ur, fall a
vanish. We find that bookkeeping of the sk
becomes, quite suddenly, a matter of some cultu
importance. The literature of the ancient c
tures that proceeded from Ur, including th
which became the Judeo-Christian, contains mu
lore of a vast flood, lost continents, vanish
oceans, a world gone meteorologically mad. W
find Egypt, which traced its origins to Pythom,
parently a falling object of some kind, and
find a strange and seemingly offhanded Egypti
memory, now forever enshrined in Exodus, o
darkness lasting three days. We find an ancient c
in Arabia, Wabar, supposedly destroyed by
other falling object, an event that happens to
incide with the rise of Bab
lonian astrology. There
counterexplanations to al
these developments,
course, just as heaven
counterargument to deatl
it exists primarily because
need it to. If it is true th
small though still ca
strophic impacts—caused
asteroids not big enough
find with existing technol
—are statistically timed
occur roughly every few th
sand years, this means t
the woolly mammoth and
fell victim to separate
pacts, and it means that
other is due, well, any
now.



Unlike ancient human
ings, however, we actua
can do something about i
other than devise cosmologies of desperate er
tional necessity. There are several theoretical
fenses to asteroid impacts. One method invol
landing a rocket-booster device on the collisi

Illustration: Farmers showed C. Bettmann/CORBIS

rse asteroid and then attempting to steer it
n Earth's path. Another proposes placing so-
anels on an incoming asteroid to create what
lled a "solar-powered mass driver," thereby al-
ng its trajectory in a fuelless, less-expensive
. Yet another envisions painting asteroids
k in the hopes that the change in absorbed so-
adiation would gradually shift the object's or-
But the most imperative theories involving as-
id defense are nuclear. It seems beautifully, if
ronically, apt that the weapons that have ter-
d us all for half a century might turn out to pos-
the cleansing holy fire we were all promised
y did. How effective they would be against the
deological phenomenon of asteroids is anoth-
natter. Simply hitting the rocks with missiles
ld accomplish nothing; they are traveling too
, and the warheads' tonnage would only be
rbed. The most useful deployment of nuclear
e against an unopposable asteroidal object
ld be to explode a powerful nuke at the as-
id's surface near the closest point its orbit
s to the sun, where the leverage of deflection
reatest. Then our planet would wait. If this
explosion did not alter the asteroid's course
ugh (chances are it would not), one would
another explosion, and perhaps another, thus
rding" the asteroid into a different orbit. Prob-
s with this method, and there are many, in-
le the possibility that the asteroid in question
been weakened by an older collision, or is
sely bound together (a rubble pile, this is
ed), or has an insecure interior riddled with
n space. Nuclear weapons, used against such
table bodies, might only transform one aster-
coming our way into several asteroids, per-
s hundreds—pieces of which would be large
ugh to breach Earth's atmosphere. The other
blem would be an enlivened nuclear-weapons
ustry, one busily developing warheads not as a
errent but as devices *intended* to be used. No one
uld object, of course, if we were to keep a few
these newer-line missiles—which would, no
ubt, be better than ever—on high alert, or de-
yed a few more here or there. There are maniacs
there. Maniacs with nuclear weapons! China,
its part, has explained its resistance to the
i-nuclear-proliferation Comprehensive Test
n Treaty on the grounds that it would like to
p its missiles in the event of an asteroid-impact
eat. No doubt Iran and Iraq and Libya and Al-
ia would like to step up their own programs, too.
t in case.

LPLESS

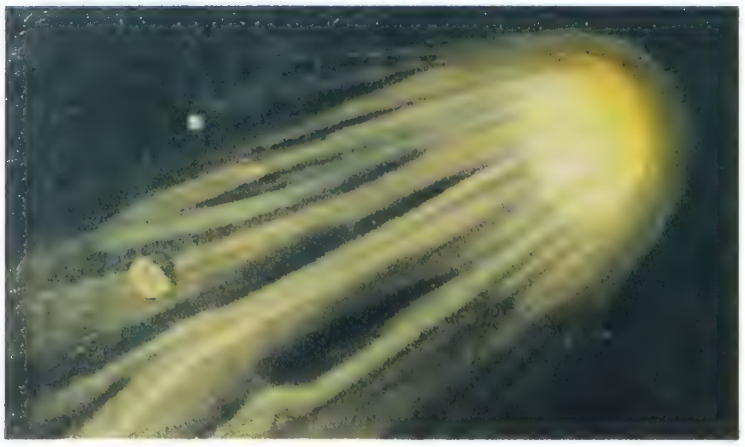
Reading about asteroid impacts will undoubt-
y cause many people distress. I feel bad about
t, and I would like to say that although these
eats are terrifying all is not lost. Concerned,
dicated people are working on the asteroid-impact threat, and one need not be a deluded idealist to believe that they may succeed. Hope, after all, takes as its foundation not likelihood but possibility. There is, however, another threat to ourselves and our civilization, one that cannot be stopped or avoided. You readers who find yourselves already traumatized, let me entreat you here, please, to stop reading.

Comets differ from asteroids in several ways. Consensus holds that they are "dirty snowballs" made up of ice and carbon-bearing rock. A 1986 "flyby" mission to Halley's comet beamed back data suggesting that its nucleus is less dense than water, 50 percent of it a warren of cracked and empty networks. How this pertains to other comets is not known. Before the comet Hyakutake was found in 1996, only five previous comets had been detected, by radar. Traveling like frozen freight trains along the loneliest edges of the solar system, comets occasionally enter the inner solar system, the neighborhood of Earth, at twenty-six miles a second, leaving behind them a long tail of dust and gas crystals that can stretch back as far as sixty million miles. Replacement dust accumulates on cometary surfaces; when the dust layer becomes thick enough, comets gain an excellent shield against solar heating. An icy skein builds, and they get bigger. One cometlike object, Quaoar, recently found floating out around Pluto, is 800 miles across. As comets approach the sun, however, their frozen gases expand and form makeshift jets that can alter their course. This makes predicting accurate orbits of newly discovered comets nearly impossible. But discovering them is also challenging. They are too fast, not typically seen until they pass near the sun, and in any event their gas- and dust-obscured passage across the universe's dark starry backfield is often difficult to discern.

WE COULD HAVE AS LITTLE AS THREE MONTHS' WARNING WHEN A COMET ON A COLLISION COURSE WITH EARTH APPEARS IN THE SKY

We know of two types of comets. The closest to Earth, called short-period comets, are found just beyond Neptune in the Kuiper Belt, named after the astronomer Gerard Kuiper. Long-period comets make up what is known as the Oort cloud—named in honor of the astronomer Jan Oort, who first hypothesized its existence—an envelope of as many as a trillion comets that travel around the sun far beyond Pluto. The Kuiper Belt and Oort cloud are both remnants of the early physical conditions of the primitive solar nebula. The Oort cloud was most likely formed by gravitational ejecta from the Uranus and Neptune regions, and some astronomers believe that the Kuiper Belt is merely the innermost edge of the Oort cloud.

Jupiter's massive gravitational force shields Earth from many long-period comets, but its movement is also thought to be the key mechanism for injecting the few comets that manage to get past it, often in shattered form, into short-period Earth-crossing orbits. Almost all long-period comets have orbital periods of 100,000 years or more, making it all but certain



that there are literally millions of comets with periodic near-Earth passes we know nothing about. We could have as little as three months' warning when a comet on a collision course with Earth appears in the sky. Most are too big to stop with nuclear weapons, which does not much matter, as their meddled-with, chaotic trajectories make intercepting them fantasy.

Edmund Halley, in his *A Synopsis of the Astronomy of Comets* (1705), was the first scientist to wonder if comets might impact Earth. Halley's astonishing foresight was only negligibly explored until the 1970s. In the 1990s, however, comets stepped to the forefront of scientific thinking about apocalyptic mass extinction. On March 24, 1993, three years after concluding that the "Earth resides in an asteroid swarm," Eugene Shoemaker, along with his wife, Carolyn, and the amateur (though highly respected) astronomer David Levy, detected upon a photographic plate a strange smear of pearly light. What they had found was twenty-one pieces of a comet that had been torn apart by Jupiter's orbit the previous July. The pieces of this comet, now called Shoemaker-Levy 9, were predicted to impact the planet's surface the following year. Sadly, the impact would occur on Jupiter's dark side, viewable only at a great distance by the Voyager and Galileo probes. Many worried that humankind's first opportunity to observe a large-body impact in at least 800 years (or since what may have been the formation of the moon's Giordano Bruno crater, in 1178) would be spoiled.

They needn't have worried. Upon impact, larger pieces of Shoemaker-Levy blew fireb thousands of kilometers high into Jupiter's mosphere and were plainly visible through t scopes on Earth. When Fragment G collided w the King of Planets two days after the first imp the flash was so bright that infrared scopes over Earth were momentarily fried. The scar by Fragment G was larger than Earth itself, the explosive energy released was the equival of a Hiroshima-sized nuclear bomb explod every second for thirteen years. Shoemaker-Le volatile swan song was quickly and accurat called the astronomical event of the century, has proved the starkest challenge so far to manity's sense of its own inviolability.

Scientists are divided on whether the K mass extinction sixty-five million years ago caused by a comet or an asteroid. The seve of the event—miles of evaporated ocean; very high chance that a hundred trillion t of molten rock were thrown into space, froz and then pulled back down to the surface Earth in the form of more impacting me orites; an ozone layer so shredded that creature peeking out of its cave even a year ter the impact would have found its skin on in the ultraviolet spring; the sheer numbe extinctions—points to a comet. It is empiri ly inarguable that every few dozen million y a mass extinction is visited upon Earth. V ous arguments place these mass extinctio the extent and agencies of which are still bated, at intervals ranging from twenty-six thirty million years. A theory called the "Sh Hypothesis," named after the Hindu god of struction, holds that mass extinctions occu startling simultaneity with the movement our solar system through the galactic plan passage that is thought to perturb million Oort cloud comets into our path. Comets, the mass extinctions they cause, might v well be the piston that drives Earth's biolog processes. If the Shiva Hypothesis is corr we are all just marking time u the next comet arrives.

Before leaving the Jet Propulsion Lab tory, I stopped to visit Don Yeomans, a n commonly regarded as one of the world's figures in near-Earth object studies, to about comets. Yeomans struck me as a for nerd who has aged extremely well. He radia a thoughtful, deceptively low-key intelliger That he is well liked was clear from the bo Yeomans action figure someone had given h and from the fact that the writers of a dooms television movie named their impacting co after him. When he went through his files find the film's title, I noticed that one of

vers was labeled "NEOs and Things That Bump in the Night . . ."

We're hit by tons of material every day," mans told me after his futile file search, "but all dust. We're all walking around with et dust in our hair. What really interests me hat comets and their impacts with Earth –apart from the sun—the only bodies that e a direct effect on evolution, on life, on the in of life. They probably brought the mate- of life to Earth—carbon-based molecules water. They're not just something in the that looks nice, like the outer planets or or clusters. That's all very interesting but no real effect on us. When you come right n to it, the guy in the street wants to know, hat's in it for me? Why should we be study- these things?' And comets, I always claim, the brother-in-law test."

The brother-in-law test?"

eomans smiled. "My brother-in-law doesn't eve in the space program that much. And he , 'Hey, why are you guys spending millions of ars to do this and that?' But after I explained ets and the origin of life and evolution, he , 'Maybe that makes sense.'"

eomans was addressing the notion that im- ts upon the ancient atmosphere, before the in of life on Earth, generated a stew of sim- organic molecules that eventually resulted mino acids and nitrogen bases able to serve he keystones of life. Impacts are high-energy cesses not unlike ultraviolet light, cosmic- irradiation, and lightning discharges. The ospheric violence caused by impacts can create a high incidence of these potentially creating processes—a case of God appearing he whirlwind, hurricane, earthquake, and nami.

Human beings are not a goal that this stew lutionarily pushed toward; they are only one ity within evolution. Contrary to the worries ertain Kansas school boards, lution does not, in fact, push ard *anything*. The Darwinian lution attacked by creation- is not even Darwinian but inflexible version of natural ction promoted by Darwin's owers that Darwin himself uld not have recognized. To- , Darwinian natural selection n acknowledged fact of life's cro development, but on a cro scale natural selection is ot. How does an organism pt when its world is hit with- warning by a ten-mile-wide l of ice traveling 70,000 miles hour? Evolution is not even good for the planet, based as it is on speciation and phyletic transformation. If these processes were allowed to go on indefinitely the planet would be overrun and all life would go extinct. Thus mass extinction serves as speciation's necessary foil, and the victims run well into the millions: today's extant species account for less than one percent of the total number to have ever lived. "Mass extinctions," wrote Stephen Jay Gould, "can derail, undo, and reorient whatever might be accumulating during the 'normal' times" between "imparting a distinctive, and perhaps controlling, signature to diversity and disparity in the history of life."

"These objects are weird," Yeomans concluded. "And the history of these objects is weirder still. Comets are unlike anything else. They show up unexpectedly, they disappear unexpectedly, they have different shapes and sizes and characteristics. There's nothing celestial-looking about them. They are the wild cards."

By the time I left Yeomans's office, The End of the World and its wild-card causes had begun to seem less like a force of impartial terror than something far more complicated—something *necessary*. Life is a huge blackboard filled with a million marks of chalk. Every thirty million years that chalkboard is forcefully wiped clean, leaving only a few small smudges in the corners, whereupon life begins again without regard to perfection of adaptation, what has come before it, or the miserable consciousnesses of those few creatures able to wonder why they are here. For reasons no one yet understands, smaller animals seem to have a survivalist edge in the aftermath of most mass extinctions. One such (most likely shitlessly frightened) animal, a primate, survived the K-T mass extinction. Possibly it lived in a wet, boggy area, the only part of the planet that would not have burned up in the global firestorm. Say its name: *Purgatorius*. We may have this tiny creature to thank for our current civilization. So impacting comets giveth, clearing the way for new species, and they taketh away. This most unstoppably terrifying vision of the world's end is also the most comforting, for it forms an iron law no organism, including ours, can hope to step around. Life cannot win. "Behold," the Lord says in Isaiah 65:17, "I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind." There is freedom in that recognition, a sense of knowing where we stand in fighting to stave off oblivion, and of knowing where we surrender. As everything must. ■



ration from *La fin du monde*, by Camille Flammarion, 1894. Photograph by Chris Jocht



ONE fur coat.

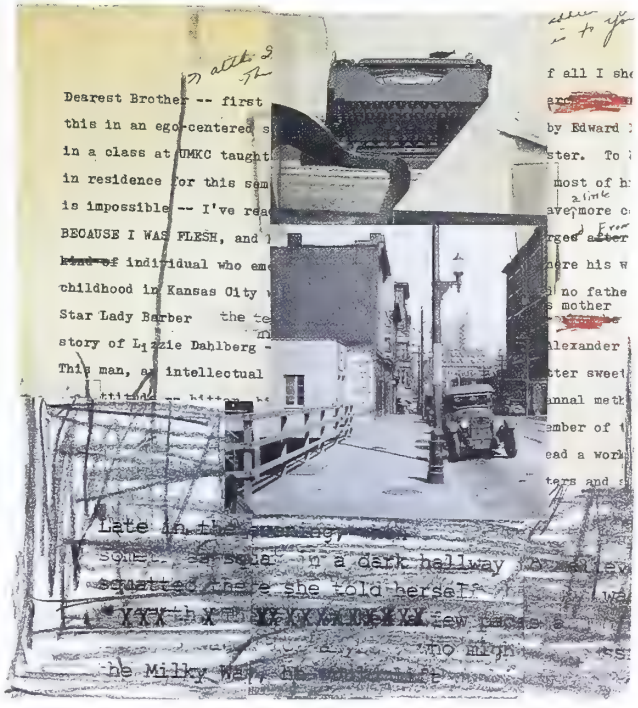
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THE DISAPPOINTMENT ARTIST

Edward Dahlberg's recipe for crocodile tears

By Jonathan Lethem

My Aunt Billie (1918–94)—Wilma Yeo to her readers, to the world, to you—was among the first human beings I remember. Her Kansas City apartment was the site of one of my earliest, murkiest memories: seated on a carpet, I wept at seeing, on television, a detection of a forest fire, one that routed a herd of panicked baby animals. Aunt Billie's twin daughters, then young teenagers, laughed at me for crying. In the memory, which plays like a length of corroded celluloid—grainy, broken at both ends, but reliably identical each time—Aunt Billie sweeps in, rescues and consoles me, lightly chastises her daughters.



I lived with my parents in Kansas City, on the campus of the Kansas City Art Institute, from 1965, when I was two, until 1968, when my parents returned to New York City, and each of three or four of my earliest memories takes place there. Another involves television: Taking shelter during a tornado warning, with my parents and a couple of their friends, in the basement of our stone house. George Burk, another painter then on the faculty at KCAI, and my father's best friend, brought for entertainment a six-pack of beer and a portable black-and-white, on which we watched *The Monkees* while the storm passed harmlessly. Yet another Kansas City memory is of seeing my first film in a theater: *Yellow Submarine*. Counterfeit Beatles, animated Beatles, forest fires seen but unreal, tornadoes real but unseen—may one plead, Your Honor, postmodernism as an involuntary condition?

That is Kansas City's whole place in my life: a small, strange place. Aunt Billie's place in my life is larger. She was my first writer. And, although my father was a painter and I was trained for a career in his footsteps, as a visual artist, I somehow knew from the first to sit at the feet of any writer I encountered. Aunt Billie was primarily an author of children's books, but her résumé boasted articles in *Reader's Digest* and *The Saturday Evening Post*, as well as a biography of Thomas Hart Benton, *Maverick with a Paintbrush*, which, though written simply enough for young readers, is solidly researched and a contribution to Benton studies. Her *Mrs. Neverbody's Recipes* (J. B. Lippincott, 1968; the title page notes: "The following poems were first published in *Humpty Dumpty's Magazine*")

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Illustration by Steven Dana; Photograph of Kansas City, 1924, courtesy Kansas City Public Library, Special Collections, Kansas City, Missouri

was the first autographed book in my collection, which before I was even out of my teenage years had grown to include inscriptions from Allen Ginsberg, Robert Hamblin, Norman Mailer, and Anthony Burgess. I was a nerdish and sycophantic kid, let me be the first to say. I revered writers, and still do. I loved my Aunt Billie.

So did my father, who's still around. Sibling bonds were strong among my father and his three sisters and two brothers. They grew up together on a Depression farm in Missouri. But Aunt Billie (the second oldest) and my father (the runt) enjoyed a particular lifelong kinship as the two "creative" types. Their closeness defied and outlasted my father's repeatedly throwing over the Midwest for, in turn, Columbia University, the Army, Paris (on a painter's Fulbright), and New York again.

On the telephone my father still shouts, gives only rudimentary news, and suspects all he hears, feeling, perhaps rightly, that long-distance calls are a sham apparatus. He and Aunt Billie maintained their intimacy by writing letters. One day not long ago, my father asked if I'd ever heard of Edward Dahlberg. I had some familiarity with that name, but I couldn't imagine why he wanted to know.

"Have a look at this," he said, and handed me the letter.

> Dearest Brother — first of all I should say that I write this in an ego-centered search for an identity that I lost in a class at UMKC taught by Edward Dahlberg, a writer in residence for this semester. To describe him is impossible — I've read most of his autobiography now BECAUSE I WAS FLESH, and have a little more comprehension of this individual who emerged from a poverty stricken childhood in Kansas City where his whore-mother was a Star Lady Barber and he had no father — his book is the story of Lucie Dahlberg — his mother — whom he loved with repulsion. This man, an intellectual Alexander Kaganovich, both books and attitude bitter, bitter sweet (and I don't use the term intellectual in the banal method of today) has verbally crucified every member of the class who dared open his mouth — and to read a work of ones own! Sheer folly. He is a man of letters and so well acquainted with Dreiser, Swift, Mather, Taylor, Stendhal, DeBalzac, Unamuno, Dryden, Gissing, Ruskin, Morris, Ford, Coleridge, Anderson, Baudouin, Flaubert, Keats, Gill, Read, Chestov, Thoreau, Rozanov, Merkowski, Tolstoi, Swinburne, Holmes, Williams, Heywood, Jastrow, (all of the Bible — though he dislikes Religion) Weaver, Meyers, Garland, Berkman, Goldman, Dehetoux, Dostovsky etc but not many more — that he is astonishingly like a walking library. He calls James and Brecht scribblers — says nothing worth reading has been written 'en contemporary . . . . . no doubt it would seem to be a mistake to sit two hours twice a week in the mezermizing world that he weaves for I can no longer write a word — should my life depend upon it.

That's the whole of the first, unparagraphed page. There are seven more. The letter—still in my possession—is written on onionskin, the words carved in ink by a manual's keys. Rich with delirious typos and misspellings (Dostovsky and Chestov!), and hasty cursive annotations and ellipses, as well as a torrent of weirdly antique name-drops (Alexander King, Jastrow), but above all eloquently desperate, the letter radiates human intellectual panic like pheromones. Each time I read it I feel the thrill of unsealing a time capsule, and of awakening my aunt from her deservedly peaceful slumber.

The year of the letter is 1965, identifiable by Aunt Billie's stated age and some family chatter on the last few pages. Wilma Yeo was forty-eight, still three years from placing *Mrs. Neverbody's Recipes*, her first book, with Lippincott, when she had her bracing encounter with Dahlberg.

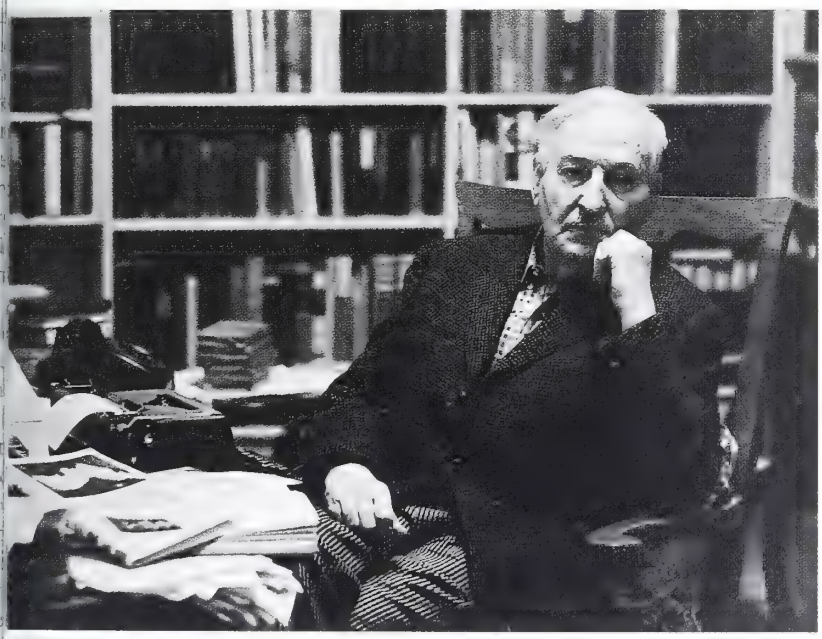
Edward Dahlberg (1900–77) was born, illegitimately, in Boston and raised in Kansas City (Dahlberg: "let me admit it, I hate Kansas City"). His tormented coming-of-age, split between a Jewish orphanage and the home of his mother, the barber and adventuress described by Wilma Yeo, is the center of both his first novel (1930), famously introduced by D. H. Lawrence (Dahlberg: "I wasn't influenced by Lawrence at *all*! Not at all! That's a small, wanton, niggardly conjecture!"), and his late memoir, *Because I Was Flesh* (1964). Where Dahlberg is remembered, *Because I Was Flesh* is accounted his masterpiece. His career was split. There were three nove[ls] the thirties, full of ancient slang [and] proto–Hubert Selby grubbiness, [gen]erous enough to make him a signal figur[e] the largely forgotten—and, by D[ah]lberg, regretted—proletarian movem[ent], then some years of wandering, follo[wed] by reinvention as a crypto-class[ical] mandarin stylist, no longer commi[tted] to fiction but to literary-historica[l] says, memoirs, mythological poe[try] and fulmination. In this late ph[ase] Dahlberg enjoyed (a uniquely im[pro]propriate word) a reputation as an [un]derground hero of American writi[ng]—an unwilling father to Beats ("I have [no] feeling about these boys. But they're doing what was done thirty years [ago] and they imagine they are avant-gar[de]. You can be scatological in any cen[tu]ry; it is not news. Or a dung-eater [of] time; it is an old habit") and a figure [le]gendary for his auto-exile, his excoria[ting] intolerance of other writers. Dahlb[erg] routinely broadcast, on every chart[er] open to him, a galactic disappointm[ent] with his own career and with the [last] flavor that living had left in his mo[uth]. He died in 1977, his last jottings sa[id] of the television commercials that [had] come to fascinate him.

I'd known the name, faintly. W[hil]ing in used-book shops, I'd fondl[ed a] few Dahlberg tomes before slasl[ing] their prices or consigning them to [the] of the never-to-be-sold. I associa[ted] him with the agony of the rebuffed [ca]reer, the refused book. In used-b[ook] selling one becomes a dowser of [the] underground river of refused bo[oks], and the dowsing rod twitches like [a] second hand of a clock. Experti[se] knowing which few, of the thousa[nds] flung to posterity by their flap co[pies] anyone would ever actually pay to r[ead]. So, Dahlberg: a guilty association, [an]other titan I'd dissed by thinking [of] a drag on the retail flow.

Aunt Billie's letter concentrated [my] attention. Dahlberg's, it seemed, w[as] shrill, vibrant voice clinging to [the] edge of the collective literary c[on]sciousness—just. As I asked arou[nd], seeking to see how his name pla[yed] among my best-read friends, the [an]swer was always the one I'd have g[iv]en myself: Dahlberg, oh yeah, alw[ays] meant to find out what he was abo[ut]. I located a biography, *The Wages of E[x]pectation*, by Charles DeFanti, [and]

ard Dahlberg: A Tribute, a festschrift nbled by Jonathan Williams; the t recent item was "Broaching Dif- t Dahlberg," by Lydia Davis, an es- ublished in *Conjunctions* that cir- Dahlberg without actually plunging Davis interrogates older writers still ing grudges against Dahlberg, con- ing the testimony the biography of many of Dahlberg's own osten- e supporters: this was a more than lerately difficult man. Dahlberg's lency to be recalled but unread e him a bizarre discovery: a writer se reputation was either blinking of existence at the exact moment cated it, or, weirder, a writer whose tation was somehow *frozen in the act inking out of existence*.

mance at a cocktail party given in his honor: "What he said about Hemingway, Faulkner, Eliot, Edmund Wilson, Pound ... was univocal, brilliant, sour, erudite, and unanswerable. . . . Only the cadence of his sentences ... seemed to keep Dahlberg's words from becoming a scream." The list can seem endless, but to eliminate any uncertainty Dahlberg sweepingly denounced not only the whole twentieth-century shelf but the nineteenth century's as well, locating the corruption of American literature well before Melville. As for his personal relations, he made himself famous for his cold shoulder, arranging elaborate fallings-out so persistently that William O'Rourke, a student and disciple, eulogized him this way: "Edward Dahlberg wrote 18 books and one masterpiece that will endure; at the end of his long life he had less than six people he would have called friend." Perhaps my Aunt Billie had had the privilege of having her head bitten off not by some average writing-class ogre but by the greatest head-biter of all time, the Ozzy Osbourne of writing-teaching.



he more I looked, the more it med that Dahlberg's compulsion taking out his monstrous disap- ntment on any human within strik- distance was the only reputation , dragging the books distantly be- d it. Charles DeFanti details how hlberg denounced as unworthy, various times, Charles Olson, eodore Dreiser ("If I had reread his ks, I would have had to assail n"), Robert Graves, Edmund Wil- , and dozens of others, all attempt- friends or sponsors of Dahlberg's eer. Here's Paul Carroll, in his in- duction to *The Edward Dahlberg ader*, witnessing a Dahlberg perfor-

> When you listen to him talk—where do I, a woman of forty eight, with so little time (comparatively speaking) (and he answers—"there is no such thing as time"—Life is an error and death the only truth etc.)—Fit into this picture? His theory that only children are knowing—and that we innundate our minds with every passing minute and thus die with each experience—never able to change our life's destiny one drop—never again able to attain what we lost through living—is near a parallel that I have long ago reached—and the reason I want to write for children and believe that is the hardest writing to do.

She then adds,

> But when I try to discuss writing for children, he says there is no such thing—write what you have to say and pray to God that children will read it . . . Now this is fine—I go along—but how can I go when I have suddenly lost the way to anyplace at all? I write you this because, knowing how many classes you have sat through—where undoubtedly this same kind of person, taught—I wonder if you can help me. I guess what I want you to say is Don't Listen To Him, but its too late for that because I already have. How far should one go in deciding what ones personal limitations are, and settling for less than perfection. If I read all of these things (I don't literally mean every book, but read, say for a year or two) and quit writing (as I seem to have anyway) do you think I would be happier (ugh what a weak word—of course the only happiness is satisfaction or joy in work in progress—and the ability to move on to the next job without looking back with too many weakening day-dreams.) But just when I thought I was going along so great—I've stubbed my mental toe! On a rock! You know that for several years I've been reading deeper things—I can finally read poetry—a little—after years of trying to ..... I can recognize good passages—I've learned the effectiveness of small words—found the art in brevity—doubted the adjective—learned to discriminate in the varying shades of words ..... increased my sad little vocabulary some ..... but can one really know what is good unless one has long looked upon perfection until anything less seems shoddy and factory made.

To attempt to read Dahlberg, as I began to do, is to find oneself reading about him instead. For a writer whose persistent epiphany was isolation ("All intelligent Americans are extremely alone"), and whose obsession it was to decry the charlatanism of comradeship among writers ("I am not looking for disciples. Jesus did not even know what to [do] with the apostles, and they had such dull auditory nerves that they could not hear what came from his soul"), Dahlberg is nevertheless one of

ograph of Edward Dahlberg, 1969 © Bernard Gotfryd

the *most introduced* writers of all time. The parade of ushers begins, of course, [illegible]. It turns out that Lawrence's essay was commissioned; Davis characterizes it as "unwilling," DeFanti as "squeamish if not somewhat petulant." Reasonable enough: Lawrence's envoi to Dahlberg's career concludes, "I don't want to read any more books like this."

Lawrence there inaugurates a great tradition: Dahlberg is routinely assassinated by his own apologists. Here's Gerald Burns, in an afterword to *The Leafless American* (a book consisting of a hundred pages of Dahlberg, a preface by Robert Creeley, and an introduction by Harold Billings, on top of the afterword!): "I had heard he was down on blacks, and the reason seems to be that they have made bastions of our apartments and robbed us of the parks. . . . [He] says the faces of their children show why they do not yet have a civilization." Karl Shapiro, from *Edward Dahlberg: A Tribute:* "His petulance and misunderstanding of the Modern are one thing; his disgust for . . . modern art and literature must be brushed aside; but his blind loyalty to himself as poet, prophet, and *l'inconnu*—these are his birthright, by all means." Jonathan Williams, in the same book, gratuitously disinters what may seem a too telling review by Alden Whitman in the *New York Times:* "Dahlberg is outrageous, a deliberate striver for shock value, a magpie who delights to show off his gleanings from the classics, a bombast on occasion, a writer of ponderous nonsense and almost insufferable ego." Well, ahem.

These same supporters compensate by overstatement. In this, they have encouragement from Dahlberg's style itself. His absolutism is recapitulated everyplace he's remembered. Paul Carroll: "Is there any author living who is even in the same country as Edward Dahlberg in the moral grandeur and violence of his writings?" Ronald Johnson: "I wonder sometimes whether we deserve an Edward Dahlberg to reprimand us and cajole us." August Derleth: "He is as much a genius as anyone of whom I can think, past or present. . . ." To invest in Dahlberg is to adopt scorched-earthism.

In a letter dated September 2, 1964, anticipating his departure from Ireland for Kansas City, to teach my aunt's class, Dahlberg wrote: "Good teaching is apocalyptic talking."

Again, Wilma Yeo:

> There is a young man in the class who looks so much like you, Dick, that when I watch his eyes as he reads (as he made the grave mistake of doing) one of his poems—'I am where you are' Drivel! says the old prof! Pure drivel! You don't even know that you don't know anything—read, read, read!!!! I, of course, had thought it quite good. He will say, Did you bring a paper? On what [illegible]?"
>
> "It's a creative paper."
>
> "How do you know it is creative? Oh well, read it."
>
> Then he interrupts about the second word and says, "Forgive me, I don't want to be rude but that is asinine and purile and we don't have time to waste on it." or "that word makes me want to vomit." I know you say, why listen? but he has something to say. His book is good—his soul is bitter. A boiled prune without hope or belief. Since I can't write, I have been drawing—This is something I understand why I can't do well, and so I can enjoy it.

My aunt then describes some other published writers at Dahlberg's mercy, including Alice Winter, author of *The Velvet Bubble*, and Frankie Wu, a poet who had already placed work with *The New Yorker:*

> He doesn't know any of the three of us have ever sold anything and wouldn't care if he did, for he believes that writing to sell is as morbid as you feel that commercial art is—and that could easily be true, but writing is of so little use in a file cabinate . . . anyway Frankie typed off this same poem and handed it in—a non poem, he said, with three good lines in it—but he is interested in Frankie—partly because he likes orientals and thinks America would be better off if we had let them in—and maybe a little because of that poem, but he was so intense in his criticism of it, in front of the class that she was ill afterward—Frankie has a rare disease and spent four years in an iron lung—her husband Dr. Wu is a quite famous brain surgeon or she would probably not be alive. It is a disease of the nerve endings and sometimes affects her as if she had been drinking. If he is too cruel to her, Alice or I shall probably tell him to go to hell, kindly—for he is easily hurt—as people so often are, who persist in brutal frankness.

There! It was out and said, if only at the last moment, as though Wilma Yeo could no more bring herself to omit her diagnosis than she could refrain to judge her teacher: *a boiled prune . . . easily hurt*. Or, in the words of Josephine Herbst: "There is so much that is paradoxical, quixotic, comic about Edward Dahlberg. . . . Is it possible always to agree with him? Or to share his exclusive literary tastes? Is there consistency even in his inconsistency. . . . What writer is not afraid of absurdities or willing to see himself as ridiculous?" What compelled my Aunt Billie, then, beyond her necessary rejection of what he told her evidently, "quit writing" [illegible] was Dahlberg's vulnerability. Wasn't that right and couldn't it be enough? Wasn't toward Dahlberg not-so-secretly terrible and didn't his genius spring from [illegible] pained source, in a very *Woman of the Bow* sort of way? Perhaps I could forgive him, and beg to read him.

Perhaps I was about to do so. But then I found the next two pieces of evidence in my search. First, a letter from Piers Paul Read, who studied under Dahlberg at Columbia in 1967 and whose father, Sir Herbert Read, was one of Dahlberg's staunch supporters:

> My misgivings about Dahlberg as a teacher were amply fulfilled. He had a bullying manner and a total intolerance of any writing but his own. He had read my first novel . . . which had already been published by this time and rejected it as worthless in front of the class . . . We more or less made up the class. . . . He was not, however, a man to be ignored and he continued to bully me—saying, at one time, in front of the class, that I was responsible for my father's cancer because I had been making love in Strassbourg!

My second discovery was a memoir by William O'Rourke, who, incredibly, had been part of the Kansas City class my aunt attended. He paints the scene in Dahlbergian tones: "Women filled his classes. Cameoed dowagers with rouged jowls and red velvet caps, young brittle-lipped girls whose pens took notes nodding like steadfast crochet needles." Women, it needs be noted, are the great Dahlbergian sore point. Dahlberg's greatest subject was his mother, and his lifelong Waterloo was

own sexual appetite—his seven iages, various imputations of ha- nent and physical abuse, and his le raging ambivalence about sex: nan may want to study Mark, or celsus, or go on an errand to do a ness to an aged woman, but this nt [the penis] wants to discharge either because the etesian gales are or a wench has just stooped over ther her laundry.... The head is so se as to go absolutely crazy over a of hunkers, which is no more than ine of beef." And, as elsewhere, dmirers eagerly hoist him to the ens on this petard. Thus, O'Rourke inues:

The writing class had decomposed a half dozen. Another male, a speech acher ... and an assortment of female ets. Dahlberg sat with his legs crossed ith gray exhaustion over his face ... hen a woman volunteered to read a ildren's book she had written. He had oken against the children's dilutions the Classics before, but consented th alarm for there was no other of- ring during the period. She began:

"Winnie was a puppy who looked ke a mop and rode the elevators of wntown Kansas City until everybody new his name ..."

Edward Dahlberg, American artist, t with his head shrouded by his hands. She continued:

"He would walk around the Plaza, r he lived with his master in an apart- ent ..."

"Stop," he said, hardly audible. "Stop. lease."

top, please! indeed. In my exagger- l relish and mock-horror at uncov- g Dahlberg's heroic monstrosity I becoming a student of Dahlberg elf, another slave pining for his . Worse, in my compulsion to geance on my aunt's behalf, I re- bled not a follower but old grudge- nurturing, injury-cherish- ing Dahlberg himself.

That the writing workshop, the sort by an established writer and popu- d by aspirants, is a site of human ging and despair is undeniable. Fear loathing, the grosser undercurrents ostility, fratricidal and patri- or ma- idal impulses, fox-in-henhouseish ying on one's own potential suc- ors, those are more like secret pox- –venereal flare-ups, to use a

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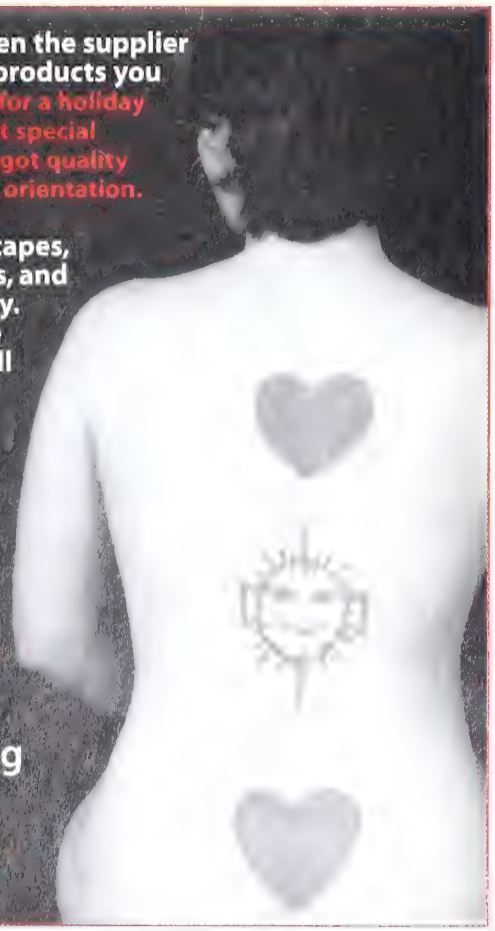
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metaphor beloved by Dahlberg. The famous teacher who steals from his students—that's a story going around. Alternately, one hears of the writer with the former protégé, one extensively favored with opportunities, opened doors, who's now, after publication, brushed his mentor off—but only after making an unacknowledged appropriation of signature aspects of the elder writer's live-performance shtick. Typically, in our correct, passive-aggressive era, hostility has gone underground. The last remaining interrupters, ranters, tantrum-artists—and a handful do still roam the creative-writing landscape—are mentioned with the tittering that disguises our uneasy awe. No one approximately my own age will tell even his or her worst students, as Dahlberg often apparently told even his very best, that they are simply not a writer, that they ought to give it up. And every one of us feels a queasy guilt at this hesitation; are we perhaps only leaving that job to be done by some subsequent disenchanter—an editor, or a series of rejection slips, a teacher braver than ourselves? Are we like bogus farmers, raising crops already scheduled to be destroyed in some government buyout?

No one can say. So we smile in the classroom and work out murkier feelings among ourselves. Tongues scarred with bite marks, then loosened by a little red wine, wag in late-night gripe sessions. A few teachers circulate excerpts from the laughably inept, others memorize the unforgettable lines. A prize-winning poet shocked me years ago, explaining casually, almost sweetly, that the majority of her students could be shown how to write an adequate, competent poem—the problem was that few of these poems would ever be anything but too "boring" to read. The ferocity and finality of that modifier wasn't lost on me. A cheery type (at least by Dahlbergian standards), I like many of my students personally. Their striving mostly stirs me, often inspires me, sporadically breaks my heart. Yet I participate in the venting, too, and the whispered framing of guilty questions: Is it for more than the paycheck that we go on propagating this farce?

We are all of us, students and teachers alike, stranded in the breach between the violently solitary and elitist necessities of High Art—exemplified, in our time, by professional Bartlebys of the William Gass or Cynthia Ozick type—and the Horatio Alger wishfulness of so much writing advice, the self-actualizing egalitarianism of *Writer's Digest*. Yet, faced with this ubiquitous hunger even to be allowed the attempt to make oneself a writer—so human and poignant, so profoundly benign—what does it mean to install a Dahlberg in a classroom and permit him to maul a Yeo? What's the value of the dissident writer, one who exiles himself from contemporaries, audience, and apprentices, in the cultural marketplace? Why do we—*why did my aunt*—seem to cherish our brushes with Dahlbergs, even as we encourage their victims to complain them out of the profession?

Edward Dahlberg—for I've finally begun to read him—was a genius, sure. Having penetrated the haze of remorse around his career, I've joined the tinny chorus: *Because I Was Flesh*, his memoir of Kansas City childhood and orphanhood, but most of all a portrait of his disreputable, unbearable, and resolutely life-embracing mother, is a great book. Great in the saddest and simplest way, for Dahlberg has arrayed an armor of rhetoric to fend off his pain, and everywhere the armor proves inadequate. *Because I Was Flesh* is a catalogue of defenseless defenses, of feeble snarling assaults on implacable, if erratic, love. It shows Dahlberg's baroque scalpel turned inward, for once. Dahlberg would certainly have loathed our contemporary culture of brandished trauma. Yet brandished trauma is his legacy:

> She did not know what to do with her life or with her feelings. She toiled because she was afraid to starve, and because she had nothing else to do; but her will was too sick to love the child of her lust. He was so skinny and yellow that his nose seemed to cover his face; and all the obduracy that was in her short, round neck had passed over to him. If he saw a speck on the wall, he imagined that it was the ordure of flies. When he looked at the greasy, rotten oil-cloth on the table, he would not touch his scummy soup. His mind gave him intolerable pain when he thought of the back alley that lay between 8th and 7th where he had seen gross rodents. On occasion, when he heard the chirruping of rats in the basement of the building or in the rear of the shop, his face
> more peaked and rancid, and he
> his head in his arms and retched
> was unable to comprehend his naus
> like most people of her class in the
> west she found a certain amount o
> ture in looking at vermin. Often t
> dy barbers spoke at great length
> loathsome creatures, and the bo
> tened and could not leave off he
> what made him green and sick for w
>
> All that Lizzie could understan
> that the child of her profligacy wo
> and that he would grow up ugly . . .

Because I Was Flesh is all the r
moving for how late it comes, fo
sense that Dahlberg had had to t
himself into writing a masterpie
declaring himself a neglected m
for thirty years before he'd wr
one. And how fascinating, how
structive, that his first pass at
material of his great book is
hearsed in such different forr
Bottom Dogs. All the "proletar
moves of that first book—the
lowing sociology, the overempl
slang, now so quaint—serve to s
how useless the consolation of
sort of crowd, or movement, or
ternity with his fellow man, w
ever be to Dahlberg in the long
Although *Because I Was Flesh*
seem to be written in a more "
tentious" style, compared with
ostensible street-authenticity of
tom Dogs, it is the later book
wrecks the earlier's pretensi
Screw the proles, *Flesh* says: I v
my mama—except my mama,
my yearning for her,
beneath my respect.

In his other work, Dahlberg
only a bizarre, sometimes hypn
stylist, and a writer who forgo
love anything better than his
failure. His literary and cultural c
cism, *Can These Bones Live*, *Lea*
American, and others, is worse t
useless; it's corrupt—poisoned by
reeling distress. His parable of di
chantment with the left, *The Fle*
Sodom, is unreadably arcane—f
lucid portrait of the intelligent
sad contortions in the 1930s, be
you turn to Lionel Trilling's *The M*
dle of the Journey or Paula Fox's
Western Coast. Beyond the autob
graphical books, only *The Sorrow*
Priapus, a kooky diatribe against

an body and sexual desire, is
n a look, and that because it re-
s a gift for comedy, a voice so
wrought with self-alienation it
cipates the morbid hilarity of
ald Antrim or Ben Marcus:

ne phallus is a slovenly bag created
thout intellect or ontological purpose
design, and as long as the human be-
g has this hanging worm appended to
s middle, which is no good for any-
ing except passing urine and getting
ew, miserable irritations, for which
forsakes his mother, his father, and
s friends, he will never comprehend
e Cosmos.

ne problem is that, apart from
hildhood, Dahlberg had just two
cts: his own career's undervalu-
n and the emptiness of existence.
e he was American, contempo-
and literary, it is largely con-
porary American literary exis-
e that is decried, but one quickly
s out how ready he is to spread
bad news to cover anything his
was alerted to: home, travel,
h, age, company, loneliness, and
, girls, girls. D. H. Lawrence, in a
r written out of exhaustion with
younger writer's preening com-
nts: "for HEAVEN'S SAKE
.VE OFF BEING UNLUCKY—
seem to ask for it." Dahlberg re-
edly quoted the line with pride.
ecognized early that despair was
ift, and he gave it freely—in fact
he'd sling it at your de-
parting back.

o, despite the lasting beauty of
one towering book, the fame of
lberg's terror campaign through
ary culture is no mistake. His fail-
was greater than his greatness:
lberg was a disappointment artist.
virulence against professional glad-
ding was only a matter of dyna-
ng fish in a barrel, as any cheap
about logrolling blurbists has by
more than demonstrated. Dahl-
's deeper dissidence was against
surance and consolation, even in
r purest forms. That when he con-
red Hart Crane and William Car-
Williams and Theodore Dreiser he
only their failure was a confession
ain; the deepest he could afford to
r as to how little writing a master-
e had assuaged the howling lone-

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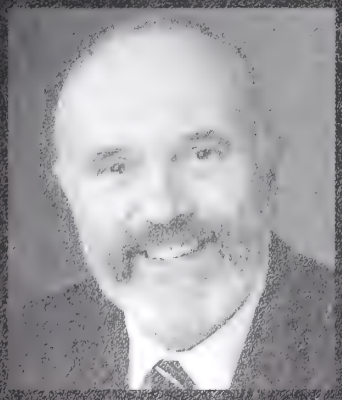
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David Norris
Do You Hear What I'm Seeing?
The life and work of James Joyce
Wednesday 19 February 2003

liness of that needless stint in the Kansas City orphanage. If only a handful of readers, or garlands, was too few, a million readers, or ten million, could never have been enough.

Dahlberg's special achievement was to take this rage and leave it raw, to refuse to professionalize it. Gilbert Sorrentino wrote:

> Dahlberg's bitterness and sourness are familiar to many readers, as is his scornful treatment of writers whose work offends his sensibilities. His near to comic reactionary positions on anything and everything are equally well known. But what does it matter after all? . . . You can find no meaning in Dahlberg, none that you can't get from a thousand lesser writers. Mailer is a titanic thinker next to him; your mailman or boss has more enlightened or informed ideas. There is nothing in Dahlberg except his greatness: he is the real thing. . . . The only thing that you can do with him is read him

Again, as everywhere, the objections come first: the *comic reactionary positions*.

In that comedy, Dahlberg continually offered to explode the myth of absolutist genius even as he sought to extend it. Dahlberg wed the kill-the-father imperative, the famous anxiety of influence, to the truism that a man is only as big as his enemies. Therefore, if one wished to be the greatest writer of the twentieth century, simply make an enemy of the whole of contemporary literature. Dahlberg spent the first two thirds of his life measuring his fellows by Melville and finding them not only wanting but bankrupt. Then, in his late fifties, in an act of almost majestic inconsistency, he turned on Melville, declaring his "failure" as well. By doing so, Dahlberg comically exposed the faulty premises in that whole rigged game: to exalt himself he'd forged the obligation to *hate greatness*. Relishing literature's variety of methods and discourse—watching a thousand flowers bloom—simply wasn't an option. Dahlberg left himself no margin to consider that Faulkner, Beckett, Joyce, and so many rejected others might be his life's companions, his colleagues, his company. Not to mention his masters. Not to mention enjoyable "reads."

Novelists pin their disgust to straw men every day, in this or that review. Others weep for the Death of the Novel. The Herculean instinct to clear the stables prospers in us all, from time to time. Loathing other writers, whether they be one's teachers or students or colleagues, is likely as basic as Freud's "narcissism of minor difference," which explains that we are obliged to denounce those most similar to us, because the resemblances are too telling of our vulnerabilities, our wants. Only Dahlberg did us the favor of tipping *his* narcissism of minor difference into the realm of absurdist tantrum-art, sustained for a lifetime. And what he did in burning down the veil of diffident fraternity he did for the writing classroom as well. Other Famous Monsters of Creative-Writing Land have been known to craft their intolerance into seductive S&M ritual, binding apprentices to grueling discipleships invariably destined for wrenching betrayal. Not Dahlberg. He was as revolted by the students who were turned on by his abuse as he was by those who resisted. Every head had to come off, every supplicant cast into wilderness. If all of us writing teachers are emperors with no clothes, it was Dahlberg who railed in starkest agony of that fact, rending his invisible garments to tatters until his constituency was forced to bellow at him that he was naked.

In 1965, the year of the letter, Wilma Yeo founded the Kansas City Writers' Group, which dedicated its 1994 anthology, *Beginning from the Middle*, to Yeo, just before her death. The foreword explains: "Every piece of this book is a commitment from people who love words and love to write. In 1965, Wilma Yeo began a class for people who needed encouragement with writing. . . . Lawyers, nurses, teachers, psychologists, editors, artists, chemical engineers—these are some of the professions in our group. But when we meet together, our real life is simply writing." The dedication quotes Yeo's credo: "In offering a critique, you must be honest and kind. To be dishonest is to be unkind. And, to be unkind is to be dishonest to yourself and your art." Here is the sort of nurturance Edward Dahlberg resolutely denounced. Yet by his absolute rejection of [the] offer of discipleship, so excruciat[ingly] detailed in the letter, Dahlberg [au]thorized a forty-eight-year-old [wo]man—instantly, it would appear [to] declare herself the kind of writer [and] writing teacher, she needed to [be]. Aunt had already *doubted the accu[racy]* and *learned to discriminate in the en[dless] shades of words*, and she didn't [need] what Unamuno or Ruskin, not to [men]tion "Chestov" or "Dostovsk[y]" Dahlberg, had to tell her, in order [to] go forward. The woman could [be] boiled prune when she met one. [Here] is the last poem from *Mrs. Never[body's] Recipes*.

> MRS. NEVERBODY'S RECIP[E FOR] MAKING CROCODILE TEAR[S]
> To a slice of hanky-panky
> Add some artificial cranky.
> Moisten well with canned boo-[hoo]
> Flavor with a spoof or two.
> Drip this slowly—as it falls
> Roll it into little bawls.
> If you're careful, while they're c[ooking]
> You can spread on only-fooling.
> *(This recipe is not worthwhile*
> *Unless you are a crocodile.)*

Do you feel the generosity, [the] even forgiveness, in that last [pa]thetical couplet? I do. Let it be [said] attending creative-writing classes [ennobles] the brave dreamy soul[s who] populate them, publication is a [safe] and harmless church, and a mi[nus]cule handful of (presently unknown) persons will write something [worth] reading even during their lifetime, let alone after. Edward Dahlberg's Worthwhile Crocodile, contrary to one book readers may wish to retrieve from the bog of his disappointment, rage, sheer unpleasantness they may not wish to bother. His [fig]ure, though, is immortal.

Answers to the January Quiz "Harm's Way"

1 Bow and arrow; **2** Virgil's *Aen[eid]*; **3** Ships; **4** Gunpowder; **5** Bubonic [plague]; **6** Muskets; **7** Amherst College; **8** [Na]poleon Bonaparte; **9** Napoleon [Bo]parte; **10** Krupp; **11** *The World Se[t]*; **12** Cuba's Fidel Castro; **13** Mem[bers] the Branch Davidian religious sect [dur]ing the 1993 FBI siege of their [com]pound at Waco, Texas; **14** [Pa]blo Neruda, in "A Few Things Explained."

ANXIETY, ANONYMITY, AMNESIA

Day to day in the nation's capital

By Wayne Biddle

t's all one story and there is no
er story. Al Qaeda, anthrax,
ıllpox, camel pox, West Nile,
aria, Iraq, Iran, the snakeheads,
sniper, the war, whatever comes
t. Whether or how these things
factually related doesn't matter.
e president will not sort it out,
ngress can never sort it out, the
vision makes money by making
orse. Pandora's box is agape even
ere people are paid to decon-
ıct. A middle-aged poet freshly
ed to teach the premeds at a lo-
university how to pen verse
ded an armed bodyguard halfway
ough the fall semester because
neone threatened to shoot up his
ting workshop if he didn't ease up
his criticism. When a career in
ice work looks more secure than
ctor-lawyer-engineer (or tenured
t), it's time for a long stay some-
ere unfashionable. Bad Nauheim's
m saline springs, impregnated with
bonic acid for the heart, or any-
ere "between Nice and Bordighera,"
Ford Madox Ford suggested.

The Good Soldier, his 1915 master-
ce, has been riding a swell of pop-
rity among the book clubs of Cleve-
d Park and Chevy Chase. If more
rriages than usual are on the rocks,
f what in England used to be called

*yne Biddle lives and writes in the Wash-
on, D.C., area.*



WI-JÚN-JON, "PIGEON'S EGG HEAD (THE LIGHT)," GOING TO AND RETURNING FROM WASHINGTON, 1837–39

"quite good people" are increasingly fascinated by tales of how badly things can turn out, then they have found the right guide in Mr. Ford. That he also wrote propaganda for the British government to lure America into World War I might even inspire some of the Cabinet-level appointees just now getting the hang of what it takes to please their Connecticut Texan.

Washington is still a fashionable apartheid city, with a narrow swath of Northwest containing most of the white people and the three other quadrants, almost all the black and brown. People of color thus have more room in the District to spread their wings than during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, when they were confined to the slave shacks of Georgetown, or during the first half of the twentieth, when many were too cut by poverty to leave the Southeast and Southwest ghetto that had arisen near the Capitol during Reconstruction. Despite two generations of integration and a burgeoning black professional class that is courted nowadays by the old prep schools and welcomed by the banks, there lingers a palpable unspoken notion in the neighborhoods between Wisconsin and Connecticut avenues debouching into Montgomery County that the Third World is held at bay here.

This is why homes in Cleveland Park and Chevy Chase are valued at Palo Alto levels, not because of proximity to ginchy restaurants and enchanting sidewalk life.

The Third World, whether of the offshore or the homegrown variety, has always found ways of busting into this realm, of course. It is empirically obvious that flying machines can be crashed into national landmarks, tropical microbes can hitch aboard immigrant bloodstreams and insinuate themselves upon native-borns, yucky alien foodstuffs can be

ıting by George Catlin © Smithsonian American Art Museum, gift of Mrs. Joseph Harrison Jr., 1985.66.474

pools to devour local fauna, and a Chevy can be converted into mobile artillery. What these events say about American foreign policy or the domestic viability of an advanced capitalist state awaits the clarification that comes gradually with memory loss. ("Many a man fails as an original thinker simply because his memory is too good," Nietzsche warned in *Human, All Too Human,* albeit as syphilis was climbing up his brain stem.) Meanwhile, there is the most terrifying realization about American life since Henry Adams watched State Street devour Quincy: money cannot buy a safe address. This was the bummer at the Pentagon's E-ring, the Hart Senate Office Building, Leisure World, and Home Depot. Nobody ever thought too hard about foreign policy in those places anyway.

Although the little white spy planes are gone for the time being from the skies over Columbia Country Club, and the video cams along the Beltway are back to catching road-ragers, Washingtonians now understand how long it takes to focus this technology on a specific foe. Unregulated "growth" in the Maryland and Virginia suburbs quickly provided houses and shops as the District depopulated itself of all but its very richest and poorest residents, but it created an anonymous labyrinth where strangers are neighbors, roads are tangles, and every intersection presents the same vista of identical franchises. Chingachgook himself, transmogrified to the twenty-first century and educated at Georgetown Day, would lose the trail here, let alone police chiefs hired from Oregon. The Department of Homeland Security will discover that in order to save America it will have to destroy it—the one military aphorism from the last hundred years that never went out of date.

And yet the money continues to pour in from somewhere. Along the once and now again malarial banks of the Potomac, from Chain Bridge north beyond Great Falls, the hilly Virginia woods are being sculpted into tracts of homes so large that they recall the tower-villas of Potsdam. The economy that makes possible the building and buying of these fabulosities is as inscrutable to *les gens dans la rue* as the livelihood of a solitary dairy farmer. Once they are purchased, what American career offers the financial longevity required to maintain and live in them for more than a few years? Are they being acquired simply as wagering chips, to park and wash the fake profits of the nineties? Will they ever be inhabited at all? One certainty is that they cannot be defended by anything less than a division of the Virginia National Guard. They have sprouted in the protective lee of the CIA (GEORGE BUSH CENTER FOR INTELLIGENCE, says the highway sign outside the gate, splitting the sides of many a European tourist), much as the black shantytowns did near Congress, but five-acre lots are harder to police than to manicure, and no owner would dare arm his Salvadoran landscape technicians.

On the Sunday before Election Day, a pristine autumn afternoon when the pin-oak and sassafras forest was hot yellow above Great Falls gorge's class-5 rapids, young Asian and Latin American families crowded the park's observation decks. The view across the Potomac is a quintessential New World inspiration, reflecting more American history than the park rangers can say. Georgetown Pike, which brings in the carloads from town, follows a prehistoric trail around the Falls formed by animals that grazed from the Chesapeake Bay to beyond the Blue Ridge Mountains. Susquehannock traders used this path during the seventeenth century to bring furs to English shippers anchored at the head of the Potomac. Tobacco replaced furs, and George Washington's Patowmack Company built canals around the gorge to give access to Ohio. President James Madison and Dolley fled over the road from British troops who burned their house in 1814. In 1863, J.E.B. Stuart's doomed soldiers slogged through on their way up to Gettysburg.

This is all forgotten, except perhaps by a few members of an occasional preservation committee trying to forestall the paving-over that characterizes most of the rest of northern Virginia. No would fault the Koreans Nicaraguans for not being t these factoids—it's an awe sight, that thundering white palachian water, and as new zens they probably know more the local children from Ma School, whose headmistress b the old bankrupt toll road d the Depression, for $500 ($6,6 day), and then gave it to the st it would be fixed up for her clientele. But when everyone voting Republican in these rons, especially in this parti state, where you can buy a co rifle or execute a teenager as as join a church, they should no mistake about whether it is of welcome. Below the Ma Dixon it is still always, alwa vote against the wog, as abov Old Line it is fore vote for lucre.

Menschliches, Allzumenschl With Republicans now run everything worth running in around Washington (the Dis mayor, a Democrat in perpetui rather like a college dean who is mitted to apply his teacup of pow the tempest of faculty hirings but dwells in the pocket of fat donors), triumphalists have reass control over the zeitgeist: demo tion of the Other, Social Darw attitudes toward unconventiona trickle-down economics where pinhole in a zeppelin is the source of fresh air for a Malthu ground crew, and abhorrence of entific fact that contradicts relig faith. Washington has never be city of ideas, only of power, as H Adams and Henry James saw clea century ago, when the capital ci nally became more notable to outside world than foggy bottom! By extension, the nation has bee terested in exercising power arc the world whenever serious mon at stake. "Is there any man her any woman, let me say is there child here, who does not know the seed of war in the modern w is industrial and commercial riva asked an exhausted Woodrow W son, who had lured the nation



V: WASH-KA-MON-YA, *"FAST DANCER," IOWA WARRIOR;* MÚK-A-TAH-MISH-O-KÁH-KAIK, *"BLACK HAWK," SAUK AND FOX CHIEF;* A-KI-HE-GA, *"HORSE CHIEF," PAWNEE CHIEF;* BOTTOM ROW: OS-CE-O-LÁ, *"THE BLACK DRINK," SEMINOLE WARRIOR;* SAY-SAY-IAIL STORM," *OJIBWA/CHIPPEWA CHIEF;* STU-MICK-O-SÚCKS, *"BUFFALO BULL'S BACK FAT," BLACKFOOT/KAINAI CHIEF*

l War I with calls to make the safe for democracy, before rest- owds a year after it was over.

st apropos in this anxiety-filled n is the grand show of George n's portraits of Native Ameri- at the Smithsonian's Renwick ery. During the decade after gress passed the infamous Re- l Act of 1830, which forced the c cleansing of Indians from all east of the Mississippi, Catlin eyed west to paint hundreds of viduals as well as primordial capes and hunting scenes. His ings constitute the sole surviv- ecord of certain tribes. Perhaps surprisingly, the U.S. govern- showed no interest in acquiring tupendous historic resource un- e Smithsonian accepted it from vate donor in 1879, by which the cleansing was finished from to coast and Catlin was long . It has rarely been exhibited then. The faces that he por- d while they were still "uncon- taminated" (his word) by European civilization now form a magnificent army of lost souls, especially when displayed "salon style" from floor to ceiling, as they are in the Renwick's voluminous second-floor chamber. Imagine a gifted, clear-sighted photographer in the 1930s, instead of such a painter in the 1830s, tromping through the *shtetls* of Poland instead of the Mandan villages of the Dakota Territory, and you get some idea of what Catlin gave future American generations to contemplate.

The Renwick sits at the barricaded corner of Seventeenth Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, a half-block from the White House. Outside its main door, concrete pylons disguised as giant flowerpots, and a pop-up barrier against truck bombs, mark the pedestrians-only entrance to an eerily lifeless zone that is still called Lafayette Park, the closest thing D.C. ever had to New York's Washington Square. Hardly anybody comes to play or relax here anymore, certainly not the often nutty protesters who used to stand across from a White House fence with signs about some part of the world they thought was getting screwed by the mansion's occupant. The few tourists who nervously snap photos through the fence do not hang around long, as though the White House were too dangerous to linger near with youngsters. All in all, a perfect locale to show Catlin's pictures, though it might be too much to suspect that the curators at the Smithsonian possess such an ironic sense of history (remember the *Enola Gay*).

Staying home with a nice book like *The Good Soldier* or *North American Indians* is clearly the safest thing to do around Washington at the moment, though readers need to venture into dirty-nuke downtown or sniper suburbia to find a Borders for such arcana. Out there along the semi-rural Potomac, there are no bookstores at all, or anything else, for that matter, besides what comes over the airwaves. To spend millions on a clapboard colonial the size of Brideshead, fill it with the flickering glow of the evening news, order Domino's for supper delivered by a Pakistani doctoral candidate, and fall asleep inside the infrared perimeter beams—this is the top of the heap. Life gets raw and exposed below this summit, filled with jobs that are here one day and gone the next, friends who are happy one day and divorced the next, children who get A's one day and flunk the next, bosses who are heroes one day and thieves the next, politicians who are Democrats one day and Republicans the next, doctors who save someone one day and kill him the next, athletes who are young one day and over-the-hill the next, and, ineluctably, a bitter numbness in which you'll vote for anyone with an ounce of energy. ■

gs by George Catlin, 1832–45 © Smithsonian American Art Museum, gifts of Mrs. Joseph Harrison Jr.; w: 1985.66.520, 1985.66.2, 1985.66.99; Bottom row: 1985.66.301, 1985.66.532, 1985.66.149

ROCKET DAY

By Ron Carlson

It was rocket day. Griffin was at the empty ballpark taping an end-of-season, goodbye-to-baseball piece. He and the cameraman, Clancy, had arrived early in the morning to catch all the shadows. The huge roof was halfway open, and the fall sky was a sharp square in it. Griffin was walking slowly from second base to third, speaking into his microphone—next season for this, next season for that—noting that the next time the stadium's seats would be filled was the upcoming monster-truck pull at the end of October, and when he said "October," he remembered: *Rocket Day*. He finished as scripted, saying maybe the team should look into some monster trucks for their bull pen, anything with horsepower, and then he signed off as he had for ten years: "Tom Griffin, Channel Seven Sports. Play Ball."

Clancy lowered the camera and gathered up the equipment. "What'd you forget?"

"I've got to get over to the high school. I'm late. What else do we need here?"

"Not a thing. You're clear. I'll get the other shots."

"The empty concourse." Griffin grabbed his jacket off the infield grass.

"And the entrance," Clancy said. "I'll get it all, but is Big Bob going to want you dissing the team?"

"Bob knows it's all true."

"I'll see you at noon," the cameraman said to Griffin, who was crossing to the seats. "Are you president of the P.T.A. yet?"

Griffin waved it off and ran up the aisle.

Whenever he was running, there was reason, and now he had to get to the high school football field to see Rocket Day in Miss McKenzie's Science II class. It was a dangerous mission, something he didn't have to do, but here he was running. He wanted to see Andy's rocket launched, and he understood this desire to be a real thing in his heart. He would sneak over and tell no one; he just wanted to witness the event. He wouldn't even tell Frannie. This was just who he was. This is who he wanted to be.

He'd had two weeks alone to try to figure out who he was, but as Frannie would have pointed out, two weeks wasn't even a start. She'd asked him point-blank: "Who are you, buddy? A father and husband or just one big sport?" Then she'd tapped his suitcase with her foot and told him to go and find out. Griffin in all his golden life hadn't done much thinking. His negligence had sneaked up on him really, what she called his "bachelor
staying out between his six o'clo
the ten o'clock reports and then s
ing an hour and then two wi
down with Clancy or some o
ballplayers. "I'm firing your laund
Frannie said. "Me. And I'm layin
off to see if you're fit for retrair
She helped him pack. It was the
she said tough stuff, with humor, h
knew it was nothing near a joke

When he sat in his one-bed
suite at the Pampas and tried to t
it was comical. He couldn't put
sentences together in his head
wondered if a person was suppos
think in sentences. It was like a
room: clothes on the chairs, a da
ous stack of books and magazine
actual pizza box that was somet
like a week old. The television
never, since he'd moved in, beer
In the little fridge he had five b
of beer and two sandwiches, date
known. A thought he did have
that when all his clothes were
Frannie would take him back. He
it wasn't a high-quality thought.

And this week, in his zeal to re
the situation, he'd made a mistake
Miss Kelly McKenzie, his son's Sci
II teacher; when he thought of th
thoughts were images,
words.

The last three nights, after th
o'clock sports, he had driven o

Ron Carlson is the author of seven books of fiction, most recently the story collection At the Jim Bridger *and the novel* The Speed of Light. *He teaches writing at Arizona State University.*

side automatically, forgetting
ıe now lived downtown. Every
who has been asked to leave his
ıome, take his stuff, whatever
ermines that to be, and just *move*
ventually spends some nights
ng his old neighborhood, twen-
es an hour in the deep twilight
the lights in the houses are go-
ı. It was crazy for Griffin. These
exactly the hours when he used
to Timothy's or The Green Gi-
r any of the six sports bars his
es ran. He'd have a few beers,
t up with the guys, only a few of
e last names he knew,
oung brokers in their
ed loafers glad to be
Griffin, the guy on TV,
hen he'd go back to
nel Seven to trim up
e late news. When he
ı his neighborhood, he
ed by the little ele-
ary school where An-
had gone just a few
ago, and looked down
Street at his house. He
he quick burn in his
ach. He ransacked his
for a reason to stop,
ıtorying every part of
arage, the back yard,
door or faucet that
t need fixing. He want-
ed to fix some-
thing.

When Andrew was in
grade, he and Griffin
lone a project on Vas-
Gama, the Portuguese
orer. They had used an
eather-handled ship-
trunk that had mildewed. Griffin
-painted the interior gaslight yel-
He and Andrew coated the in-
with a collage of sailing ships, and
naps of Da Gama's voyages, and
ıy parchment manuscripts they
ed around the edges, and then
bolted three lengths of heavy
ns inside the lid and filled the
with miscellaneous loot.
annie had come into the garage
night before and watched them
ing. Griffin had stenciled "Vas-
a Gama: Viceroy of India" on
runk.
How are we doing?" Griffin
asked her. He was excited about everything that year, because the television station had just asked him to go on air as the backup sports guy. It had meant a big raise from what he made just being the writer, and he could tell the wind was blowing his way.

"Old Vasco was a treacherous guy," Frannie said. "Anything in there about that?"

"He was appointed by the king of Portugal, and he was the first guy to sail around the Cape of Good Hope to India. Right, Andy?"



"That's what the book said." Andrew was gluing a paper crown above the name.

"He murdered thousands of people," Frannie said. "Once he sealed 380 people in a ship and started it on fire."

"He had to," Griffin said, immediately regretting the joke.

"It took four days to sink." Frannie handed him a large-font paragraph she had printed off the Internet.

Griffin looked at her. He wondered if he was as shallow as he felt. "We're being pragmatic, Frannie. Do you know what that means, Andy?"

Andrew knelt and looked up at his parents. "We're just getting the Explorer project done?"

Griffin opened the chest. "But we can fit this in here somewhere. Good idea, Frannie."

Griffin had driven it to school on the assigned day and hauled it into Miss Palmer's classroom, staying long enough to chat her into extra credit. "Old Vasco was the viceroy of India, all right," he told the young woman, "but he did some tough stuff to get there. He was treacherous. Andrew really enjoyed this project." He leaned against her desk and asked her, "How do you like teaching? It must be an amazing job."

Griffin had charm; he had spent his life as the best-looking man in the room. People said he had an easy manner, and that was because life had been easy for him, and he'd never known it until this year. Everywhere he was selected, promoted, liked. He was exactly the kind of person for whom television is a perfect career; confidence came off him like blue light.

He had wanted to be a good father, and he thought it would come naturally, the way everything in his life had come. He was alert to it until the year of Vasco da Gama, and then his career called, and he got swept away. From there it had been fits and starts. He'd go months of coming home after the boy was in bed, and then suddenly dive into a social-studies project or the science fair as if there were no other thing. "You're not an even-keel guy," Frannie told him. "You don't like equilibrium, and it's going to wear you out. You are so trained at coming from behind that it feels like the right way to play, and, Tom, it's not."

"You should have married a steady guy," he'd counter.

"No, we'll see," she had said. "This is interesting, but I worry about you, buddy." When she called

ıtion by Panne Proffitt

him buddy, it always scared him, because he heard it as her way of keeping him at a distance. He'd heard her use it in traffic when someone would pinch a left turn too close. "Careful, buddy, you're going to hurt yourself."

What he had tried to fix now was Andrew's failing grade in Miss McKenzie's Science II class. Andrew was a junior. Griffin had attended Parents' Night the previous week, after the most recent quarrel with Frannie, a frantic and upended rehash of their situation, his culpability, his fault, and he had gone to the high school feeling the energy build. He wanted to fix things for Andrew, have Frannie see him helping. Miss McKenzie was a beautiful geek. She wore no makeup and had her sensible bright brown hair combed back in a clip. She had remarkable posture and smooth skin and large breasts that under her white turtleneck were housed in a many-seamed foundation garment proud of its engineering. During the session, Griffin watched the fathers in the room checking her out. Everywhere you looked, her breasts were in the picture.

He waited until after the last presentation and then sat with Miss McKenzie for a while on stools in the lab, and he knew what he was doing. He talked about his respect for teachers, how he almost became one. He spoke of Andrew's enthusiasm for science. He alluded briefly to trouble at home, his wife, some stress. He leaned forward, he loosened his tie, he showed her the scar inside his elbow from an accident he'd had in high school shop. She spoke softly in the kind of monotone that warned Griffin not to swear or even kid around. She was surprised that Andrew liked the class, but pleased to hear it. By the time Griffin had walked Miss McKenzie to her car, he knew that Andrew would pass Science II. They were the last ones out of the building. Griffin was a little surprised that they had talked for an hour. In the parking lot there was a strange moment. At her Subaru, instead of shaking her hand, he stepped close, taking her elbow and kissing her cheek, thanking her, but she misunderstood and came into his arms, pressing against him in a hug that was full and awkward and sensuous and too long. When she pulled away, Griffin saw her eyes were still closed. He didn't kiss her, but he saw he could. In the weirdness, Griffin said it: I'll call you.

He did call her and thank her for her time, her consideration, again her dedication to teaching. She told him about graduate school in Indiana, and about how teaching was her life now, at thirty-one, and that she was a "little lonely, but things weren't bad." She said she had seen him on TV, and she hoped things were going better at home. "Well, you know," he said. He was at the office, and when he got off the phone, Clancy said, "Who was that?"

And then, two days later on Friday night, Kim McKenzie stopped by at the Pampas. Griffin did the ten o'clock sports and drove to the apartment, and when he stepped out of his car in the dark, she stepped out of hers. She had a bag of garlic bread and two Caesar salads. Not missing a beat, he said, "Good timing. Have you been here long?"

"You were on television when I went into Giardino's, and I thought it might be worth a try. Have you eaten?"

He realized he'd told her where he lived and that he ate after the program; had he told her too some story about garlic bread? There was nothing to do except walk up the concrete steps to his tiny place. She was the first person besides Clancy to witness the way he lived, and he thought that: she's come to see if I'm really separated. Kim was happy to be there and blessed the clutter with, "You must be busy." Griffin fished out two clean forks and a couple of beers, and they ate. She ate with gusto, a woman who was used to eating alone. A moment later they were sitting in his laundry on the couch, and her shirt was off as they nuzzled. Griffin's head was full of garlic and the smell of baby powder that came off Miss McKenzie in waves. He was now beyond confused, in a full tailspin. He couldn't remember how she'd gotten her shirt off. He'd helped her with her chair, something, and she'd come against him, and they'd backed to the couch, and then she'd undone a button and shrugged a shoulder free. Now they were kissing lightly, bumping heads, and she was guiding his fingers along the major seams in the hefty conical carriage of her brassiere. Each cu clearly the result of advanced de There were some man-hours in thing; the plans alone would be pages. Frannie wore seamless bras didn't weigh six ounces. Now McKenzie was whispering somet he could not quite hear, and h derstood that she'd been waiting to take off her shirt, to sit like show and explain herself.

Griffin felt treacherous. He no longer work his mind; it ran a Now, as his fingers came along side, up and over and down to her breastbone, he was thinking a the bushels of laundry in which squirmed. What he wanted was t to the cleaners, the little place b house where the three girls with ple hair and small diamond nose s wrote his name in giant loopy cu on green tickets, which he coul change two days later for bright c clothes, glistening in plastic. The ticket. He wanted that life back one where he always had a green et in his wallet, where he could into the kitchen and tell Fra "Hey, I picked up the laundry." Miss McKenzie had his hand alon underwire and up along the lace full circle, two, three, four circ navigations. She was still whisp when he felt her take his hand ar her back and place it on the c wide as a belt. He thought he coul eight hooks. She arched her shou slightly to make it easier for him he kept his hand flat.

"Let's get some coffee," he said. you want a little coffee?" Their h were still together, and he knew stayed at close quarters so tha couldn't look at her, take her all in didn't want the responsibility of t breasts.

"Not coffee," she said. "But we c get some ice cream?"

"There's a place at the Founta he said. "You want frozen yogurt cream?"

Her smile was real, and here c her shirt back up and then the tons, five, four, three, two, and She stood. "I'm all ice cream," she "Why would anybody freeze yog

They stood, and Griffin was with gratitude. For a momen thought, well, that went well,

ed that delicate moment with
ıct. They quit the room and
d out into the warm desert
clumping down the concrete
ıy that could only remind one
ıotel. He was so glad that her
as buttoned. At the Fountains,
lid have ice cream, the sturdy
cones each heaped with a
g globe of vanilla. She let him
odding at him, and saying, "I'll
next time." She was watching
ce, and added, "I'm kidding.
won't be a next time, will
" She spoke with her mouth
ice cream. "I'm sorry I scared
She pointed at him, "Let's do
ou let me know what you're
ng sometime. Okay?" Standing
bright lights of the Fountains
ıis ice-cream cone, Griffin felt
child. His mouth was full of
a now, too. He nodded. She
went on, "I won't look for
you until I see you coming."

he car on the way to the high
l, Griffin's cell phone rang.
" Clancy said (everybody was us-
her names for him), "Big Bob
that you're a little negative on
ıseball team."
ffin's stomach burned below
eastbone, and he pressed the
"Because they only lost a hun-
games?" he said. "Because they
the worst fielding squad in any
ın?"
g Bob doesn't want to burn any
s. He liked the tape, the writ-
ut he says, why hit them when
e down."
g Bob doesn't want to burn his
ıtion to the corporate skybox."
easy for Griffin to say this and
he was right, because he didn't
to lose his seat in there either. He
some of these guys, the players,
with them. Now the traffic was
, a thousand new cars, all freshly
ed, all in the way. If he let the
t stand, next year would be a dif-
season for him; he'd seen it hap-
o other reporters.
What do we do here, Boss?" Clan-
ced. "You want to talk to him?"
ot really, Clancy. I say run the
. It's the truth. It was an awful
Only have him call me with
al errors." He liked the taste of

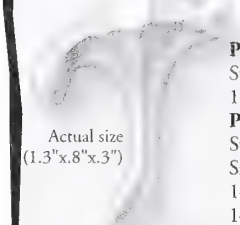
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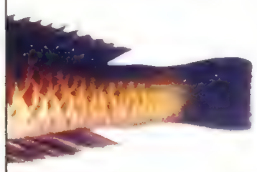


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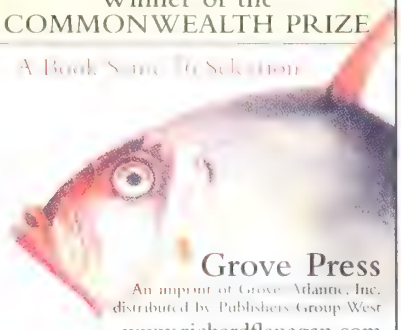
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what he'd said: bitter. He understood he'd hurt himself with it.

Last night he'd dropped by his own house, unannounced, to make a last check on Andrew's rocket, and he tried to fix the upstairs-bathroom towel rack. He'd arrived at 6:30, ringing the front doorbell. He never used the front door, hadn't stood out here ten times; the dust on the door's varnished oak scrollwork was thick. The brass faceplate was missing from the doorbell, and he added it to his list. Brass plate, superglue.

Andrew came to the door: "Dad?"

"Rocket ready?"

"I think so." He followed his seventeen-year-old son into the kitchen. The house smelled of baked chicken, and there was Frannie standing next to the hardwood island with her knife and fork. She was still in her principal's clothing, a blue plaid suit with a short-sleeve jacket. She headed the Mission School, the middle school Andrew had attended. She had opened a bottle of Pinot Grigio and poured half a glass. The cork was still on the corkscrew on the counter.

"Chicken," Griffin said.

"We're having chicken," Frannie said. "What's up?"

"Not a thing," Griffin said. "Just last check on the rocket. Tomorrow's rocket day." They'd started this project for Andrew's science class the week Griffin had moved into the Pampas. It was a two-liter soda bottle, inverted, fitted with fins and a nose cone. The rockets were powered with a fifty-pound water gauge. The grade would be 70 percent performance (how straight and high it would go); 20 percent design (drawings and plans); and 10 percent aesthetics (paint job).

"I thought you had Miss McKenzie in the palm of your hand."

Griffin turned sharply toward Frannie to read her face, but there was nothing there. "Miss McKenzie is fine," Griffin said, opening the door to the garage. "She said she's going to give Andy a fair shake on this. She seems like a nice person."

"She is a blue bitch," Andrew said.

"Watch your language," Frannie told the boy. Frannie was distraught, having, in her words, two irresponsible boys. It was frustrating for them both t a son who was unsuited and un to compromise. When he c people, that was it. Again and Griffin or Frannie had had t school to talk some teacher into the boy one more chance. It ways a version of the same thin class rule would be, if you we twice, you were not admitted t the second time. "Fine," Andrew say when they'd find him in the chair outside the counselor's "Screw Spanish." Or: "Screw Mr. the fascist." Frannie had talked boy, and Griffin had talked to was an open heartbreak for her t Andrew be rude, insistent on f But she kept her patience and c their talks in terms of the rul common human courtesy. It w lost on Griffin that she used the same tone when advising Andre she used with him.

Griffin focused his talks wi boy on the value of tact in self-p vation. It was particularly stunn Griffin to find this flaw in his s cause he had none of it. Griffi one walking apology, a suck-up because he was good looking ar tact, too much tact, Griffin had prevailed, advanced, won.

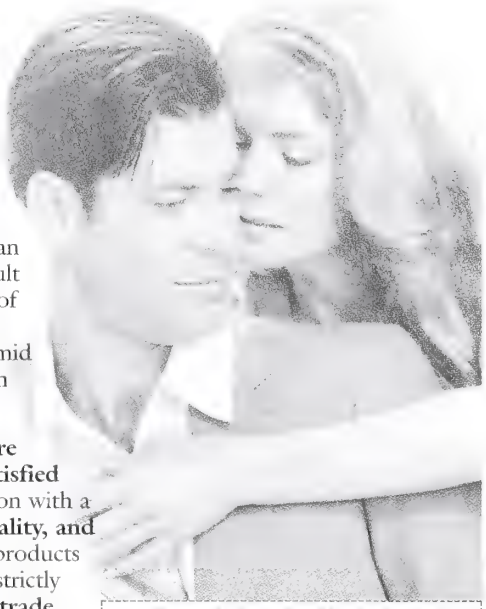
The rocket stood on its silve board wings on the workbench nights before they had lined secti the bottle with masking tape- lightning bolts—and then painted the cylinder neon or "Looking good," Griffin sai opened his little Swiss Army kni handed it to Andrew, who pic the corner of the tape and then ly peeled back each strip, rev clear lightning. "You're hired," said. "It is a certifiable thing of be

"Ten out of ten," the boy He capped the orange rocket the silver cardboard nose co which they'd stuffed the gar bag parachute.

Griffin was glad to see Andrew py. The rocket had been one lo gument, every step: the shape fins, the number of fins, the mate the fins. Griffin was not an engin the least, but he had a handy eye. They rejected plastic for th and went with cardboard; they r ed the edges of the fins as Ar

d. As each part took shape, Grif-
s urging the boy in his politics.
Miss McKenzie that you really
is project," he told him. "Just
come out sometime when you go
lass."
drew had looked at his father
ropped his head into the sarcas-
t. "Miss McKenzie, you geek, I
hysics and I love my rocket, and
you for bringing us together."
st an idea," Griffin countered.
't do anything that might help
ause."
ysics is not my cause."
high school diploma is your
," Griffin said. "Your mother's
ness is your cause."
nfortunate phrase, Dad. I'll do
school. You handle the other.
do not go over there tomorrow.
e already got McKenzie calling
my first name. I'll give you the
t in a day or two. This rocket is
ne."
stairs, a moment later, Griffin
on the bathroom floor with the
-rack parts before him. He'd fixed
e already; there was a design flaw.
ak bar was too close to the wall,
when Andrew jammed his wet
s there, it all sprung. Griffin knelt
ut the tiny brass setscrew in his
He realigned the rod, forcing it
the assembly. As he pushed, his
ce fled, and he rocked against the
nd down onto his backside, swal-
g the screw. He'd painted this
himself eight, nine years ago.
thing blue. Remington. It had
up. He sat still with his hand on
est feeling for it, the brass pellet
ng somewhere within. He couldn't
he felt it or not. There was always
-grade burn in his stomach. Brass,
ought. That can't be poison.
iffin found Frannie in the kitchen
old her he'd come back tomorrow
ix the towel rack. He needed some
. "Tom," she said. He had wan-
l back into the living room where
on was reading. It was weird for
in in the house: he couldn't stop
ing at things, his old life. Now his
Andrew, was, at seventeen, doing
he did when he read a school-
.. He had all the couch cushions
nced into a fort with a desk lamp
ing in one end. All Griffin could
were the boy's huge feet sticking

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NOTES FOR "DE-CONSTRUCTION":

The "Deconstructions" are words spelled with phrases contained within framing letters: A. W(I DO)W; B. N(OR THE ASTER)N; C. S(TABLE MAT)E; D. E.(VERY THIN)G.; E. M(OTHER LINES)S.; F. S(EAR CHIN)G; G. C(A PILLAR)Y.; H. R(ARE BI)T.

Puzzle editing by Dan Asimov.

Anagrams are indicated with an asterisk (*).

ACROSS: 11. a.b.h.o.r. (initials); 12. pun, sillier; 13. two mngs., pun; 16. i.(t.-era-t.)e.; 18. li'l-Y; 22. t(ired)-ru(d)e; 23. hidden; 26. hidden; 27. slain*-d.; 31. e-missive; 32. s(oldier)-tar; 37. *; 38. two mngs.; 39. double anagram; 40. see(m).

DOWN: 1. m-ant-is; 2. OB.-literate; 3. the-re; 4. H-over; 5. two mngs.; 6. two mngs.; 7. hidden; 8. Eli-cited; 9. sing-let on; 10. sa(GG)y; 14. (p)lace; 15. si(new)s; 17. homophone; 19. re-el(ection); 20. gril*-l(istening); 21. row(rev.)-dy; 22. *; 24. *; 25. homophone; 28. Pi(err)e; 29. l.(earns); 30. r(ighteous)-anger; 32. nits(rev.)-t.; 33. *; 34. *; 35. be(n.)t; 36.*.

out and the seams of light streaming onto the walls. Frannie came out and stood by him, speaking softly, "Do not come back tomorrow." She took Griffin's wrist, an action he realized she had never done; it was at once tender and imperious. "You don't live here. We don't need the towel rack fixed."

Griffin turned to his wife. She still had his wrist. "What do I fix?" He looked into the face he knew better than any in the world. She wasn't smiling; it was that other grin, the one she used to hold her face up when there was trouble. He had seen it at funerals. She let go of his arm.

"Good night, Tom. Be careful driving."

"I saw Miss McKenzie," he told her. "I talked to her twice."

"That's good," Frannie said. "Thanks."

He was broken for a moment and unable to move. She wasn't going to ask for his dirty clothes. "What do I do again?" he said, but she wasn't going to open the subject again, the way he'd run his life for the last year like a bachelor: job, guys, drinking.

She walked him to the door. "You go home." She went back into the kitchen, and he heard her call, "Come on, Andrew. This chicken's ready."

Griffin had the doorknob in his hand. "Get up," he said sharply to the boy. "Your mother's waiting."

"Dad," the voice came back from the cave of cushions, "chill out. I've got it covered." Griffin looked at his son's giant feet, opened the door, and went into the night.

The high school was a closed campus. Griffin saw the speed-radar van and slowed and then looked for a way in. The parking lots were all gated. It was a puzzle, by design. If you were in the club, you knew where to park; otherwise, good luck. Griffin went past the football field and turned in the exit there, drifting up the long aisle of cars, every one of them newer, bigger, cleaner than his Lumina, until he came to the small maintenance area.

Griffin stopped and watched the group of students through his binoculars. He steadied the glasses by leaning on the top of his Lumina, standing in the open door. The Science II class milled around the middle of the football field waiting to launch their rockets, and he could see Miss McKenzie with her clipboard directing the morning. Now she was wearing a red turtleneck. Her breasts were like nose cones protruding into the sunlight, and there was a burning at his breastbone that felt a lot like shame, though it could have been the brass screw he'd swallowed last night.

He saw the first rocket go up, a feeble arc of about fifty feet trailing a mist of water, and Griffin heard the muted blast a second later. A second rocket misfired and squibbed off to one side, spraying water as it went. The students groaned and squealed, and these sounds came to Griffin delayed. Miss McKenzie with her clipboard noted the procession of rockets. He stared at her and whispered, "I'm sorry." A rocket streamed into the blue sky, but the parachute opened too early, and the rocket stopped dead, floating back to the ground.

"Can I help you?" The security guard had come up in his electric golf cart. He had his walkie-talkie in his hand.

"No, no problem," Griffin told the man, whom he now recognized as the head guard, a man he'd dealt with last spring. His name was Sawyer, and Griffin knew immediately not to use it. He didn't want to remind the man that it was Andrew who had told him to "fuck off and get a real job" when he'd been caught leaving campus one noontime. During the excruciating apology, which Griffin had extorted from his son, Sawyer had not accepted it graciously but had gone off on the boy, facing him down. "I'm just watching the rocketry," Griffin said.

"You can't be here," Sawyer said.

Griffin lowered his binoculars and turned to the man. He was glad he still had his tie on. "Look," he said, reduced to pulling rank, "I'm Tom Griffin from Channel Seven Sports, and I'm—"

"I know who you are. We've got a lot of activities, and a lot of people, Mr. Griffin, and unless you have a school-sanctioned reason for being on school property, then you're going to have to—"

"Dude," Griffin said, mad, trying to make it a slur. "I need to see these rockets." Then he pushed it. "I'm speaking in Miss Kelly McKenzie's class later. Do you know Miss McKenzie?"

"Yes, I do, Mr. Griffin. Leave your right here. Let's go out and talk to h

Now Griffin's chest burned ag He was angry but controlling it. followed the guard through the gate and onto the running track t circled the field. Ahead he saw drew step through the kids with orange rocket and place it on launch platform. As he and Saw stepped onto the lush grass, he co hear the students chant the cou down, "Eight . . . seven . . . six . . ." M McKenzie had seen them approa ing now, and Griffin saw her tilt head and walk toward them. Now could see her face, the smile, and w could he do but wave? She drop the clipboard. Griffin knew she going to run to him. With a sharp h Andrew's rocket slipped straight i the blue, up two hundred yards, Griffin heard the children scream to knowledge the victory. Even Saw looked up. Now if the parachute, s as it was, would only appear.

February Index Sources

1 Bill of Rights Defense Committee (Flore Mass.); **2** The Gallup Organization (Pri ton, N.J.); **3** Information Security Overs Office (Washington); **4** U.S. Departmen Justice; **5** YouGov (London); **6** New York lice Department/Central Intelligence Age (Washington); **7,8** *Washington Post*; **9** Cal nia Department of Corrections (Sacramer **10** Security Research Project, Universit Florida (Gainesville); **11,12** American search Group (Manchester, N.H.); **13** Me Lynch (N.Y.C.); **14,15** Center for Respon Politics (Washington); **16** *Harper's* resea **17** Freedom Alliance (Dulles, Va.); **18** *Jam Observer* (Kingston); **19** Institute for Democ in South Africa (Cape Town); **20** ROMIR search Group (Moscow); **21** Prof. Mark Krai Harvard University (Cambridge, Mass.); The Washington Institute for Near East P cy; **23** Coalition to Stop the Use of Child diers (London); **24,25** United Nations De opment Programme (N.Y.C.)/UNA (Geneva); **26** World Health Organizat (Geneva); **27** Embassy of Japan (Washingt **28** Dr. Yugui Guo (North Potomac, Md.) University of California, Berkeley; **30,31** Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation (M Park, Calif.); **32** Centers for Disease Con and Prevention (Washington); **33** Nati Organization for Women (Washington). Jet Propulsion Laboratory (Pasadena, Cal **35** National Aeronautics and Space Admi tration (Washington)/Missile Defense Age (Washington); **36** Missile Defense Age (Washington); **37** Dr. Shanna H. Swan, U versity of Missouri-Columbia; **38,39** Chu & Dwight Co., Inc. (Princeton, N.J.); **40** N ticles (Independence, Mo.).



EW BOOKS

y John Leonard

s Rebecca Solnit tells it in RIVER OF SHADOWS: EADWEARD MUYBRIDGE AND E TECHNOLOGICAL WILD WEST cing, $25.95), every nineteenth-ury robber baron had his own court tographer. What made railroad ty-n Leland Stanford different from baronial brethren was that he n't interested in snapshots of the ily hearth or the garden toad. Stan-l wanted *his* shutterbug, Edward ybridge, to take pictures of his ses. He owned 800 of them, most-r racing. The more one knew about ies in motion, the better one might n or breed them to go faster. For in-ce, were all four legs of a trotter off the ground at the same time? n the ingenious experiments that lted in his 1872 series of equestri-photographs, Muybridge was able to wer yes. After which, we were all of p in the air.

We learn a little something about nford here, "governor, senator, thief a grand scale," who, with a silver sons still not clear, tried to cheat Muybridge out of his proper credit for inventing motion-studies photography; and who, upon the death of his only child, established the university that bears his name as a place to put his grief. We learn a lot more about Muybridge, an English emigrant who warmed up as a bird-watcher on the banks of the Mississippi and as a salesman of books and wolfhound puppies in gold-rush San Francisco before sustaining head injuries in a Texas stagecoach crash that seemed somehow to jump-start his very tricky brain.

After sitting out the Civil War in Europe, Muybridge returned to California to set up shop as a landscape photographer (Yosemite, Alaska, Guatemala), then branched out to cover the Indian wars. Just as with the railroad we began to move faster than nature, so with photography we

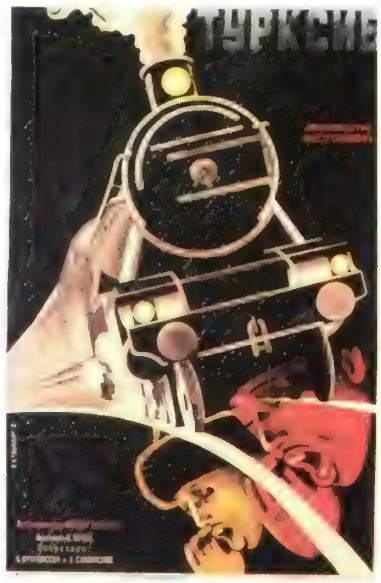


lgehammer, personally drove in the bolic golden spike completing the ascontinental railroad; who, for rea- learned to *see* faster, to spy what had been blurred in time. Muybridge, "with his addled brain, his furtive heart, his boundless ambition, his tangled beard, his incomparable eye," proceeded from horses to gymnasts to nudes. And what he discovered—playing with his shutters, film speeds, and panoramas, creating "successive images that . . . reconstituted a whole cycle of motion" and reanimating "these images as a moving picture"—dazzled the disparate likes of Thomas Edison, Edgar Degas, and the physiologist Etienne-Jules Marey. More recently he has shown up in a Philip Glass opera, *The Photographer*. He is also, of course, considered to be both godfather and earth mother of the movies.

Did I mention that he murdered his wife's lover and got off on an insanity plea? Solnit nods at the case on her fleet-footed way to larger meanings. Like a Mike Davis, Marshall Berman, or Simon Schama, she is a cultural historian in the desert-mystic mode, trailing ideas like swarms of butterflies and bees. She wants us to think about the nineteenth century as an "annihilation of time and space," as specifically noted by Ralph Waldo Emerson, Ulysses S. Grant, and Karl Marx. And about cinema as "a hybrid of railroad

tration of Eadweard Muybridge by Walter Wilson, 1889 © CORBIS; Photograph s by Eadweard Muybridge, circa 1875 © Hulton-Deutsch Collection/CORBIS

and photography." And about Stanford (Leland and the university) as the sponsor—a sort of psychic Daddy Warbucks—of both Hollywood (via Muybridge) and the Silicon Valley (for where do you think Hewlett, Packard, Yahoo! and Netscape all went to college?), thus inventing California as a postmodern state of mind, "the center of displacement, distraction, and a kind of transcendental disembodiment." Well, maybe.



Quite as if Ken Kalfus had been reading Rebecca Solnit, we open the first page of his first novel, THE COMMISSARIAT OF ENLIGHTENMENT (Ecco, $24.95) and find ourselves in the head of a young cinematographer who has just arrived at a train station in provincial Russia in 1910. He is there to record for Pathé News the passing of Russia's greatest writer, who has fled his wife to become a photo opportunity, a media event. The young cinematographer finds himself thrust into the company of a corrupt British journalist who wants to trademark Tolstoy's death, a creepy medical professor who longs to embalm him, at least three excitable revolutionaries who bear a striking resemblance to Stalin, Lenin, and Krupskaya, and the usual component of "peasants frozen in time, leaning away from their carts, against the direction of history."

It takes half the novel for Tolstoy to die, after which both Russia and the cinematographer will change their names. The latter becomes a commissar of culture, making agitprop films for the Soviet masses—in 1919, during the civil war; in 1921, when the Kronstadt sailors mutiny; and in 1924, for the death of Lenin. It comes as no surprise to learn that his camera is working for Stalin as well as for the Commissariat of Enlightenment; that Lenin will be embalmed by the same creepy professor who pounced on Tolstoy; and that Kalfus is exploring related notions of cinema as deceit, propaganda as pornography, and the "tumbling quanta of light" in a movie house as the modern equivalent of iconostasis: "This was how to do it: either starve the masses of meaning or expose them to so much that the sum of it would be unintelligible."

What should surprise us, unless we already knew that Kalfus lived for a while in Russia and is fluent in the language, is how wonderfully steeped his novel is in the great literature that made it imaginable. Here some Bely, there some Bulgakov, and, in the attic or a cellar, Babel with his boots and whip. If Kalfus is perhaps a little too contemptuous of the Bolsheviks, well, he is mourning the murder of a culture. As Mandelstam wrote of Stalin in 1933: "*He rolls the executions on his tongue like berries./He wishes he could hug them like big friends from home.*"

Michael Pye, as readers of *The Drowning Room* have reason to know, is always more ambiguous about what history pretends to mean. His new novel, [illegible] (Knopf, $24), also spends some awful time at the movies—in this case a film studio outside Berlin in the last days of World War II, where Lucia Müller-Rossi more or less plunges from her camera perch into a great scenery drum that spins to mimic a palace or a garden: The camera is flying and so is Lucia into terror. She's not a nice person, this Lucia, the daughter of an Italian banker, the wife of a Swiss accountant, the good-time girl of Embassy Row who will kindly store the paintings, jewelry, and furniture of her frightened Jewish friends, then somehow see that the whereabouts of those friends become known to the Gestapo, and finally—after the zoo is bombed and there are snakes in the hedg[illegible] tigers in the cake—truck this [illegible] along with her befuddled your[illegible] Nicholas, across the borde[illegible] Switzerland, where she will c[illegible] smart Zurich shop and make [illegible] profit for the next fifty years.

Although inspired by the tr[illegible] ry of the morally bankrupt An[illegible] Schwegler-Torré, who behaved[illegible] pretty much this same deprav[illegible] difference, *The Pieces from Ber*[illegible] vents everybody else from s[illegible] and is finally concerned not so[illegible] with historical detail as with d[illegible] of complicity, statutes of limit[illegible] and how much we really want [illegible] member the past. There are [illegible] of Bruce Chatwin's *Utz* to[illegible] fetishism and licentiousness [illegible] lecting objects, the smut of o[illegible] ship and ogling.

This is a novel of facades—li[illegible] film-studio drum; like Lucia's [illegible] shop full of marquetry and ormol[illegible] Zurich itself, "this polite city . . . [illegible] straction . . . streets like the i[illegible] streets, not specific, not dirtie[illegible] full of particular and demanding [illegible] and landscapes hanging like pos[illegible] at the end of those streets." It w[illegible] age of facades as well, as one [illegible] cia's victims tries to explain to L[illegible] furious granddaughter:

> "I sometimes think . . . you ha[illegible] much respect for the Nazis. Their [illegible] were enormous. They were the fi[illegible] ly modern killers and thieves. [illegible] staged gigantic shows. But they we[illegible] small-time criminals, all the same. [illegible] tection racket on a continental [illegible] They had no great vision, only c[illegible] searchlights and Teutonic giants [illegible] that rubbish. Even the Holocaust[illegible] failure of imagination. They co[illegible] imagine their new world for them[illegible] so they had to make it new by [illegible] away some defining fact about t[illegible] world."

What a very grim fairy tale it is [illegible] the snow comes down on Nic[illegible] while his mother listens to Wa[illegible] *Tannhäuser*. Only superior fictio[illegible] take us here, a river of shadows [illegible] complicating than any film. Aw[illegible] she is, Lucia says something t[illegible] granddaughter that I have never l[illegible] in California: "I hope you can [illegible] your morals. I always had the mo[illegible] could afford."

Poster for the film *Turksib*, Russia, 1929, by Georgii and V[illegible] Stenberg/Collection of Susan Pack, Rancho Santa Fe

JYS WHO WORKED ON HE MOVIE

traits of Hollywood's anonymous craftsmen

John Gregory Dunne

ed in this essay:

onversations: Walter Murch and the Art of Editing Film, by Michael Ondaatje. opf, 2002. 384 pages. $35.

What F. Scott Fitzgerald called the "private grammar" of film is so private little understood that it might well be written in Urdu. At nd of every movie there is an ss crawl of credits that seems longer (and more interes) than the picture just seen—200-plus names. Outside the ess, no one really knows what of these people do; after more three decades of writing scripts, still not certain whether the oy works for the gaffer or the Critics talk a good game about s a collaborative art, but generhey buy into the cult of the dir, which suits directors just fine. n though Michael Mann, han Demme, and Ridley Scott have mined the Hannibal Lecter franchise with great skill, enormous success, and, in Demme's case, many awards, the latest Lecter incarnation, *Red Dragon*, becomes "A Brett Ratner Film." This is Ratner's best credit since his bio entry on The Internet Movie Database: "Ratner grew up in Miami Beach, the only child of a famous Jewish socialite mother. . . . He lives in a $3.6 M house in Beverly Hills, and has four assistants."

A director is seen as Napoleon, the Sri Lankan novelist and poet Michael Ondaatje writes in *The Conversations: Walter Murch and the Art of Editing Film*, a figure who is "sweepingly credited with responsibility for story, design, dramatic tension, taste, and even weather." But, Ondaatje adds slyly, "Even Napoleon needed his marshals." Many of these marshals of film—the editors, the cameramen, the production designers, the sound editors, the costume designers, the composers—are legends within the business, however little known outside it, and are in no small way responsible for the look, sound, and texture of the pictures on which they work. Any director would be well served marching into a shoot with Walter Murch as one of his marshals, as he would be with the cameraman Conrad L. Hall, and would have been with Richard Sylbert, the production designer, who died last spring at seventy-three, still too young. Among them they won seven Academy Awards (three for Murch, two each for Hall and Sylbert), and they worked with most of the signature directors of the last half-century—John Huston, John Frankenheimer, Roman Polanski, Francis Ford Coppola, George Roy Hill, Sidney Lumet, Mike Nichols, Hal Ashby, Anthony Minghella, George Lucas, Elia Kazan, Richard Brooks, Warren Beatty, John Schlesinger. And on and on. Their astonishing list of credits could be a history of the movies since the 1950s: *Fat City*, *The Manchurian Candidate*, *Chinatown*, the *Godfather* trilogy, *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*, *The Pawnbroker*, *The Graduate*, *Shampoo*, *The English Patient*, *American Graffiti*, *Baby Doll*, *In Cold Blood*, *Reds*, *The Day of the Locust*. Among others.

The questions remain: How does a film editor edit or a sound editor (which is how Murch began in the business and what he now does in conjunction with his film editing) create and mix sound? How does a cameraman light to get the best visual effect? What exactly constitutes production design, and how is it achieved? Perhaps most importantly, what is the relationship between the marshals and their emperor direc-



Gregory Dunne is the author of eleven , the most recent of which is Monster: g Off the Big Screen. *His new novel published by Knopf next year.*

om *Apocalypse Now*, 1979 © The Kobal Collection/Zoetrope/United Artists; *The Graduate*, 1967 © The Kobal tion/Embassy; *The Manchurian Candidate*, 1962 © Everett Collection; *Fat City*, 1972 © Everett Collection

tors, many of whom do not remove their epaulets even in their sleep?

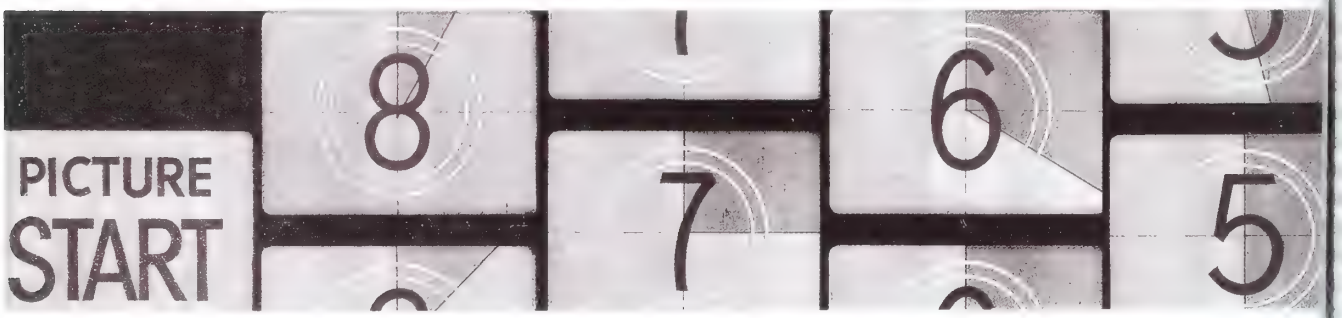
Ondaatje, who has lived in Canada for forty years, met Murch during the shooting of his novel *The English Patient*, and Murch became not just his instructor in movie grammar but his friend as well, one who is, in Ondaatje's words, "a true oddity in the world of film," "a genuine Renaissance man." Murch is the son of a painter. He has translated the Italian prose of Curzio Malaparte into English poetry, has a collection of odd facts at the tip of his tongue (the moon is 238,713 miles away from Earth), and has campaigned to revive discredited theories of eighteenth-century astronomy. He plays "the music of the spheres" on the piano, based on the distance of the planets from one another and translated by him into musical chords. It is Murch's editing of film that most absorbs Ondaatje: "How to eliminate that slightly superior tone that has emerged in the central character, how to avoid a series of plot bottlenecks later, how to influence or 'save' a scene in the fifty-third minute of the film by doing something very small in the seventh. . . . How, even, to disguise the fact that an essential scene was never shot."

ally. Murch found a later take in which Dafoe's voice quavers with fright when he says, "Don't cut me." He kept the first matter-of-fact line reading, cut away for a moment, then dropped in the second and eliminated all the sound. When the line is repeated, as it was not in the script, followed by the bleed into silence, the viewer feels the immediacy of Dafoe's overpowering terror.

The silence in this scene is a hugely powerful sound effect. At USC film school, sound was Murch's field, and he has built on that academic knowledge ever since. A director who has never worked with him told me recently that what Murch has done with sound is like the jump from Newtonian physics to quantum physics. Murch remembers Roman Polanski talking passionately to a class about "celebrating the authenticity of the sound itself." The example Polanski used, Murch recalls, "was the drip of a faucet and what that tells you about a person, about the apartment they live in, about their relationship to many other things." In *The Godfather*, when Michael Corleone murders the two men in an Italian restaurant in the Bronx, the background noise is the earsplitting screech of an elevated subway. Neither the train nor the

Kay. Other than the score, the
closing is the last sound in
movie, and Murch tested a nu
of doors to get the proper *ka-*
that would signify that the clo
door effectively shut Kay out of
husband's life.

Editing—sound and film—use
be much more primitive, like su
without anesthesia. Years ago, a
studio cutter told me that in W
War II movies, the Japs (never
Japanese) always flew from the lef
of the screen to the right, while
Americans shot at them from rig
left. "We've got to be careful to
that guy in Chicago know that w
ever he sees a plane flying from l
right, he's seeing a Jap plane," th
ter said. In the first movie Murch
ed, Francis Coppola's 1974 film
Conversation, he discovered that
actors, in this case Gene Hackma
stinctively blink where the cutter
naturally make his cut. "Blinks
says, "are the equivalent of m
punctuation marks—commas, pe
semi-colons." Lesser actors, on th
er hand, tend to blink at the w
time; they are worried about ca
placement or what the director th
or they are trying to remember a
Murch has since refined this t
When he was editing *The Talente*
Ripley for Minghella, he found



What Murch does, Ondaatje writes, is to move "the bones or arteries of a scene, relocating them so they will alter the look of the features above the skin." In *The English Patient*, a major in German intelligence threatens to amputate the thumbs of a prisoner played by Willem Dafoe if he does not give up the information the officer is seeking. "Don't cut me," Dafoe says casu-

tracks are ever established, but the noise is accepted because the scene takes place in a neighborhood where subways run. It is also abnormally loud, as if the camera were lying on the track itself, so that it becomes a metaphorical counterpoint to the murders happening on-screen. At the end of *The Godfather*, one of Michael Corleone's soldiers closes the office door on Michael's wife,

"statistically, a blink will most
happen when the actor is spea
nonvocalized consonant. I think
called fricative consonants: an
f, th, but not *d*(uh)—*d* has a voca
ponent to it." Murch picks up u
scious signals from actors that
important to him as a broken t
the forest is to a hunter. "Some
might turn their head to the left
they say the word 'but,'" Murch

k seven times a minute when hinking hard." A bad line read- ten useful. "There are a num- mes that I've used shots of ac- ing to remember their lines," Ondaatje. "They are embar- hey're confused, they hope they er the line, and you can see all n their face. In a certain con- at's absolutely the wrong thing ut placed in a different context, e wonderful and magical."

learning experience, working on a's *The Conversation* (the title of je's book is, of course, a play movie title) could not be im- on. Because Coppola ran out ey, some fifteen pages of script l (or about ten minutes of screen ere never filmed—connective hment shots in the San Fran- cations, some scenes, camera a chase sequence on electric One way that Murch was able to nsate for the unshot film was by zing on Coppola's belief that ers in movies tend to change othes more often than people do life. "In film there's a costume nent interested in showing what o," Murch says, "so on the small- text characters will change ." The problem, in many movies, frequent wardrobe changes lock akers into a more rigid scene re. In *The Conversation*, Harry he character played by Hack- rarely out of a cheap transpar- astic raincoat, which allowed to move scenes around out of se- e. Invention was the order of the the script, the electric-bus chase ectly to a realistic dialogue and ene in a park. The way Murch ppola saved the park scene with- lead-in was to make it a dream il's. "When you have restricted al," Murch says, "you're going e to restructure things from the al intent, with sometimes felici- uxtapositions."

ry film presents a unique set of ms. On *Apocalypse Now*, one of ggest problems (figuratively and ically) was Marlon Brando. He mammoth deal that stipulated a wo-week time frame, and he re- o give Coppola a break on either ney or the time. After his arrival e Philippines location, Brando spent his first week arguing with the director about the script; the production was shut down, which meant that his scenes had to be done in half the time allotted. "He was heavier than he said he would be," Murch says discreetly, "and therefore couldn't reasonably do what his part called for." Not only was Brando the size of a tank but he seemed not to have read Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, on which *Apocalypse Now* is loosely based. He hated the name Kurtz and had insisted that his character's name be changed to Colonel Leighley, since it was his contention that army officers had flowery southern names. (The southern officer he played in the film made from Carson McCullers's *Reflections in a Golden Eye* was Major Weldon Penderton.) Coppola had acquiesced to the name change, and shot a number of scenes in which other characters referred to Kurtz as Colonel Leighley. Then, in the Philippines, Brando read Conrad's novel and demanded that his character be called Kurtz, as it was in the book. This meant that it was necessary to rerecord all the previous scenes in which characters talked about Colonel Leighley and the reasons it was necessary to terminate him with extreme prejudice. "The actors' mouths are saying 'Colonel Leighley,'" Murch says, "but in fact we hear them saying 'Colonel Kurtz.'"

Murch rarely visits a set during shooting because there are too many extraneous factors: "How cold it was when the scene was shot; who was mad at whom; who is in love with whom; how quickly something was done; what was standing just to the left of the frame." He wishes to have as little interplay with actors as possible. "I try never . . . to see the actors out of costume or out of character," he says. "I only want to see what there is on the screen. Ultimately, that's all the audience is ever going to see. . . . You are studying them the way a sculptor studies a piece of marble before deciding to chisel it—here. So I have to know all the hidden veins and strengths and weaknesses of the rock that I'm working with, in order to know where best to put the chisel." He watches actors over and over in take after take, forward and backward, at twenty-four frames a second and forty-eight frames a second, yet meeting them in the flesh, after the end of a shoot, is disconcerting. "For the most part, they have no idea who I am," he says. "I'm just a person who worked on the film. . . . On the other hand, I know them better than anyone!"

Walter Murch edits film; that film is shot by a cameraman, who lights the set and orchestrates the camera movements. In this field, Conrad Hall has few equals and no superiors. I have known him since the late sixties; he was a neighbor when my wife and I lived in Malibu. His father was James Norman Hall, who, with Charles Nordhoff, wrote *Mutiny on the Bounty*. Conrad was born in Tahiti and has a house there on an island off Papeete, where he spends a part of every year. Like every DP (director of photography) I have ever known, Conrad wanted to direct. Years ago he and his then companion, the actress Katharine Ross, secured the film rights to William Faulkner's novel *The Wild Palms*, that desperate tale of love gone disastrously awry in the Depression South. Conrad would direct, and Katharine would play the lead, Charlotte Rittenmeyer, who dies after a bungled abortion. Together they had written the screenplay, and they asked us to read it. I confess that we were uneasy about the request—it seemed a vanity project—but the script remains one of the two best I have ever read (the other was Francis Coppola's adaptation of *The Great Gatsby*, which as a film, not directed by Coppola, became a miscast, lumbering mess). Over the years, Conrad has taken DP jobs that he did not especially wish to do because a producer or studio held out the carrot that if he did the gig, *The Wild Palms*, with Hall directing, would get the highest consideration. Hollywood promises. From 1977 to 1988, sick of Hollywood and still unable to get *The Wild Palms* off the ground, he shot only commercials with his old friend, the equally great cameraman Haskell Wexler (himself a two-time Oscar winner, for his work on *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* with Mike Nichols directing, and on Hal Ashby's *Bound for Glory*).

Last September, Connie came to New York to conduct a master class in cinematography at the American

Museum of the Moving Image in Queens. The four pictures he had chosen to show were *Day of the Locust*, which he shot for John Schlesinger; *In Cold Blood*, for Richard Brooks; *Searching for Bobby Fisher*, for Steven Zaillian; and *Fat City*, for John Huston. He introduced each film and afterward underwent an extensive Q&A. Conrad is now seventy-six, and with a certain rue told my wife and me, "I've reached the age where I get lifetime achievement awards." Last year he did *Road to Perdition* for Sam Mendes, one of the few directors for whom he will drag himself back from Tahiti, and the studio is touting him for another Oscar. (His first, in 1969, was for *Butch Cassidy*, with George Hill directing, and thirty years later, in 1999, he won again for Mendes's *American Beauty*.) "I wouldn't mind a third," he said matter-of-factly.

On a Sunday afternoon, I went to a screening of *Fat City*. Conrad sat on stage, wearing sandals, a jacket, and a T-shirt. The beard he has worn for as long as I have known him was neatly trimmed, his hair combed forward. What struck me immediately was how simultaneously direct and offhand he was. He refers to a movie he is working on as "the show," and, like all the great film technicians, he has an artisan's pride in the work: there's not that much mystery to movie lighting; it's a job; a job not well done is a job not worth doing. "Overexposing is a technique, just like underexposing is a technique," he once told an interviewer. "It's another tool, that's all."

Fat City was adapted from Leonard Gardner's novel about a down-and-out prizefighter, a has-been who never was, played by Stacy Keach. He lives in a flophouse in Stockton, California, and befriends a young man (Jeff Bridges) who deludes himself that the ring offers salvation from the backbreaking stoop labor in the fields, which is his only other opportunity. The picture, both exteriors and interiors, was shot entirely in Stockton, where the summer heat is relentless (with midday temperatures regularly over a hundred degrees) and the sun cruel and punishing. It is the kind of sun that blinds you when you come from the outside into a dark interior so that the eyes take several seconds to adjust; it was this effect that Conrad sought to duplicate. "I wanted to torture the film, bleach the color out," he said in Queens, "and so I overexposed it three or four stops." Whenever possible, he used natural light, not bumping it with the kind of candlepower he would use in a controlled soundstage environment. "If I saw the light was perfect," he said, "I tried to be naturalistic." Needless to say, the studio complained that the lighting was too dark. Another problem was that a freeway was being built through skid row in Stockton. Every day the redevelopment demolished dozens of buildings, so that pickup shots were difficult to get. "If we shot a gas station one day," he said, "boom, it was gone the next day."

Fat City's boxing background was particularly appealing to Huston, who had been a fighter in his youth, as Gardner, who also wrote the screenplay, had been. Huston saw the picture, Conrad told the audience, as a story about life going down the drain before you had a chance to put in the plug. To this end, he sent Hall out before the start of principal photography to shoot documentary footage for the credit sequence. Conrad put a camper top in the bed of a pickup truck, with a camera and a zoom lens inside, and for three days he cruised around Stockton's skid row. Shooting out of the camper's windows, using only natural lighting, he filmed derelicts, drunks, the lonely, and the defeated as they congregated outside missions, bars, barbershops, seedy hotels, and evangelical churches, nowhere people with nowhere to go and in no hurry to get there. When Huston showed the first day's rushes to the actors, he included Conrad's documentary footage along with the dialogue scenes. The actors immediately grasped that their own acting was too florid, too fast-paced, for the marginalized rejects they were playing. "They saw how much they overacted," Conrad told an interviewer in *Masters of Light: Conversations with Contemporary Cinematographers*. "And they could see that in that environment."

The credit sequence—which in the finished film was edited into a fifty-second montage—dissolv
the street into the cramped
where Keach, as the retired
Tully, is lying on a bed in his
wear and a ratty polo shirt,
eyes contemplating the dea
day ahead. The room was an
location, tiny and blistering
There was a window and, outs
window, a small balcony.
reaches for a cigarette on his b
table, crumples the empty pa
throws it away, and then se
under his pillow and among th
azines strewn around the bed
match. He swings around, sits
edge of the bed, gets up, an
two steps across the room to th
and the chair, where his trous
hanging. There are no matc
the pants. He walks to a table
the wall where there are sever
tles of booze but no matches.
he comes back across the ro
front of the camera and rifles th
a jacket hanging on a hook
wall. Still no matches. Tully
and shuffles back to the bed. A
moment he gets up once more,
to the chair, the unlit cig
drooping from his mouth, an
on his trousers, socks, and shoes

It is an amazing scene that l
character into place: two mi
and fifteen seconds without a
cut or line of dialogue. "I lov
shot," Hall said in *Masters of*
"It's such perfect cinema." His
era was always on Keach; some
Tully's face is out of frame a
camera focuses on his bulky bo
ing to fat. To facilitate rotatin
camera as Keach walks the peri
of the room, Hall laid down a
dolly track by the door. He use
the source lighting that ca
through the window, except fo
moment when Keach sea
through his jacket; then a gr
the balcony flashed a light th
lowed Conrad to frame Tully
houette. Hall operated the ca
himself in this scene. Normall
use an operator once the scene
up (the DP stands aside and s
vises his crew and the lighting
Connie, when he was younger
ferred to do his own opera
Lighting a scene and then not
ating the camera, he says, is

the violin and letting some-
e do the finger movements.
s a septuagenarian, he thinks
exes might be suspect and
im to jerk the camera when
erceptible movement is need-
ecent years, his operator was
his son, Conrad W. Hall,
Win, now a DP on his own,
nie still misses operating. He
ed why at an American Film
e seminar: "It gives me the
t emotional satisfaction of
g I do except seeing a terrific
the dailies."

he production designer on *Fat City* was Richard Sylbert; it was one of the two pictures he onrad did together (the other *equila Sunrise*, with Robert directing). Sylbert wanted to e an Edward Hopper palette, ling to Hall, and when he location or built a set he fin-t in the washed-out blues and s and ochers of Hopper's nop in *Nighthawks* and the eserted theater in *New York* I had met Dick even before I Conrad; my wife and I are god-s to his older daughter. He was ably smart, and to say that he t suffer fools was an under-ent; he thought most people There was no subject he did ow more about than you, and ld punctuate his case with ref-es to Goethe, Wittgenstein, r, Mozart, and Bessie Smith. A rsation with him was intimi-; he took no prisoners and shot ounded. His fluent bad-rap l wear out his welcome with a rectors, but if you weren't the it was inventively funny. Of a director who had green-and-spiked hair, he said, "This guy ght on time." Of another pro-on designer: "He's got red sus-rs and no reputation." And of ers in general: "A lot of design-e what I call hummers. It's like Mozart said to someone, 'I've got reat piece of music, but I don't he piano. You play the piano ll hum.'"

was born in Brooklyn, and his never lost its hint. His brother, an identical twin, is also a much-sought-after production designer. (Paul won an Oscar for *Heaven Can Wait*, with Warren Beatty directing.) They both studied painting at the Tyler School of Art, at Temple University, and then moved to New York, where they painted sets and scenery. It was the early days of live television; nobody knew anything, and youth was no impediment to rapid advancement. "The game is making choices," he said in 1974. "You make these choices because you're solving problems with them. Dramatic problems, not technical problems. There are millions of good technicians in Hollywood who can solve your technical problems. But if you haven't got a good idea, you can't make a choice."

On every film, he would take hundreds of photographs of the various locations he was considering, usually black-and-white Polaroids, because he wanted no reality input on his own color scheme. If he found a particular brick he liked, he would have fiberglass molds of it fabricated into four-by-twelve sheets; when the brick was installed on a set, he would kick it and throw things at it to make sure it looked real. Everything began with a script, and he could be merciless about a screenplay's absurdities and failures of continuity. As a designer, he tried to reduce each script into a simple visual metaphor that would create a mood and advance the story. His training as a painter was the bedrock of his designing. He learned early that to ensure a set was right he had to do all the initial plans and sketches and elevations himself. "If you don't, you have no control over the picture," he said. "I don't trust anyone." A control freak, but not a hummer.

Before he was thirty, Sylbert had designed *Baby Doll* and *A Face in the Crowd* for Elia Kazan. His credits piled up—*Splendor in the Grass*, again for Kazan, and *The Manchurian Candidate*, for Frankenheimer. In 1966 he won his first Academy Award for *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* with Mike Nichols directing Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor as George and Martha, the drunken, burned-out college professor and his poisonous wife whose



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frayed marriage is kept from disintegrating by the imaginary son they have invented. *Virginia Woolf* is a clear example of Sylbert's attention to detail. "George and Martha are two human pack rats," he once said in a conversation at AFI. "They're slobs . . . who have collected shit from every sabbatical for the last twenty years." From this idea, he created a perfect academic slum; on a shelf in the bedroom, he placed a copy of A. S. Neill's *Summerhill School*, a controversial book about progressive child rearing. It was a touch that almost no one would pick up, but it lent verisimilitude to the blighted lives of George and Martha. "When you put *Summerhill* behind the head of a man who has a fantasy child," he said at AFI, "you're already doing something." It seemed to my wife and me that the only questionable choice was a copy of *The Paris Review* on a table overflowing with magazines and books and papers and drinks. Delicately, we suggested to Dick that George and Martha would think *The Paris Review* effete, and that they were more likely to have a copy of *The Partisan Review* on that table. He did not hesitate. "That was Mike's idea," he said.

In all, Sylbert did six pictures for Nichols, including *The Graduate*, *Carnal Knowledge*, and *Catch-22*. Like Murch and Hall, he liked to work with the same people over and over: "You don't have to introduce yourself every time," he said. I recall seeing him in New York when he was about to start building sets for *Carnal Knowledge*, a film based on Jules Feiffer's script about the dysfunctional sexual relationships of two former college roommates, played by Jack Nicholson and Art Garfunkel. Although set in Manhattan, the picture was under budgetary constraints and had to be shot on soundstages in Vancouver. At dinner I asked what he was doing, and he said, "Looking at some moldings in West Side apartments"—the kind of moldings with generations of grime buried under layers of bubbling, peeling paint. "Every door in that movie is in a corner," Sylbert said at AFI. "To get out of a room or go into the next room, you've got to walk into the corner. That's what the dramatic situation really is."

Chinatown, *Shampoo*, *Reds*, and *The Cotton Club* each earned Sylbert an Oscar nomination, though not another statuette. *Chinatown*, with Roman Polanski directing, took place in the middle of a drought. All the grass was painted brown, and the buildings white, to capture the sense of heat. To heighten the effect, Polanski arranged and re-arranged the shooting schedule so that there was never a cloud in the sky during any exterior sequence. In *Shampoo*, a story of narcissism gone haywire in the person of a Beverly Hills hairdresser played by Warren Beatty (who also produced), there is a mirror in every scene, and in most locations, from beauty parlors to homes small and large, there is some variation of the piss-elegant latticework that defined time and place.

It was on *Dick Tracy*, with Beatty starring, producing, and directing, that Sylbert did perhaps his most extravagant work. The project had been around for years, with a number of name directors attached—all of whom tried to do it realistically. It was Beatty's conceit to invent a parallel universe, without reference points of time or place. "It was like being a trapeze acrobat who's left one bar and hasn't grabbed the next," Sylbert recalled at AFI. "It's all phony. You can't use any of the things you remember, all the cleverness you've learned over three decades, all the things you've been brilliant at—color, texture, detail. You can't use anything you've used before." Any hint of realism was out: "You're not here to make people believe that someone's nose pickings are on the doorknob in the bathroom." The trick was to create an entire generic city, with bridges, railroad tracks, a dock, a cemetery, streets, alleys. Everything was painted on a matte (a backdrop that can be photographed; Xanadu in *Citizen Kane* was a matte, as was Tara in *Gone with the Wind*). The cars were from the late 1930s, with new grilles to make them nonspecific; the colors were as loud as the *Fat City* colors were muted—purples and yellows and greens. For his work on *Dick Tracy*, Sylbert won his second Oscar.

I worked with him once, i
when my wife and I did a thre
production rewrite on the t
Red Corner for our friend, the
tor Jon Avnet. *Red Corner* wa
an American businessman fra
a murder in Beijing and
prison to await trial before a
roo court. The subject matter
ed the possibility of shooting i
na, so Avnet, Sylbert, and
assistants spent weeks in B
soaking up atmosphere, bootl
footage of Tiananmen Squar
photographing everything—
signs, facades, doors, sidewalks
hole covers. Back in Californi
bert began building an entire
neighborhood, or *hutong*, on
acres of wetlands near Los A
International Airport. He had
of 242, working three shifts, a
ished the job in ten weeks. T
tong was frighteningly real,
wood, plaster, and plastic tar
alleys and courtyards and dead
In the streets and the apart
were much of the junk h
shipped back from China in fi
go containers—old newsp
empty bottles of Chinese bee
old bicycles, garbage cans,
some aging jeeps and VW tax
authentic plates and regist
stickers. My wife and I w
through the set with him; he
stop and kick a door and ord
other layer of paint because t
ing did not measure up. The
he most particularly liked
bump in one of the streets; the
been an earthquake in Beijing
late nineteenth century, an
bump was one of its legacies.

Dick died of cancer last Ma
week or so before his death m
and I talked to him on the telep
The hospital had not smooth
rough edges. He fired a few rou
some people and movies he d
care for, talked about future pr
his and ours, and never mentior
illness. After he died I received
ter from the novelist Richard Fo
perfectly summed him up. Whe
was a young college instructor,
who was then a production vic
ident at Paramount, brought hi
to Hollywood to work on the sc
his first novel. One night the

n a medium-bad French restau-
ar the studio. Dick was late.
he arrived, he was in the ef-
y stylish L. L. Bean wardrobe he
vore—safari jacket, khakis with
afers with white socks, a ban-
knotted around his neck. "I re-
er that dinner so vividly,"
l wrote. "I remember Dick com-
the table, where the manage-
ad set a big vase of cut flowers.
ty flowers,' I said. 'Yeah,' Dick
ien turned to the waiter and
trike the flowers.'"

What Walter Murch and Conrad Hall understand, and Richard Sylbert un-
od, is that they were subordi-
the director. "A talented di-
lays out opportunities that can
ed by other people," Murch
lichael Ondaatje. "This is the
nction of a director. . . . And
o protect that communal vi-
accepting or rejecting certain
outions. The director is ulti-
y the immune system of the
When Hall first began with
rd Brooks, the director said,
kid, I suppose you want to be
ctor." Hall said he did. "Direct
own fucking picture," Brooks
im, "not mine." Brooks and
ltimately did three films to-
. Sylbert saw himself as the di-
's "seeing eye dog" and stayed
from those who wanted to in-
on his duties. "I never work for
" he said. "I'm not a stenogra-
I don't take dictation."
hatever their enormous skills,
n, Hall, and Sylbert could not
a bad picture good, but they
make a good picture better. Yet
e the movie industry their work,
rtistry, is essentially anonymous.
s sometimes mention them; a
"artfully" edited, or "beautifully"
graphed, or "meticulously" de-
l, but those are just adverbs, with-
ny real understanding of what it
to cover Leighley with Kurtz, or
two-minute tracking shot in a
y-twelve room without a cut, or
bump in a Beijing street out near
. To the people at the cineplex,
er Murch, Conrad Hall, and
rd Sylbert are just three guys who
ed on the movie. ■

MINTING FRANKLIN

More lives of the quintessential American

By Matthew Stevenson

Discussed in this essay:

Benjamin Franklin, *by Edmund S. Morgan. Yale University Press, 2002. 339 pages. $24.95.*

Franklin: The Essential Founding Father, *by James Srodes. Regnery Publishing, Inc., 2002. 435 pages. $34.95.*



n Commissioners of the Preliminary Peace Negotiations with Great Britain (1783–84).
jamin West © Winterthur Museum, Gift of Henry Francis du Pont

Faithful to his own maxim that "lost time is never found again," Benjamin Franklin undertook to write his own epitaph in 1728, more than sixty years before he died. In choosing the language (which did not, in the end, appear on his tombstone), he turned to the jargon of printing, the trade that had occupied much of his life since he was apprenticed to his own brother at the age of twelve:

> The Body of
> B. Franklin, Printer
> (Like the Cover of an old Book
> Its contents torn out
> And stript of its Lettering & Gilding)
> Lies here, Food for Worms.
> But the Work shall not be lost;
> For it will (as he Believ'd) appear once more,
> In a new and more elegant Edition
> Revised and corrected
> By the Author.

When Franklin was laid to rest in downtown Philadelphia, in 1790, not all of his comrades in revolutionary arms grieved his passing. President George Washington declined the proposal of his secretary of state, Thomas Jefferson, that the executive branch observe a period of mourning, on the grounds that once such a custom was

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in place it would be difficult to "know where to draw the line." The Senate, under the influence of John Adams, who despised Franklin, also chose to pass on obsequies.

More recently, however, given the bull market in patriotic sentiments, Franklin has seen his life restored—not just in "a new and more elegant Edition" but also in television specials, inspirational texts, biographies, management tracts, and get-rich-quick seminars, all of which star the good doctor as what James Srodes, one of his latest biographers, calls "the essential Founding Father." On my desk are scattered a new boxed edition of *The Autobiography*, the same book recorded on tape, a leather-bound copy of *The Way to Wealth*, and no fewer than four biographies, all published in recent years. Poor Richard, Franklin's alter ego in the *Almanack*, may have wondered, "If your Riches are yours, why don't you take them with you t'other World?" But what is immortality if not having Hal Holbrook, in spectacles and a wig, re-enact your life in a History Channel miniseries?

I went back to Franklin's life and writing during year one of the War on Terrorism, in which the heirs to Revolutionary America were doing their best to reconfigure the country into one of the baronies of King George III. In the aftermath of September 11, Congress passed, with little debate, so many stamp duties on the Bill of Rights that a modern-day Franklin or Jefferson would have to group the mission statements for Homeland Security under the heading of Coercive or Intolerable acts. Abroad, the search for Barbary-like pirates has obscured Congress's prerogative to declare war, and the realm's own light cavalry has fruitlessly searched caves in Afghanistan, the Philippines, and the Caucasus for enemies who could answer to the name of "terrorism."

Poor Richard said, "The Royal Crown cures not the Head-ache." But voices such as Franklin's—witty and precise, prescient and irreverent, but most of all constructive—are lost today in debates that rarely rise above loyalty oaths. Public sentiment echoes the entreaties of Princess Augusta, mother of King George III, who, insisting upon royal privilege, constantly nagged her son, "George, be king."

How best, then, to read the life and works of Franklin, of whom there are enough biographies to fill one of those subscription libraries he was so fond of establishing? Many critics still consider Carl Van Doren's *Benjamin Franklin* (1938) to be definitive, and it indeed remains a watermark of the biographer's art. His aim was to assemble as complete a record as possible of Franklin's movement "through his world," as Van Doren put it, "in a humorous mastery of it." In places the reader may feel that Van Doren succeeded all too well. He is overindulgent of Franklin's more tedious side: his love, for instance, of crafting lists for himself—tenets of belief, steps toward moral perfection, guideposts to proper behavior—the sort of lists for which D. H. Lawrence could never forgive Franklin and that famously caused Lawrence to conclude, in *Studies in Classic American Literature*, "I do not like him." Van Doren was also, despite the exhaustive detail of his account, an unembarrassed hagiographer. His book nods occasionally to the complexities and contradictions of Franklin's character, but on the whole his subject can do no wrong. At times this leads Van Doren into absurdity. "Franklin was not ambitious," he writes in one place; and, in another, "Having no envy, jealousy, or vanity in himself, he would not run the risk of needlessly rousing them in others."

Definitive status was the goal, too, of H. W. Brands's massive *The First American: The Life and Times of Benjamin Franklin* (2000), which was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize. Brands's book yields nothing to Van Doren's in the way of scope and surpasses it in terms of depth and insight, taking full advantage of the wealth of new information on Franklin's life and social context that had become available in the intervening decades. For the reader possessed of the time and interest to grapple with Franklin's life on a day-to-day basis, Brands is now the reigning authority.

Given that these earlier books are both in print, and that the latter is only three years old, why did James who has just published *Franklin: sential Founding Father*, decide need another biography? W counts for this carriage trade lives of the Revolutionary saint summer I was staggered by the ous copies of David McCullough *Adams* that I saw carted to the as if a debriefing on Adams's *D the Constitutions of Governmen United States* might reconcile th teenth-century document to a try that has recently waged und wars in Kosovo, Iraq, Afgha Grenada, and Panama.) The apart from length, may be simp our interest in the Founding Fa strong enough to admit yet anot of Franklin—or of Jefferson Washington—and that the l these men are of greater momen ever, now that the democratic ment they set into motion se uncertain. No doubt this exten fort to make the Founding F available in a paperback pantheo comfort, as well, to a democr which less than half the citizen senatorial office costs $20 millio the country's permanent allianc foreign oil is no more questione one's inalienable right to drive gulping suburban utility vehicle said, Franklin speaking to us fr grave still makes more sense tha of the Sunday patriots chattin Cokie Roberts.

Srodes is a journalist who h viously written a prize-winning raphy of Allen Dulles, and his the familiar Franklin is an acc style that will see readers to t page. He is also well-read in E history, able to provide vivid dotes of Franklin's life abroa those who last encountered Fr in the eighth grade, one cou worse than to begin with Sr book before returning to the A *ography*, Franklin's own acco the pluck and luck by which h America came of age: Huckle Finn taking on the British Er One measure of its enduring q is that it ends prior to the eve the American Revolution.

Finally, whatever the extent reader's familiarity with Franklin can turn to Edmund S. Morgan

published shorter biography. n is a Yale historian (it is at Sterling Memorial Library that nklin papers are being pored d ushered into publication by hers), and his book is a sum- p of the professor's lifetime of about Franklin, and in colonial nerican history. The book is, gan's words, "a letter of intro- n to a man worth knowing, pending time with," words that o Morgan as well.

book on Franklin's world that puts the man himself in a larg- er context is Henry Steele ager's *Empire of Reason* (1977), carries the alluring subtitle: *How Imagined and America Realized ghtenment*. Commager, a prolific n who held chairs in American at Columbia University and Amherst College before his re- nt in 1992, writes that "Dr. n embraced a dozen sciences, did Jefferson, and the lexicog- Noah Webster wrote a two- work on the history of epi- . How natural, then, that in the he Enlightenment, the scientist be king." The New World was n canvas on which these phes could paint their theories ernment, science, and human . In borrowing from European alism, "America," Commager s, "had been invented before it covered."

mmager quotes Justice Oliver ell Holmes, who said that part ius "consists in *being there*," to he point that Franklin shaped all aspects of the American ution:

> was there at the Albany Congress of 4 where he drafted a plan that an- ated the ultimate American con- ration; there at the House of Com- s to defend the American distinction veen external regulation and inter- axation; there in Carpenter's Hall to Jefferson draft a Declaration of In- ndence; and there, too, on the mittee that drew up Articles of Con- ration for the new nation. He was e at the Court of Louis XVI to win ch support, and there at the peace otiations that acknowledged Amer- independence. He was there, final- r the Federal Convention that drew up a constitution for the new nation—where he managed to have the last word, as he had had the first word.

Although Franklin is now synonymous with Quaker Philadelphia, he was born in Puritan Boston, in 1706. According to Srodes, "Franklins were pious and fearless Congregationalists who believed that each village church should run its own affairs," an idea Benjamin later extended to American government. One of seventeen children, he remembers that his father's "great Excellence lay in a sound Understanding, and solid Judgment in prudential Matters, both in private & public Affairs." The same could have been said of his youngest son, whose formal education consisted wholly in a few years of school and in reading the family's "Books in polemic Divinity." As an apprentice printer, he continued to read widely and tried his hand at writing, acknowledging that his detractors found his style to have "a Turn for Libelling & Satyr." He fled the family congregation in 1723, finding printing work in Philadelphia, where he caught the eye of the governor, who entrusted Franklin at age eighteen to represent him on business in London. Franklin survived the dangerous crossing—a trip he was to make eight times in his life—but discovered the governor had sent him on a fool's errand, which, nevertheless, helped to form his views on political hierarchs: "He wish'd to please everybody, and having little to give, he gave Expectations."

Although he was to spend almost a quarter of his life abroad, in London and then in Paris, Franklin returned to Philadelphia in 1726 to find his fortune and a wife. Of one failed courtship he noted despairingly: "I attempted Familiarities." Poor Richard observed: "Three things are men most likely to be cheated in, a Horse, a Wig, and a Wife." But in 1730 Franklin found his match in Deborah Read, the woman with whom he had two children and to whom he was devoted, at least emotionally, until her death, in 1774. For his fortune, Franklin stuck with printing, a trade at which he excelled, and soon had both over-the-counter business and government contracts, in addition to his own newspaper. During these years he was also a "great promoter of useful projects" and raised

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subscriptions for city libraries and hospitals. With his temperament for invention, he redesigned stoves, chimneys, gutters, streetlights, and school curricula. His science was that of necessity, as Commager writes of Philadelphia itself: "its character was heterogeneous, its temper secular, and its philosophy utilitarian, and it stamped these qualities on the American Enlightenment."

Franklin retired at age forty-two, to live off a carried interest in the printing business and to spend his time conducting such experiments as that which led him to fly a kite into an electrical storm. But he drifted into freelance diplomacy, in the cause of which he moved to London in 1757, to represent Pennsylvania's colonial assembly at the English court. At midlife, Franklin was an Englishman who lived in America, not yet an American of English descent. He believed that America's rapid population growth and habits of industry made it the ideal partner, along with England, to sit atop the British Empire. In the interest of protecting the realm, he returned to Philadelphia in 1762, to fight in the frontier skirmishes that followed the Seven Years' War. Poor Richard said, "Wars bring scars," and the scar that never healed after these battles was Franklin's growing sense that England saw its partner in the Americas as a wholly owned subsidiary.

American colonists thought it their duty to defend the empire against France and her allies. But to pay for military appropriations they preferred to levy their own taxes and settle their own accounts, not to cede this basic right to an English Parliament that lacked colonial representation. Colonial officials met in Albany in 1754, at which time Franklin proposed his Plan of Union, a political document that is the antecedent for the Articles of Confederation and the Declaration of Independence, if not for aspects of the federal Constitution. In the *Autobiography*, Franklin calls it a "union of all the Colonies under one government." Morgan elaborates:

> The heart of the plan was a Grand Council to be chosen by the representatives assembled each year. . . . [representatives] that is, representatives [representatives] that would have the power not only to make laws for all relations with the Indians, including warfare, and to levy taxes for the purpose. . . . The powers of the general Government would be limited to the external affairs of the member colonies and would not otherwise affect their existing governments.

But as the *Autobiography* notes, "History is full of the Errors of States & Princes," a remark that summarizes rather neatly how England stumbled toward American independence.

For the quintessential American, Franklin spent a lot of time abroad. He was in London from 1764 to 1775, having gone initially with the idea of exchanging the Penns' proprietorship of Pennsylvania for a royal charter. For much of his life he maintained a running feud with the heirs of William Penn as well as their Quaker brethren. The Penns owned an estimated 45 million acres of Pennsylvania, but they thought themselves exempt from taxes, not to mention the reach of the colonial assembly. In petitioning for Pennsylvania to be organized under a royal charter, Franklin was attempting both to settle a local score and to realize his wish that the colonies would answer to the British monarch but never to the English Parliament. "The Sovereignty of the Crown I understand," he wrote. "The Sov[ereignt]y of the British legislature out of Britain, I do not understand."

Critics of Franklin's diplomatic service imply that he remained more loyal to the crown than to rebellion, and put his considerable energy into a reconciliation of England and America that would have kept the empire under one king. Morgan writes: "This long-term goal of an Anglo-American empire of equals directed Franklin's public service until he was obliged to give it up in 1775." He elaborates: "Franklin can be seen year after year trying to patch up the empire, trying to undo mistakes of a heedless ministry, trying to guide colonial protests in constructive ways, trying to interpret them constructively to an uncomprehending English public." But he is not as uncharitable as the Mount Holyoke historian Joseph J. Ellis, who co in *Founding Brothers* (2000):

> His forceful presence at the moment of 1776 had caused servers to forget that, in truth, was a latecomer to the patri the man who had spent mos 1760s in London attempting to of all things, a royal charter fo sylvania. He had actually lent port to the Stamp Act in 1765 bied for a position within the government as late as 1771.

It is true that the final revolu break with England was pai Franklin, as it was to many of h influential compatriots. "That be loyal to my Prince" had be of his own private "Articles o and Acts of Religion," written w was twenty-two. But despite t pearance of currying favor at Franklin spent much of his time educating himself—as had nc American, except perhaps Jeffe in the follies of empire. To the Hillsborough, who defended shend's acts, Franklin dedicat pamphlet: *Rules by Which a Gre pire May Be Reduced to a Smal* On another occasion he wrote Parliament he loathed:

> I fear they will drag us after thei their plundering Wars, which th perate Circumstances, Injustic Rapacity may prompt them to take, and their wide-wasting Pr ty and Profusion is a Gulph th swallow up every Aid we may ourselves to afford them. Here berless and needless Places, en Salaries, Pensions, Perquisites, groundless Quarrels, foolish Expe false Accounts or no Accounts tracts and Jobbs, devour all Re and produce continual Necessity Midst of natural Plenty.

But his ministerial counterparts English government—perhaps li day's Washington bureaucrats re to lay siege to Saddam Hussein none of his sense of observation of travel and experimentation, mand of language, and, not lea portant, ability to compromise.

In 1776, Adam Smith publ *The Wealth of Nations*, Th Jefferson wrote the Declarat Independence, and Tom Paine a

printed *Common Sense*. The connecting these authors was ip with Benjamin Franklin, ed seventy that year and who, ith John Adams, collaborated rson's draft. Franklin had the se to admire the younger Jefand made just a handful of s to the Declaration, which nly John Hancock signed on he rest adding their signatures ust, by which time Franklin writing a new constitution for vania and had laid the frame- the State Department and . Army. By October, Franklin his way back to Europe, to he American cause at the court, which bankrupted itng the course of the American ionary War by sending 47,000 and men, 3,668 cannons, and s of the line to outflank the Empire in the New World.

rican orthodoxy credits George gton with winning the Revo- Ellis contends that "the Con- Congress could be driven from ation to another like a covey of s, and it was. But as long as gton held the Continental ogether, the British could not war, which in turn meant that uld eventually lose it." Around remise the Federalist Party lat- d, celebrating Washington and le lieutenants as Adams and der Hamilton, all of whom were tted to a strong central gov- t and a tilt in foreign relations ward England. In opposition, called Democratic-Republicans d France with victory in the tion, dismissing Washington as t to command a regiment." The f Jefferson and Paine felt that ca owed the debt of its indence to De Grasse's fleet and mbeau's 7,000 French troops at wn, who were paid by Franklin's acy.

klin is often associated with the "there never was a good war, or peace," but the treaty he negowith England in 1783 proved a eace for a war whose outcome en unsure. It assured American ndence. But it also revealed a ostility between the two Amerenvoys in Europe, Franklin and Adams. Ellis writes that "Adams thought Franklin naïve about French motives, which were anti-English but not pro-American, and besotted with his own inflated reputation as the ultimate American in Paris." Madison took a different view in a letter to Jefferson, written in 1783: "Congress yesterday received from Mr. Adams several letters dated September not remarkable for anything unless it be a display of his vanity, his prejudice against the French Court and his venom against Doctr. Franklin."

The miracle is that so many of the Founding Fathers could tolerate each other long enough, in 1787, to draft a new constitution. Jefferson and Adams were both abroad during the Philadelphia convention, but Franklin and Madison were present. Many accounts, including Morgan's, indicate that in that long hot summer Franklin was tiring and won few points, other than that of "being there." Influenced by his admiration of the Swiss cantons, which have had a form of democratic independence since 1291, Franklin championed, without success, a one-chamber legislature, a plural executive, and annual elections, to avoid "making our Posts of Honour Places of Profit." Ever suspicious of power, he did insert the clauses about presidential impeachment and the steps to overturn a presidential veto, and warned about the cumbersome Electoral College: "It cannot be sufficiently deplored that the federal constitution should be so inexplicit as to lead to such a variety of modes of chusing Electors as have been adopted throughout the Union," which could stand as an accurate summary of the 2000 presidential election.

From the Albany Plan of Union to the new Constitution, America had traveled the road from a confederation to a nation, all under Franklin's premise, as he wrote, that "Government is not establish'd merely by *Power*; there must be maintain'd a general Opinion of its *Wisdom* and *Justice*, to make it firm and durable." In his last political act, in 1790, just before he died, he signed a petition urging Congress to ban slavery (though he had "dealt in slaves," in Van Doren's phrase, at his print shop in Philadelphia). Franklin

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knew that in the Old World of monarchy, it was asked of a man: *What is he?* In the America on which he left his mark, he made that question: *What can he do?*

It is no exaggeration to say that Franklin could *do* as much as any American before or since. In the confounding scope of his activities—literary, scientific, political, practical—we get the clearest sense of how radically inadequate our idea of him is: our image of the rotund, bespectacled man whose wig and common sense have graced so many one-man theatrical performances. He was an excellent athlete who astonished Londoners in the 1720s with his ability to swim—itself then a novelty—long distances. He had physical as well as moral courage. At fifty he was fighting the French and the Indians on the Pennsylvania frontier.

Unusual for a Founding Father, Franklin was reticent, at least in large crowds. He was inept as a public speaker, preferring to buttonhole those whom he needed to convince. Srodes believes that "his two best skills were to plot strategy in private and to write documents for public purposes." And Morgan adds that "his specialty was listening and then making the right suggestion to the right people at the right time." There were less benign aspects of his personality. Strodes writes that "he had a wide tolerance of other people's foibles, other faiths, and other political doctrines, and yet he could be coldly unforgiving and Machiavellian."

None learned that lesson harder than his only adult son, William, who was illegitimate but brought up in Franklin's household. (Another son died in childhood.) Until the Revolution, father and son worked and traveled together overseas. It was to William that Franklin addressed the *Autobiography* as a family letter, but the son disappears from the narrative after he sides with the Loyalists. Franklin never forgave him, and William died lonely and bankrupt in England. Nor did Franklin easily warm to the husband of his daughter, Sally. "Franklin's love for [his children]," Srodes contends, "was conditioned on their performing the tasks he demanded." Nevertheless, Franklin did lavish praise and attention on several of his grandchildren, including William's illegitimate son, Temple, and Benjamin Franklin Bache, whose newspaper was so critical of Adams.*

Because of his scientific discoveries, Franklin enjoyed access to the leading minds in Europe, and his social life there reads likes a chapter of *Ragtime*. In London, he enjoyed dinners with Captain James Cook, James Boswell, Jeremy Bentham; in Edinburgh he visited David Hume. He was a diplomatic colleague of Edmund Burke's but was unable to work his charms on Samuel Johnson, who had no appetite for the other doctor's politics. On a tour of Scotland he called on Adam Smith. In France he was a friend to Voltaire. Lafayette applied to him for an introduction to General Washington. He once watched Marie Antoinette play cards, and was known to five kings. Morgan describes his reception by Louis XV at Versailles in 1767: "The French were dressing him like one of them," Franklin wrote in a letter to his friend Polly Stevenson, "transforming him into a Frenchman." He joked that "to conform to the mode he would soon have to make love to his friends' wives!"

"Dally not with other Folks' Women or Money" was another of Poor Richard's maxims. But although Franklin was prudent with money, he walked a finer line with women, especially during his long stretches abroad, as his wife, Deborah, refused to travel and stayed on in Philadelphia. Adams, who served with Franklin in Paris, thought him a rake. But neither Morgan nor Srodes, after careful examination of the dalliance question, can accuse him of anything more than a fond-

Adams blamed Franklin, then dead, for the grandson's politics: "Benjamin [Bache] . . . . in his Aurora . . . became of course one of the most malicious Libellers of me. But the Yellow Fever arrested him in his detestable career and sent him to his grandfather from whom he inherited a dirty, envious, jealous, and revengefull Spight against me for no other cause under heaven than because I was too honest a Man to favour or connive at his selfish schemes of ambition and Avarice."

ness for what the French *amitié amoureuse* (a loving ship). Srodes writes that "he to be on the edge of danger, control as well." He was of tracted to younger women closer in age to his daughter. ter middle age Franklin se have drawn his emotional from the salon.

It is strange to be thinkin these most intimate de Franklin's life just now American redcoats threaten in so many of the empire's But however glutted the field olutionary biography has beco can welcome any excuse to minded of Franklin's career- he thought, said, and did. W Bush Administration gamb much on the fortunes of war, t senting voices of the Americ olution are easily lost in trans Which reign and which Geo John Adams describing wh wrote, "The pride and vanity nation is a disease; it is a deli has been flattered and inflat long by themselves and others perverts everything"?

We are entering an age Franklin's propensity for "Lib would draw the attentions USA Patriot Act and Jeff would be forced to explain eit love life or his heresy to Springer. Meanwhile, the exc kings are everywhere on displ Congress has yet to debate in rious way the merits of a foreig icy that would have us wage Iraq to defend an improbable nent alliance with the Ho Saud. American dependen Arabian crude rivals eighte century England's craving f colonists' tobacco. If Franklin with us, my sense is that he have quoted from Washing Farewell Address: "'Tis folly i Nation to look for disinterest vors from another. . . . There no greater error than to exp calculate upon real favors fro tion to Nation." Like Poor Ri he also knew that "Mad King mad Bulls are not to be he treaties and packthread."

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LETTERS

Continued from page 6

The pursuit of a collective identity may currently hinder the work of black intellectuals, as Shelby Steele suggests. But black individualism is thriving in the most individualistic of all employment sectors: business entrepreneurship. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the number of black-owned firms grew by 33 percent from 1992 through 1997, while the total number of U.S. firms grew by only 21 percent.

Mike Kerlin
Cambridge, Mass.

Going Postal

It is unfortunate that a writer with Ben Metcalf's talent would undertake to research and write a dissertation such as his treatise on Sacajawea ["Wooden Dollar," December 2002], only to compromise his credibility with the absurd remark regarding his dysfunctional father's experience with the United States Postal Service.

I retired from the postal service as a letter carrier, complete with the usual debilitating effects one can expect from a lifetime of physical labor: carpal tunnel in both wrists, arthritis in my hands and knees, tendonitis in both shoulders, a back that resembles twisted rebar, a hip that appears to have a destination of its own, and a slight list to the side of my body that shouldered a thirty-five-pound mail satchel for more years than I care to admit. I can therefore assure you, with the authority of one who has both delivered the mail and trained letter carriers, that Metcalf's father simply followed in the footsteps of the many trainees before him who quit because they considered the work demeaning, demanding, and considerably more stressful than they ever expected.

Joseph Warda
Eureka, Calif.

I am delighted to see that Sam Clemens has reincarnated Mark Twain and is now writing as Metcalf."

G. Perlstein
Via email

My response to Ben Metcal
ciousness is that *Harper's Ma*
should not have run his pi
think the writer needs m
attention.

Lawrence Jay Dessner
Via email

Rage Against the Machir

Eric Porter's otherwise thou
review of my book *Against th*
chine: The Hidden Luddite Tr
in Literature, Art, and Indi
Lives [New Books, December
criticizes the fact that I inclu
technology resisters, the K
who chose to live for forty
without electricity on a Ma
land. Because the Kellan
canned sardines and used ke
lamps, Porter argues, they w
neo-Luddites but simply ecce
no different from any subur
chomping on a fast-food b
Under Porter's paralyzing c
tion, not even the Luddites
qualify as Luddites. His sw
declaration condemns all o
eternal servitude to indust
commerce; the only alterna
total primitivism. The Kellan
was to "avoid the diverting c
cations of modern civilize
tence." Their considered c
made that possible.

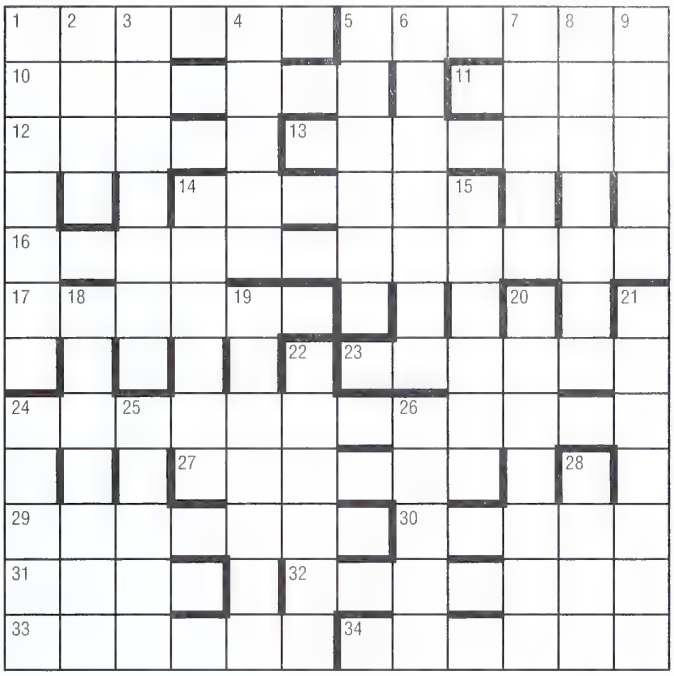
Nicols Fox
Bass Harbor, Maine

We Stand Corrected

I take issue with the cont
presented in your answers
vember's Quiz, that all twe
century female Asian heads
have been related to a previou
head of state. Philippine pr
Corazon Aquino ran for offic
her husband, Benigno, was
nated. Benigno, a prominent
tion leader, was never preside

Russ Piekarski
Brooklyn

PUZZLE



Sixes and Sevens

By Richard E. Maltby Jr.
(with acknowledgments to Zander of The Listener)

The clues to words of six and seven letters are grouped separately. Solvers must determine where each answer belongs in the diagram, using answers to the numbered clues as guides.

Answers include one proper name. As always, mental repunctuation of a clue is the key to its solution. The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 65.

ACROSS

11. *The Thing* harks back to *The Great Dictator* (4)
12. Letters from curia tooled with gold (5)
16. English/Arab merger: both turned Communist acquiring crude (12)
24. Insane grannie axes a peer of hers, perhaps? (12)
30. Reed given note during rap recording (5)
31. Pressing need, one with no right to be returned (4)

DOWN

2. Association with membership that's suitable? (4)
4. Tree ring to follow around twice (5)
7. Treacherous person, big deal on TV series (5)
9. Went boating for a way in the Sound (5)
24. Ruin Spanish olive production (5)
25. Crosses, holding output of mine (returned copy) (5)
26. A lake house to get high in (5)
28. Reverse English, in the center of change, perhaps (4)

SIX-LETTER WORDS

a. Paid attention—sounds like the man did!
b. Cook goes to foil
c. Manufactured before laundry detergent?
d. Stamp out drink
e. Shudders at the thought of cab horse out of bounds!
f. Slack Western airport (Municipal) defaced!
g. A travel pad twisted around the temple
h. Secretly lets on, getting pinched
i. Kid who has an edge?
j. A hundred-dollar piece causes stress
k. Stir tea, fly into Pledge of Allegiance
l. Fires business leader fronting for lies all around

SEVEN-LETTER WORDS

a. Miterer working in constructing ship
b. Added on a following for the audience
c. Construction worker laughs about road time
d. Broken rules of the Royal We
e. Advocating environmentalists start when a dog shakes with this
f. With weight reduced in two thousand one, came in first in the luge
g. No-frills fight with whip
h. Pretend place spelled out in treaty
i. China may have a presence here, limiting period to be in France
j. The Gap makes a trick current by being retro
k. Slight slurring of gentle "C"
l. Requirement for a row right out in infamous O.K. Corral

Contest Rules: Send completed diagram with name and address to "Sixes and Sevens," *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Broadway, New York, NY 10012. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Entries must be received by February 11. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive one-year subscriptions to *Harper's Magazine*. Winners' names will be printed in the April issue. Winners of the December 2002 puzzle, "Quo Vadis?" are Barbara Featherston, St. Louis; M. D. Roach, Wyandotte, Michigan; and Marilyn Somers, Rumson, New Jersey.



LOVE'S LABOR

1. What body part is depicted in the earliest known pictorial engravings?

2. According to the ancient Egyptians, a vein runs directly from the heart to what finger of what hand?

3. For what purpose do the women in Aristophanes' play *Lysistrata* deny their partners sex?

4. What poet was banished from Rome for writing a textbook on adultery called *The Art of Love*?

5. Exposure to Eastern poetry during what military campaign inspired the first romantic European troubadour in the twelfth century?

6. Ulrich von Lichtenstein's thirteenth-century autobiographical work, *Frauendienst* (*Service of Ladies*), later inspired what Spanish picaresque novel?

7. What nineteenth-century French novelist wrote "'Faith' in the language of heaven is 'Love' in the language of men"?

8. What twentieth-century mogul declared, "I love Mickey Mouse more than any woman I've ever known"?

9. What did Sigmund Freud glimpse on a train in childhood that contributed to his theory of the Oedipus Complex?

10. What country's crown jewels did Catherine de Médicis recover from her husband's mistress after he had given them to her as a gift?

11. The last king of what country was given his position by his former lover, Russia's Catherine the Great?

12. What Macedonian king ascended the throne after his father was killed by a jealous lover?

13. What medieval Christian leader wrote, "Thus even Christ, who was so righteous, must have been guilty of fornication before he died"?

14. What became of Attila the Hun after he sustained a nosebleed on his wedding night?

Contest Rules. Send numbered answers with name and address to "Quiz," Harper's Magazine, 666 Broadway, New York, NY 10012. If you already subscribe to Harper's, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Entries must be received by February 13. The sender of the first correct set of answers opened at random will receive a one-year subscription to Harper's Magazine. The winner's name will be printed in the April issue and be available at www.harpers.org in May. Subscription winners are eligible to compete in an annual quiz whose first prize is a complete set of the Oxford English Dictionary. *The answers to last month's quiz, "Harm's Way," appear on page 56.*

Illustration by Ralph

When your

hearts

are

in the

same place.

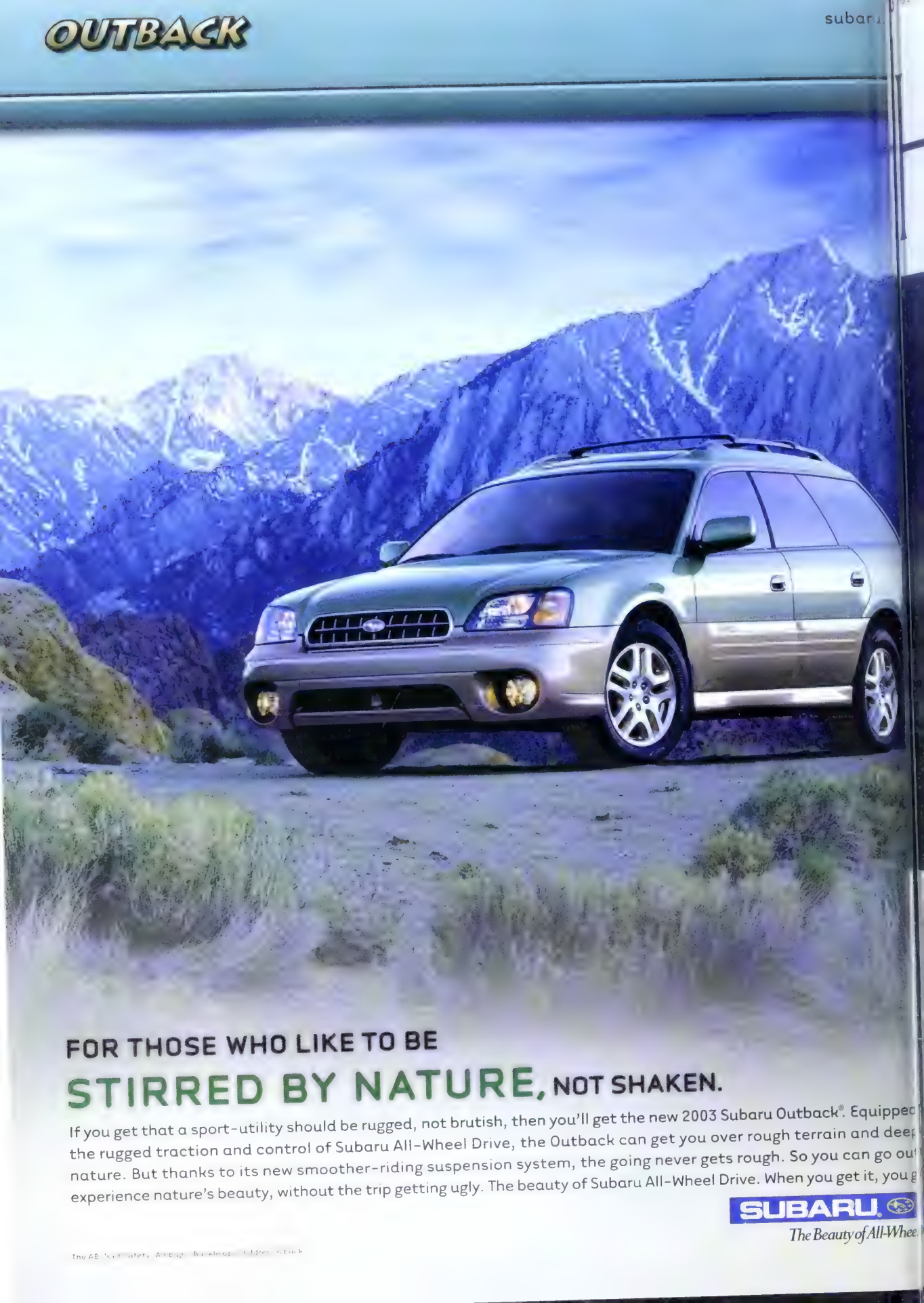


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By Jonathan Schell

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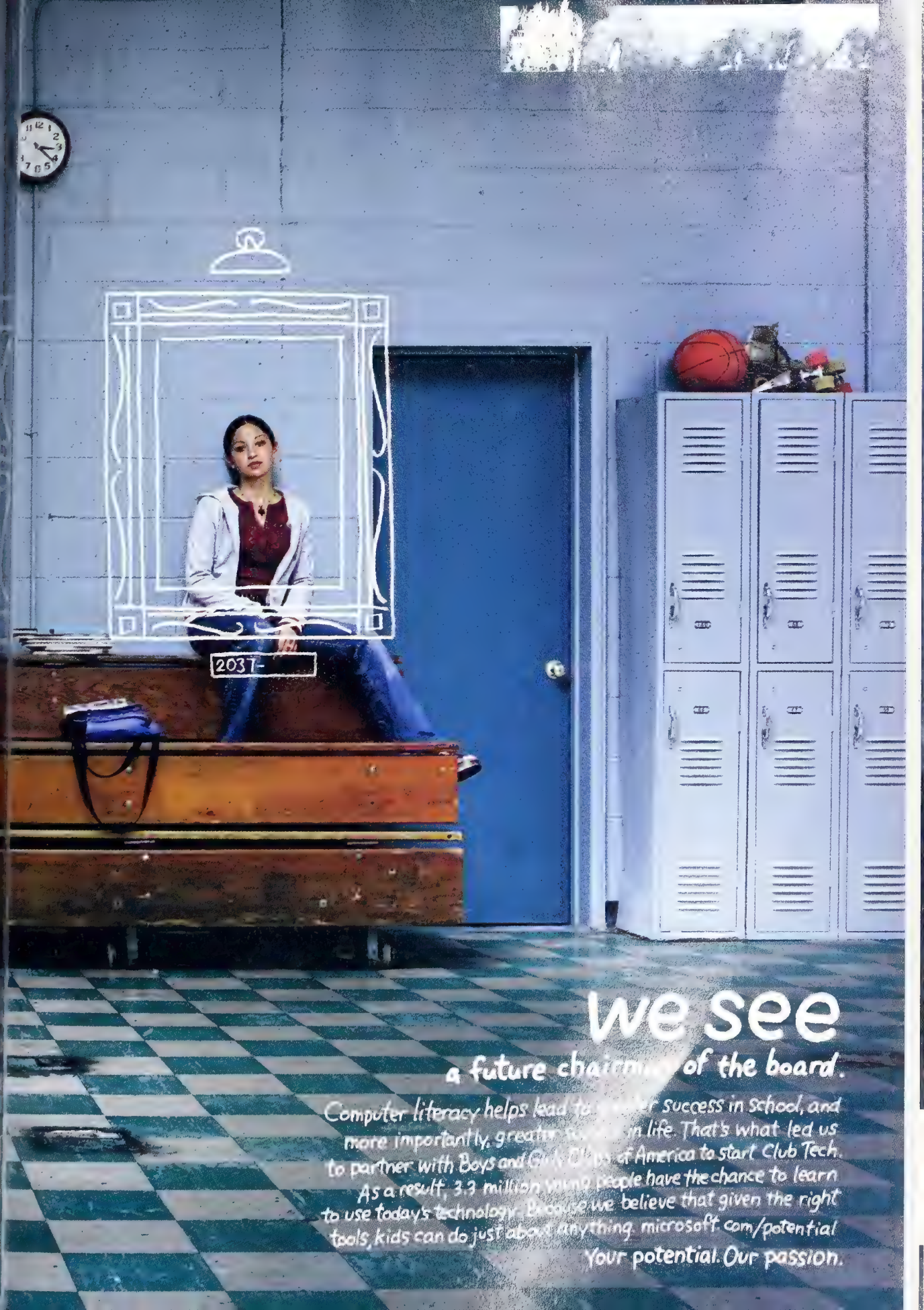
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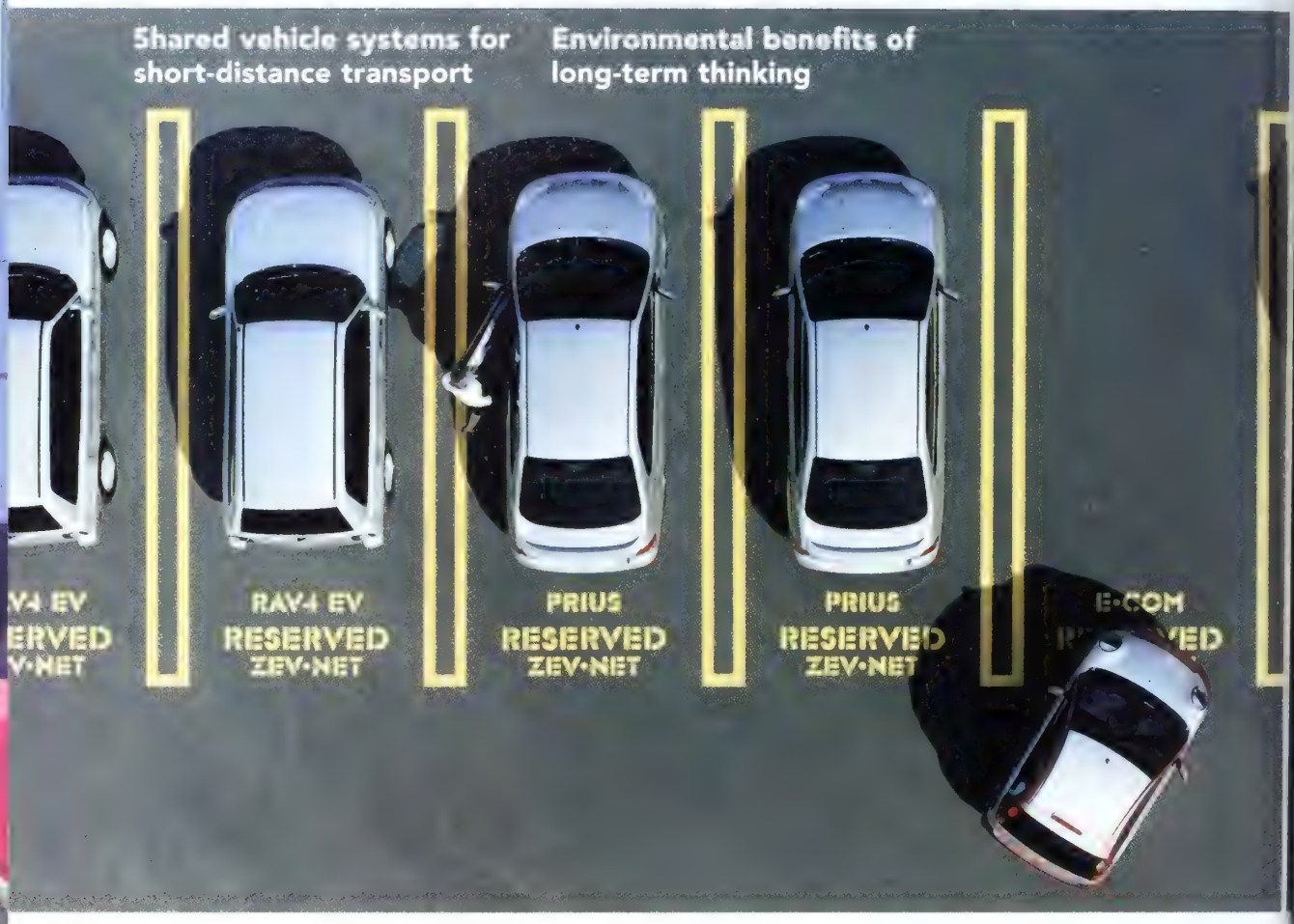
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MAGAZINE

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MARCH 2003

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LETTERS

Liberal Criticism

In his essay "The Case for Liberalism" [December 2002], George McGovern writes, "President Bush has said repeatedly that the terrorists hate us because of our freedom. I don't believe that. The world's people have always admired our freedom. What they don't like is the arrogance and indifference to world opinion inherent in so much of our international policy." McGovern makes a slip common to those on the left who turn the terrorist attacks into an occasion for questioning U.S. foreign policy. Many who protest U.S. foreign policy around the world *are* motivated by the "arrogance and indifference" of the United States as well as by the hypocrisy and injustice of U.S. foreign policy, but I find it hard to believe that the people who flew airplanes into the World Trade Center are among them. The Taliban does not top the list of regimes that have manifested a concern for "world opinion," that have avoided [illegible] gance and indifference," o[illegible] have displayed any regard for [illegible] justice or human rights. Ig[illegible] the differences between the [illegible] ists and those who oppose U. [illegible] lateralism does a disservice [illegible] American left and to people [illegible] the world who oppose both [illegible] ism and U.S. arrogance.

Mary Dudas
Via email

Just as the selection and di[illegible] of Tom Eagleton derailed G[illegible] McGovern's presidential cam[illegible] another error in judgment mu[illegible] trumpeting of liberalism. H[illegible] sumption that democracy guar[illegible] the "principles of majority ru[illegible] freedom of choice" conflict[illegible] American political reality. P[illegible] McGovern had in mind a W[illegible] democracy other than the or[illegible] produced the 2000 election [illegible] voter turnout of 2002.

Ralph Goldstein
Altadena, Calif.

Because the words "libera[illegible] "conservative" have been sub[illegible] to long abuse, McGovern's d[illegible] of liberalism is a timely wail [illegible]

Harper's Magazine welcomes reader response. Please address mail to Letters, Harper's Magazine, *666 Broadway, New York, NY 10012, or email us at letters@harpers.org. Short letters are more likely to be published, and all letters are subject to editing. Volume precludes individual acknowledgment.*

ness, a wistful call to an
a gripped by a collective,
s obedience. How sad and
at his defense is necessary
ikely to be heeded. As Carl
rg warned in "Primer Les-
When you let proud words
not easy to call them back."

udor
bor, Mich.

ld Reagan won the war of
"tax and spend" has been
d onto "liberal" as surely as
Claus onto Christmas. I was a
professor, like George Mc-
n, and recall the G.O.P.'s
in waving the bloody shirt
generations after the Civil
we have to follow the lead
Populists and call liberals Dy-
Centrists or Positive Progres-
be it.
rals need to assert workable
nd programs, and await the
's next self-destruction. The
R split let Wilson slip in and
nany of the progressive mea-
sures that McGovern lists. The economic meltdown of Hoover's presidency opened the door for the New Deal. Nixon gave us early environmental protections and other progressive measures; he even proposed the "negative income tax." Liberals failed, however, to capitalize fully on his collapse. The insipid campaign-finance reform and "turning down the thermostat" hardly constitute a legacy.

Ron Adkins
Tacoma, Wash.

As a member of George McGovern's generation, I remember every day the loss that I suffered as a result of young men being sent to war. My college sweetheart, a navigator on a B-24 out of Lecce, Italy, never made it home.

President Bush is addicted to the accolades he has received for his handling of the 9/11 disaster and, without considering the consequences, keeps feeding his own ego with talk of war. What real thought does it take to rail against a dastardly enemy? If Bush could find a way to change our global policies and to cool the hatred boiling up in the Middle East, he would be worthy of accolades.

Gail S. Ravitts
Rockford, Ill.

In George McGovern's otherwise compelling essay, there is a list of his "heroes" that includes Andrew Jackson. Unlike Thomas Jefferson, whose slave-owning belied his progressive democratic vision, Jackson, an ardent supporter of slavery, had no redeeming qualities. He stood for federal rights over states' rights when it came to taxes but assumed a states'-rights stance by not enforcing federal treaties and the Supreme Court decision concerning Indian removal. Thus 50,000 native people, including Cherokees and Chocktaws who had aided Jackson in his wars with other Indians, were uprooted from their land. How do the bribery, the violence, and the corruption related to the removal of American Indians uphold the definition of



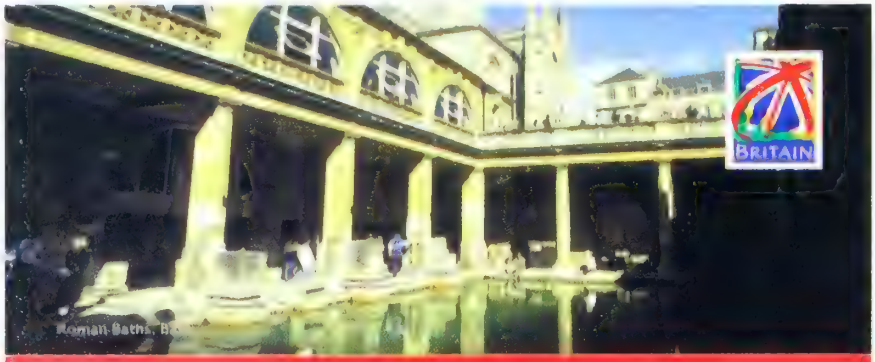


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liberalism—i.e., "the protecti
litical and civil liberties"
do those oppressive actions
against liberals' alleged belie
essential goodness of man"?
Jackson does not belong on a
al's list of heroes.

Eugene Spake
Mill Valley, Calif.

A Blight to the Nations

Although I agree with
Hendrickson's critique of t
gers posed by the Bush Adm
tion's move to unilateral ir
ism ["The Course of Er
Readings, December 2002
troubled by his conclusion th
historic policy of non-en
ment" is "quaint" and by his
tion of the dubious conve
wisdom that the United St
too big and powerful, and the
of past actions too pronoun
it to avoid entanglement
world." Hendrickson is right
America cannot responsibly
form itself overnight fr
world's greatest meddler into
plete bystander, but it har
lows that this nation should
tempt to disentangle itse
time. Especially when one c
the long and sordid conseque
America's historical fantasy
ing a "redeemer nation"—g
in Woodrow Wilson's word
infinite privilege of fulfilli
destiny and saving the world—
insufficient to call the curr
ministration back to a defa
ternationalism," which, al
vastly preferable to the curre
sarism, is still predicated on
nialist delusions. American
recognize that we are hop
overextended around the
that unbridled military sp
and foreign adventurism hav
rupted our domestic infrast
and civil society, that contin
terventionism will bring cor
terrorism and still greater er
civil liberties, and, most imp
of all, that we are not no
have never been, God's Ele
tion but merely *una natio int*

Continued on

NOTEBOOK

Light in the window

By Lewis H. Lapham

ıy not be interested in war, but nterested in you.

—Leon Trotsky

s a promotional venue for any s collection of worthy thoughts steful sentiments, the Sunday *ork Times Magazine* commands thority of the show windows at rf Goodman. Of the moment th the trend, the editors arrange iopolitical merchandise in ways to attract discriminating shop- the markets of received opin- vell-informed and right-thinking , competently educated and de- affluent, alive to the similari- the works of Versace and Ma- ond of animals and the several of beige. Although the editors onally make space for ideas a tri- advanced for some of their less ticated readers in Oklahoma or rn Queens, they don't take es with the big-ticket items or what they judge to be the con- of uptown money and down- style.

ıich is why, on first glancing at -nonsense cover lines for the is- January 5—"The American Em- Get Used to It)"—I knew that I the presence of an important n statement. The United States (very with it, very now) was on y to an invasion of Iraq, there hibit a modish line of summer ons at the military equivalent of way show, and the *Times* had to the trouble of furnishing a ul program note: What to watch when to applaud, how to think this year's new and exciting look opolitics. Michael Ignatieff, a l-name foreign-policy intellectu- ruited from the faculty of Harvard University, matched the assertive tone of his lead article to the red, white, and blue block lettering (not fussy, very bold) of the magazine's cover art:

> Americans are required, even when they are unwilling to do so, to include Europeans in the governance of their evolving imperial project. The Americans essentially dictate Europe's place in this new grand design. The United States is multilateral when it wants to be, unilateral when it must be; and it enforces a new division of labor in which America does the fighting, the French, British and Germans do the police patrols in the border zones and the Dutch, Swiss and Scandinavians provide the humanitarian aid.

An editor's note identified Ignatieff as the director of the Carr Center at the Kennedy School of Government, also as a teacher of "human rights" well versed in the syllabus of the world's sorrow. A man of sense and sensibility who had spent a lot of time "walking around" in the "frontier zones of the new American empire" in Bosnia, Kosovo, and Afghanistan, and who knew, as he himself said, that it wasn't enough to draw "the big picture" on the wall of a classroom in Cambridge, that one really must "get out of Harvard Yard" if one wants to "get really close to the intimate, tragic detail of it all."

And what did he learn, the professor, from his poking around in Afghan tents and Balkan graves? If nothing else, how to write sententious and vacant prose, most of it indistinguishable from the ad copy for an Armani scarf or a Ferragamo shoe. Too much direct quotation from the professor's text might be mistaken for unkindness, and I enter three of his obiter dicta into the record only because they fairly represent the attitudes currently in vogue among the marketers of the country's preferred wisdom:

> Imperial powers do not have the luxury of timidity, for timidity is not prudence; it is a confession of weakness.
>
> [The United States] remain[s] a nation in which flag, sacrifice and martial honor are central to national identity.
>
> The question, then, is not whether America is too powerful but whether it is powerful enough. Does it have what it takes to be grandmaster of what Colin Powell has called the chessboard of the world's most inflammable region?

If Ignatieff doesn't for a moment doubt that America has what it takes to play chess with Genghis Khan or Darius the Great, neither does he say anything that hasn't been said, repeatedly over the last nine months, by the cadre of Washington propagandists, both Democrat and Republican, writing for the policy journals that supply the government with its think-tank thoughts and Sunday-morning media phrases—America, the world's unrivaled hegemon, an empire in fact if not in name, its sovereign power the only hope for less fortunate nations groping toward the light of free markets and liberal democracy. Be not timid, do not flinch. Shoulder the burden of civilization and its discontents. Lift from the continents of Africa and Asia the weight of despotic evildoers. Know that if America does the fighting, other people will do the dying. Learn to appreciate the refined elegance (conceptually minimalist, gracefully postmodern) of high-altitude precision bombing.

When delivered by one of the rabid polemicists allied with Lockheed Martin, Fox News, or the Baptist church, the same message usually comes with

a tactical objective in view—the seizure of the Iraqi oil fields, the destruction of Hugo Chávez, the safety of Israel. Ignatieff imparts to it an air of languid abstraction, not wanting to disturb anybody with the "intimate, tragic detail of it all." He briefly raises the question of terminology (America as democratic republic, America as military empire), but then he goes on to say that it doesn't make much difference how America chooses to see itself. The words don't matter. The country is what it is, so rich and powerful and good that it can't help but do what is just and right and true.

Never having met Ignatieff or read his books, I don't know how he defines his politics, or whether he construes himself as a liberal, a conservative, a lapsed Marxist, or a reconstructed Tory. After making my way through the 7,000 words of his article for the *Times*, I still couldn't guess who were his enemies and who were his friends, and it occurred to me that much the same can be said about most of the government officials and high-end journalists whose commentaries have decorated the display windows of the national news media for the better part of the last twenty years. They strike poses and adopt attitudes, pleased to imagine that politics amount to little else except the staging of *tableaux vivants*, the crowd scenes and the musical accompaniment matched with the power points in the season's polling data. The reliance on theatrical effects long ago destroyed the credibility of the voices of conscience associated with liberal causes and the Democratic Party. Too many nominally left-wing defenders of the realm couldn't disguise their loyalty to the right-wing Mouton Rothschild, their rhetorical tours de force (on behalf of racial equality, social justice, freedom of expression, etc.) too laughably at odds with their views of the sea from a sundeck in East Hampton. A similar fate befell the apostles of the conservative truth soon after the election of Ronald Reagan. The actor arrived in Washington under the impression that he had been hired to make a movie, and it was only a matter of months before the claque of his apologists in the news media began to think of aircraft carriers as set decorations.

Reading Ignatieff I was reminded of a dinner-table conversation in Washington in the middle 1980s at which an authoritative syndicated columnist explained that he was "depressed" by "the quality of the regime" in Nicaragua. Judging only by the tone of his voice, I might have guessed that he was talking about a second-rate wine or a Caribbean resort hotel gone to seed and no longer fit to welcome golf tournaments. He wasn't concerned about Nicaragua's capacity to harm the United States; the army was small and ill equipped, the mineral assets not worth the cost of a first-class embassy. Nor did the columnist think the governing junta particularly adept at exploiting "the virus of Marxist revolution." What troubled him was the "indecorousness of the regime." Nicaragua was in bad taste.

In the similarly detached context of a Fifth Avenue cocktail party on the Tuesday after the publication of Ignatieff's article, I listened to two political correspondents, one from *Vanity Fair* and the other from *Newsweek*, analyze the differences between the Democratic and Republican attitudes toward the liberation of Iraq. The important question was aesthetic, not geopolitical; not whether Saddam Hussein deserved to die a coward's death (the fact so obvious that it didn't bear discussion) but how to accessorize the coverage of the assault on Baghdad, whether it was best to present it as a crusade ordered by God or as a hostile corporate takeover arranged by a consortium of Texas oil companies. The first option indicated a heartland sensibility, the second an instinct perversely urban.

I mention the conversation because, like the brass-band promotion of Ignatieff's article in *The New York Times Magazine*, it speaks to the insouciance with which so many people party to the formulation of our public argument regard the current recasting of the country's laws. The government in Washington makes no secret of its wish to eliminate the freedoms of speech, thought, and movement synonymous with the workings of a democratic republic, and where is the senator or syndicated columnist who gives voice to an intelligible objecti
the civilian populations of I
Islamabad it might not mak
difference whether the Unite
styles itself hegemon or republ
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buildings collapse into the sam
and who doesn't know that a
by any other name is still an F
the residents of Philadelphia a
orado Springs, the words shou
ter; despite Ignatieff's bland ass
to the contrary, so should th
porting connotations. A gove
that becomes accustomed to th
of itself as an empire falls easily
habit of issuing imperial decr
soon acquires the characterist
Secretary of State Colin Pow
February attributed to a faile
"unrepresentative of its peopl
with corruption," blighted by "
transparency," thinking that
achieve a position on the wor
through development of wea
mass destruction that will tur
be fool's gold . . ." The secret
speaking of North Korea and
might as well have been talkin
Vice President Dick Cheney's
a reconfigured United States.

If not as a concerted effort t
the liberties of the American
how else does one describe
publican agenda now in motio
nation's capital? Backed by
cious promise of imminent ec
recovery and secured by the gu
of never-ending war, the leg
measures mobilized by the
House and the Congress sugg
what the Bush Administratio
mind is not the defense of the
can citizenry against a foreign
but the protection of the A
oligarchy from the American
racy. In every instance, and n
what the issue immediately
the bias is the same—more la
ing the rights of individuals, fe
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nation's wealth from the unid
poor to the confederacy of t
President Bush's new plan to
from taxation all corporate di
received by individuals, at t
time lowering the income-t
previously scheduled to tak

now and 2009, assigns the
he refund (64 percent) to the
st 5 percent of the nation's
s, more than half of the award
e earning at least $200,000 a
uarter of it to people earning
an $1 million a year.

he easing of environmental
ons on the energy industries
England.

he opening of the national
n the Pacific Northwest and
ic National Wildlife Refuge to
expropriation by the oil, gas,
and timber industries.

he persistent issuing of health-
e regulations intended to sub-
eventually overturn the 1973
e Court ruling, *Roe* v. *Wade*,
ognized a woman's freedom to
whether or not she will give
a child.

he reinforcing of the monop-
ld by the big media syndicates
country's systems of communi-

utfitting the banks and credit-
encies with the privilege to sell
ighest bidders any or all of the
al data acquired from their
ers.

he broad expansion of the gov-
t's police powers under the
atriot and Homeland Security
e Justice Department reserving
f the right to tap anybody's
and open everybody's mail.

A series of bills in Congress
to reduce the nation's health-
sts by denying medical services
le too poor to pay for the up-
the insurance companies.

The nomination to the federal
courts of judges apt to find le-
edents in the pages of the Bible
than in the Constitution.

f wishing to leave nobody in
bout the political bias now afoot
shington, President Bush took
uble to juxtapose his endorse-
f affirmative action for the rich
eech to the Economic Club of
go on January 7 favoring the re-
of all taxes paid on corporate
nds) with his objection to affir-
action for the poor (his remarks
he White House on January 15
fault with the admissions poli-
the University of Michigan).

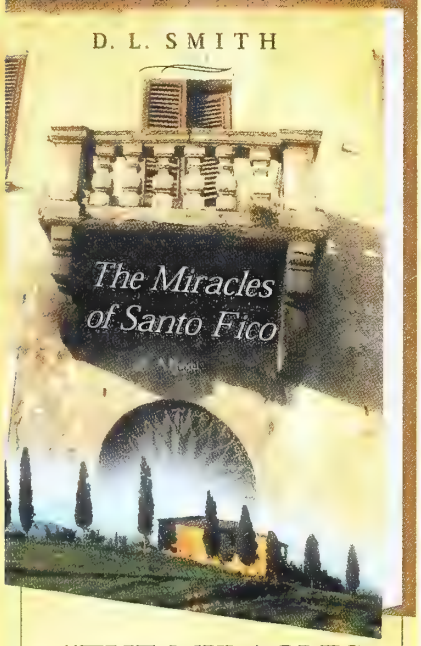
The interval of a week between the two announcements was brief enough to impress the lesson upon a national television audience known for its short attention span, but among most of the upscale journalists in New York (of the moment, with the trend) the point was by and large ignored. The best and most tasteful opinion doesn't countenance the notion of class warfare. President Bush rejects even the suggestion of such a thing as wrongheaded and maybe treasonous, partisan agitprop distributed by envious Democrats and would-be demagogues. His indignant tabling of the proposition, in a speech on January 9 at a Virginia company that produces American flags, was strongly seconded by the right-thinking managers of the nation's better media boutiques, who regard the subject as preposterously *démodé*—threadbare cant found in the attic of the 1960s with the rest of the sensibility (go-go boots, *Sgt. Pepper*, Woodstock, Vietnam) that embodied the failed hopes of a discredited decade.

The media take pride in their exquisite collections of historical certainty, and so, being persuaded that class war invariably manifests itself as an uprising of the angry poor against the greedy rich (pitchforks, sansculottes, the guillotine), and having seen the reassuring photographs of both Teddy and Franklin Roosevelt, they also know that all American politicians are, by definition, gregarious and open-hearted people, industrious, well meaning, occasionally eccentric but always friendly, sometimes caught, unwillingly and through no fault of their own, in the webs of corrupt circumstance. Armed with combat-hardened anecdotes excerpted from the writings of Tom Clancy and the late Stephen Ambrose, our high-toned window dressers like to imagine that politics are about the more or less attractive arrangement of words, not about who gets to do what to whom, at what price, and for how long. Their gift for clever decoration serves the interest of the oligarchy currently at home in Washington (more frightened of the freedom of the American people than of the tyranny of Saddam Hussein), and obscures the fact of a war waged by the angry rich against what they perceive to be the legions of the greedy poor. ■

"A delightful fable, told with wit and grace... about an Italian village that's seen better days—and may again."

—*Kirkus Reviews* (starred review)

D. L. SMITH



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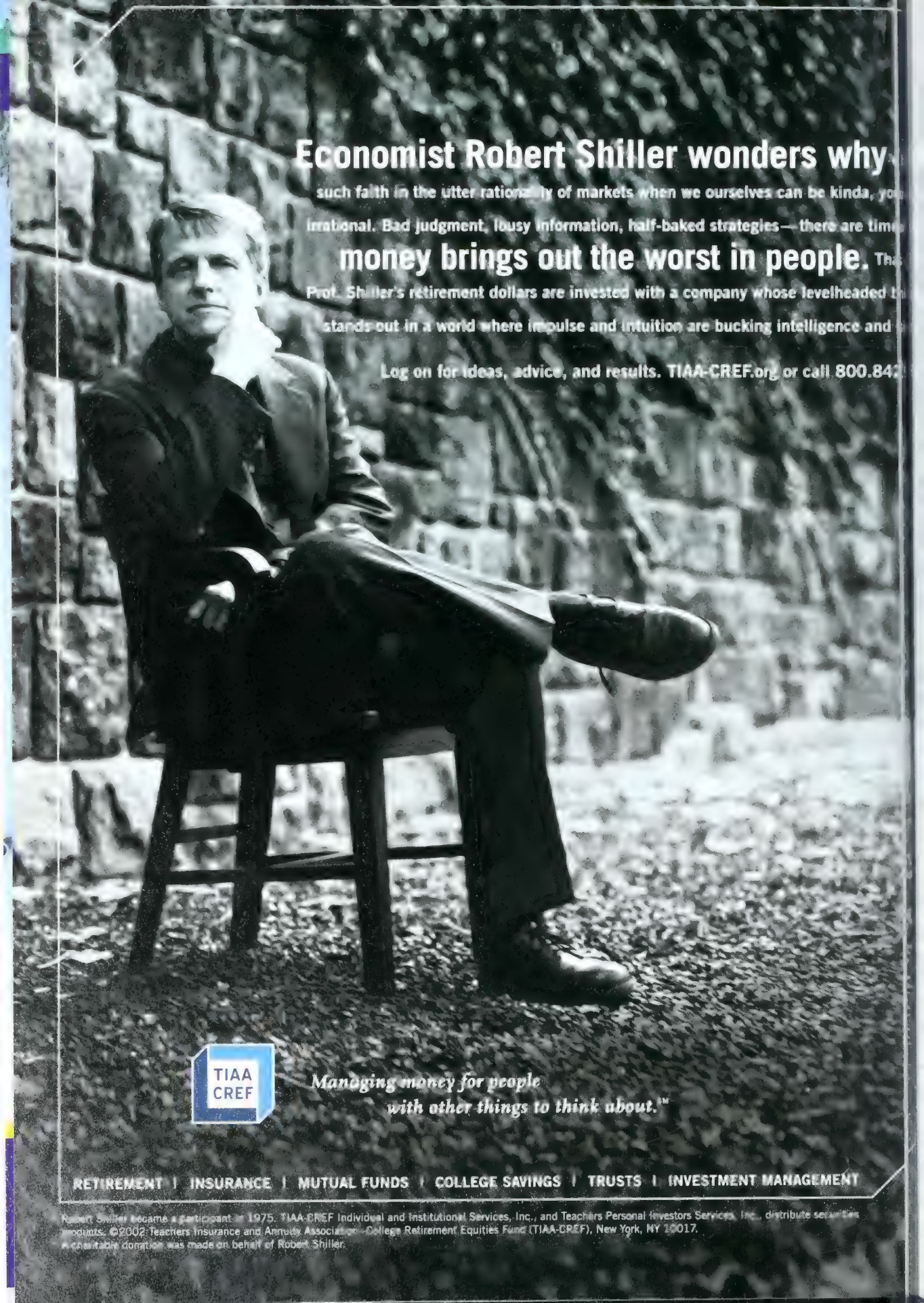
Lufthans

A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER

HARPER'S INDEX

Chance that an ACLU member has joined the group since George W. Bush became president : 1 in 2
Minimum number of times since 2000 that U.S. news stories have described Al Gore as "president in exile" : 26
Minimum number of federal lobbyists registered since 1999 whose interests cover "terror" or "security" issues : 444
Estimated number of applications that the U.N. received last year for its 302 weapons-inspector positions : 1,200
Minimum number of U.S.-led bomb strikes on Iraq in the month after inspections were agreed to last winter : 17
Percentage change in the size of the U.S. Strategic Petroleum Reserve under George W. Bush : +11
Percentage change under Bill Clinton : –5
Chance that a U.S. soldier killed in the Persian Gulf War was a victim of enemy aggression : 1 in 3
nt the U.S. Air Force will pay a Texas woman this year for mistakenly hitting her home with a dummy bomb : $12,000
or by which the percentage increase in the cost of a U.S. employee health plan since 2001 has exceeded inflation : 7
in which the last two federal studies of the possible side effects of mass smallpox vaccination were published : 1968
Number of Americans one study expects to suffer "serious reactions" in the event of such vaccinations : 286,404
Factor by which this study's estimate exceeds that of the other : 16
ber of states whose Blue Cross/Blue Shield insurers were for-profit corporations in 1990 and 2002, respectively : 0, 18
mber of Philadelphia's public schools run by one of seven private-sector education management organizations : 45
Percentage of Shakespeare's sonnets that contain at least one economic metaphor : 30
British price-fixing fine levied last November on Hasbro, the maker of Monopoly : $8,000,000
entage change since 1964 in the number of different marshmallow shapes to be found in Lucky Charms cereal : +100
ntage change since 1990 in the annual number of large-scale outbreaks of U.S. school-cafeteria food poisoning : +100
entage points by which wearing a swimsuit increased the average math test score among men in a Michigan study : 4
Percentage points by which wearing a swimsuit decreased the average score among women : 6
date on which instructions for condom use appeared on the federal government's online condom fact sheet : 6/20/01
on which the Bush Administration announced the cancellation of monthly federal reporting of mass layoffs : 12/24/02
Number of announcements of mass layoffs reported in 2002 : 17,799
Annual corporate pension that CSX will pay the new U.S. treasury secretary for the rest of his life : $2,470,000
Number of the last four years in which CSX paid any federal income tax : 2
Maximum number of U.S. firms whose 2001 profit exceeded the combined profits of Native American casinos : 16
Ratio of the combined annual revenue of Native American casinos to that of Las Vegas casinos : 5:3
Number of active-duty members of the U.S. military, per structure it owns, worldwide : 2
Ratio of acreage owned by the U.S. military to the size of North Korea : 1:1
Estimated number of endangered animal and plant species in the Korean demilitarized zone : 49
Number of orphaned newborn puppies successfully breast-fed last fall by a Norwegian woman : 6
Number of pygmy monkeys seized from a traveler's pants last December by L.A. customs officials : 2
Months after Ohio's Flesh Public Library installed Internet filters in 2000 that the filters blocked its own website : 12
inimum number of local activists the Denver police department has gathered information on since the 1950s : 3,200
Amount the department spent in 2000 to put these names in an internal database : $45,800
Minimum number of California concerts canceled since August because of new U.S. visa policies : 37
mber of the 22 Cuban nominees invited to last year's Latin Grammy Awards unable to attend because of such policies : 22
Chances that an Arab American is Christian : 3 in 4
ank shared by Jesus Christ and Bill Clinton among "the greatest Americans of all time," according to Americans : 13

Figures cited are adjusted for inflation and are the latest available as of January 2003. Sources are listed on page 69.
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Economist Robert Shiller wonders why
such faith in the utter rationality of markets when we ourselves can be kinda, yo
irrational. Bad judgment, lousy information, half-baked strategies—there are time
money brings out the worst in people. Tha
Prof. Shiller's retirement dollars are invested with a company whose levelheaded th
stands out in a world where impulse and intuition are bucking intelligence and
Log on for ideas, advice, and results. TIAA-CREF.org or call 800.842
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Robert Shiller became a participant in 1975. TIAA-CREF Individual and Institutional Services, Inc., and Teachers Personal Investors Services, Inc., distribute securities products. ©2002 Teachers Insurance and Annuity Association–College Retirement Equities Fund (TIAA-CREF), New York, NY 10017.
A charitable donation was made on behalf of Robert Shiller.

READINGS

[Essay]

WHERE ARE WE?

By John Berger, from the introduction to Between The Eyes: Essays on Photography and Politics, *by David Levi Strauss, to be published in April by Aperture.*

Everyone knows that pain is endemic to life, and wants to forget this or relativize it. All the variants of the myth of a Fall from the Golden Age, before pain existed, are an attempt to relativize the pain suffered on earth. So too is the invention of Hell, the adjacent kingdom of pain-as-punishment. Likewise the discovery of Sacrifice. And later, much later, the principle of Forgiveness. One could argue that philosophy began with the question: why pain?

Yet, when all this has been said, the present pain of living in the world is perhaps in some ways unprecedented. Consumerist ideology, which has become the most powerful and invasive on the planet, sets out to persuade us that pain is an accident, something that we can insure against. This is the logical basis for the ideology's pitilessness.

I write in the night, although it is daytime. A day in early October 2002. For almost a week the sky above Paris has been blue. Each day the sunset is a little earlier and each day gloriously beautiful. Many fear that before long, U.S. military forces will be launching the "preventive" war against Iraq, so that the U.S. oil corporations can lay their hands on further and supposedly safer oil supplies. Others hope that this can be avoided. Between the announced decisions and the secret calculations, everything is kept unclear, since lies prepare the way for missiles. I write in a night of shame.

By shame I do not mean individual guilt. Shame, as I'm coming to understand it, is a species feeling which, in the long run, corrodes the capacity for hope and prevents us looking far ahead. We look down at our feet, thinking only of the next small step.

People everywhere, under very different conditions, are asking themselves: Where are we? The question is historical not geographical. What are we living through? Where are we being taken? What have we lost? How to continue without a plausible vision of the future? Why have we lost any view of what is beyond a lifetime?

The well-heeled experts answer: Globalization. Postmodernism. Communications Revolution. Economic Liberalism. The terms are tautological and evasive. To the anguished question of Where are we? the experts murmur: Nowhere.

Might it not be better to see and declare that we are living through the most tyrannical—because the most pervasive—chaos that has ever existed? It's not easy to grasp the nature of the tyranny, for its power structure (ranging from the 200 largest multinational corporations to the Pentagon) is interlocking yet diffuse, dictatorial yet anonymous, ubiquitous yet placeless. It tyrannizes from offshore, not only in terms of Fiscal Law but in terms of any political control beyond its own. Its aim is to delocalize the entire world. Its ideological strategy, beside which Bin Laden's is a fairy tale, is to undermine the existent so that everything collapses into its special version

of the virtual, from the realm of which—and this is the tyranny's credo—there will be a never-ending source of profit. It sounds stupid. Tyrannies are stupid. This one is destroying at every level the life of the planet on which it operates.

Ideology apart, its power is based on two threats. The first is intervention from the sky by the most heavily armed state in the world. One could call it Threat B-52. The second is ruthless indebtment, bankruptcy, and hence, given the present productive relations in the world, starvation. One could call it Threat Zero.

The shame begins with the contestation (which we all acknowledge somewhere but, out of powerlessness, dismiss) that much of the present suffering could be alleviated or avoided if certain realistic and relatively simple decisions were taken. There is a very direct relation today between the minutes of meetings and minutes of agony.

Does anyone deserve to be condemned to certain death simply because they don't have access to treatment which would cost less than $2 a day? This was a question posed by the director-general of the World Health Organization last July. She was talking about the AIDS epidemic, in Africa and elsewhere, in which an estimated 68 million people will die within the next eighteen years. I'm talking about the pain of living in the present world.

Most analyses and prognoses about what is happening are understandably presented and studied within the framework of their separate disciplines: economics, politics, media studies, public health, ecology, national defense, criminology, education, etc. In reality, each of these separate fields is joined to another to make up the real terrain of what is being lived. It happens that in their lives people suffer from wrongs which are classified in separate categories, and suffer them simultaneously and inseparably.

A current example: some Kurds who fled recently to Cherbourg, and have been refused asylum and risk being repatriated to Turkey, are poor, politically undesirable, landless, exhausted, illegal, and the clients of nobody. And they suffer each of these conditions at one and the same second!

To take in what is happening, an interdisciplinary vision is necessary in order to connect the "fields" which are institutionally kept separate. And any such vision is bound to be (in the original sense of the word) political. The precondition for thinking politically on a global scale is to see the unity of the unnecessary suffering taking place. This is the starting point.

I write in the night, but I see not only the tyranny. If that were so, I would probably not have the courage to continue. I see people sleeping, stirring, getting up to drink water, whispering their projects or their fears, making love, praying, cooking something while the rest of the family sleeps, in Baghdad and Chicago. (Yes, I see too the forever invincible Kurds, 4,000 of whom were gassed, with U.S. compliance, by Saddam Hussein.) I see pastry cooks working in Teheran and the shepherds, thought of as bandits, sleeping beside their sheep in Sardinia; I see a man in the Friedrichshain quarter of Berlin sitting in his pajamas with a bottle of beer reading Heidegger and he has the hands of a proletarian; I see a small boat of illegal immigrants off the Spanish coast near Alicante; I see a mother in Ghana, her name is Aya, which means Born on Friday, swaying her baby to sleep; I see the ruins of Kabul and a man going home; and I know that, despite the pain, the ingenuity of the survivors is undiminished, an ingenuity which scavenges and collects energy, and, in the ceaseless cunning of this ingenuity, there is a spiritual value, something like the Holy Ghost. I am convinced of this in the night, although I don't know why.

The next step is to reject all the tyranny's dis-

[Poem]

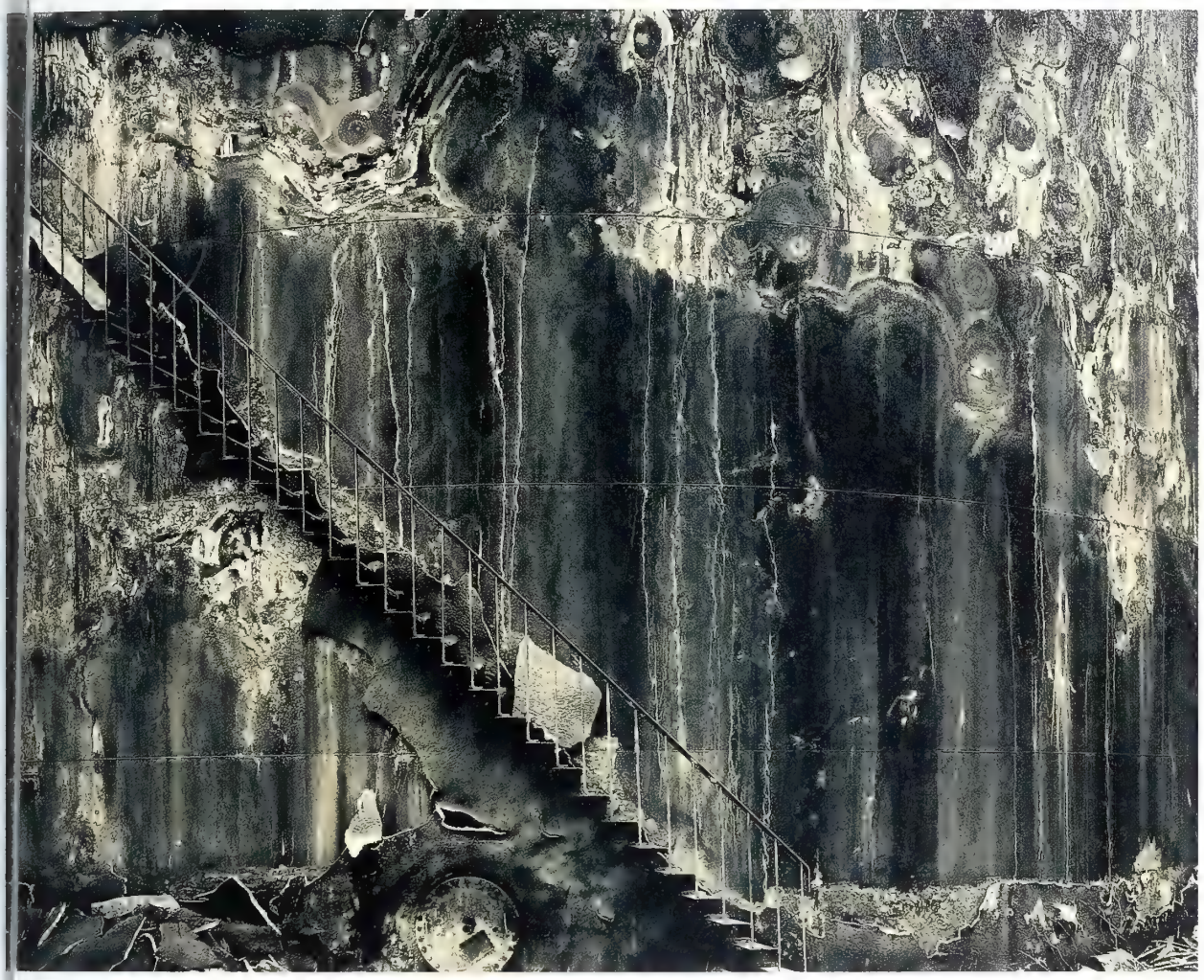
SEPARATE TRUTHS

By Charles Simic, from the Spring 2002 issue of Raritan. The Voice at 3:00 A.M., *a volume of Simic's new and selected poetry, will be published by Harcourt in April.*

Night fell without asking
For our permission.
Mary had a headache,
And my eyes hurt
From squinting at the newspapers.

We could still make out
A few old trees in the yard.
They take it as it comes.
Separate truths
Do not interest them.

We'll have to run for it, I said,
And had no idea what I meant.
The coming of the inevitable,
What a strange bliss that is—
And I had no idea what she meant.



Mill, Alabama, USA, 1995," a photograph by Robert Bourdeau, is currently on exhibit at Jane Corkin Gallery, Toronto.

course. Its terms are crap. In the interminably repetitive speeches, announcements, press conferences, and threats, the recurrent terms are: Democracy, Justice, Human Rights, Terrorism. Each word in the context signifies the opposite of what it was once meant to. Each has been trafficked; each has become a gang's code word, stolen from humanity. Democracy is a proposal (rarely realized) about decision-making; it has little to do with election campaigns. Its promise is that political decisions be made after, and in the light of, consultation with the governed. This is dependent upon the governed being adequately informed about the issues in question, and upon the decision-makers having the capacity and will to listen and take account of what they have heard. Democracy should not be confused with the "freedom" of binary choices, the publication of opinion polls, or the crowding of people into statistics. These are its pretense.

Today the fundamental decisions, which effect the unnecessary pain increasingly suffered across the planet, are being made unilaterally without any open consultation or participation.

For instance, how many U.S. citizens, if consulted, would have said Yes to George W. Bush's withdrawal from the Kyoto Protocol over the carbon-dioxide greenhouse effect, which is already provoking disastrous floods in many places and threatens, within the next twenty-five years, far worse disasters?

It is a little more than a century ago that Dvořák composed his *Symphony from the New World*. He wrote it while directing the National Conservatory of Music in New York, and the writing of it inspired him to compose, eighteen months later, still in New York, his sublime *Cello Concerto*. In the symphony, the horizons and rolling hills of his native Bohemia become the promises of the New

World. Not grandiloquent but loud and continuing, for they correspond to the longings of those without power, of those who are wrongly called simple, of those the U.S. Constitution addressed in 1787.

I know of no other work of art that expresses so directly and yet so toughly (Dvořák was the son of a peasant, and his father once dreamed of his becoming a butcher) the beliefs that inspired generation after generation of migrants who became U.S. citizens.

For Dvořák the force of these beliefs was inseparable from a kind of tenderness, a respect for life such as can be found intimately among the governed (as distinct from the governors) everywhere. And it was in this spirit that the symphony was publicly received when it was first performed at Carnegie Hall on December 16, 1893.

Dvořák was asked what he thought about the future of American music, and he recommended that U.S. composers listen to the music of the Indians and blacks. The *Symphony from the New World* expressed a hopefulness without frontiers which, paradoxically, is welcoming because centered on an idea of home. A utopian paradox.

Today the power of the same country that inspired such hopes has fallen into the hands of a coterie of fanatical (wanting to limit everything except the power of capital), ignorant (recognizing only the reality of their own firepower), hypocritical (two measures for all ethical judgments, one for us and another for them), and ruthless B-52 plotters. How did this happen? The question is rhetorical, for there is no single answer, and it is idle, for no answer will dent their power yet. But to ask it in this way in the night reveals the enormity of what has happened.

The political mechanism of the new tyranny, although it needs highly sophisticated technology in order to function, is starkly simple. Usurp the words "democracy," "freedom," etc. Impose—whatever the disasters—the new profit-making and impoverishing economic chaos everywhere. Insure that all frontiers are one-way: open to the tyranny, closed to others. And eliminate every opposition by calling it terrorist.

No, I have not forgotten the couple who threw themselves from one of the twin towers instead of being burned to death separately.

There is a toylike object which costs as little as $3 to manufacture and which is also incontestably terrorist. It is called the antipersonnel mine.

Once launched, it is impossible to know who these mines will mutilate or kill, or when they will do so. There are over 100 million lying on, or hidden in, the earth at this moment. The majority of victims have been and will be civilians.

The antipersonnel mine is meant to mutilate rather than kill. Its aim is to make cripples, and it is made with shrapnel, which, it is planned, will prolong the victim's medical treatment and render it more difficult. Most survivors have to undergo eight or nine surgical operations. Every month, as of now, 2,000 civilians somewhere are maimed or killed by these mines.

The description "antipersonnel" is linguistically murderous. Personnel are anonymous, nameless, without gender or age. "Personnel" is the opposite of "people." As a term it ignores blood, limbs, pain, amputations, intimacy, and love. It abstracts totally. This is how the two words when joined to an explosive become terrorist.

The new tyranny, like other recent ones, depends, to a large degree, on a systematic abuse of language. Together we have to reclaim our hijacked words and reject the tyranny's nefarious euphemisms; if we do not, we will be left with only the word "shame."

Not a simple task, for most of its official discourse is pictorial, associative, evasive, full of innuendos. Few things are said in black and white. Both military and economic strategists now realize that the media play a crucial role, not so much in defeating the current enemy as in foreclosing and preventing mutiny, protests, or desertion. Any tyranny's manipulation of the media is an index of its fears. The present one lives in fear of the world's desperation. A fear so deep that the adjective "desperate," except when it means dangerous, is never used.

Without money each daily human need becomes a pain.

Those who have filched power—and they are not all in office, so they reckon on a continuity of that power beyond presidential elections—pretend to be saving the world and offering its population the chance to become their clients. The world consumer is sacred. What they don't add is that consumers only matter because they generate profit, which is the only thing that is really sacred. This sleight of hand leads us to the crux.

The claim to be saving the world masks the plotter's assumption that a large part of the world, including most of the continent of Africa and a considerable part of South America, is irredeemable. In fact, every corner that cannot be part of their center is irredeemable. And such a conclusion follows inevitably from the dogma that the only salvation is money and the only global future is the one their priorities insist upon, priorities which, with false names given to them, are in reality nothing more or less than their benefits.

Those who have different visions or hopes for the world, along with those who cannot buy and who survive from day to day, are backward relics from another age or, when they resist, either peacefully or with arms, terrorists. They

are feared as harbingers of death, carriers of disease or insurrection.

When they have been "downsized," the tyranny, in its naïveté, assumes the world will be unified. It needs its fantasy of a happy ending. A fantasy which in reality will be its undoing.

Every form of contestation against this tyranny is comprehensible. Dialogue with it is impossible. For us to live and die properly, things have to be named properly. Let us reclaim our words.

[Interrogation]

GIVE 'EM HELEN

From a January 6 exchange between White House Press Secretary Ari Fleischer and Helen Thomas, a columnist for Hearst Newspapers. Thomas, who is eighty-two years old, has been covering the White House for forty-two years.

ARI FLEISCHER: Good afternoon and Happy New Year to everybody. The president began his day with an intelligence briefing, followed by an FBI briefing. Then he had a series of policy briefings. And this afternoon, the president will look forward to a Cabinet meeting where the president will discuss with members of his Cabinet his agenda for the year. The president is going to focus on economic growth, making America a more compassionate country, and providing for the security of our nation abroad and on the home front.

And with that, I'm more than happy to take your questions. Helen.

HELEN THOMAS: At the earlier briefing, Ari, you said that the president deplored the taking of innocent lives. Does that apply to all innocent lives in the world? And I have a follow-up.

FLEISCHER: I refer specifically to a horrible terrorist attack on Tel Aviv that killed scores and wounded hundreds. And the president, as he said in his statement yesterday, deplores in the strongest terms the taking of those lives and the wounding of those people, innocents in Israel.

THOMAS: My follow-up is, why does he want to drop bombs on innocent Iraqis?

FLEISCHER: Helen, the question is how to protect Americans, and our allies and friends—

THOMAS: They're not attacking you.

FLEISCHER: —from a country—

THOMAS: Have they laid a glove on you or on the United States, the Iraqis, in eleven years?

FLEISCHER: I guess you have forgotten about the Americans who were killed in the first Gulf War as a result of Saddam Hussein's aggression then.

THOMAS: Is this revenge, eleven years of revenge?

FLEISCHER: Helen, I think you know very well that the president's position is that he wants to avert war, and that the president has asked the United Nations to go into Iraq to help with the purpose of averting war.

THOMAS: Would the president attack innocent Iraqis?

FLEISCHER: The president wants to make certain that he can defend our country, defend our interests, defend the region, and make certain that American lives are not lost.

THOMAS: And he thinks they are a threat to us?

FLEISCHER: There is no question that the president thinks that Iraq is a threat to the United States.

THOMAS: The Iraqi people?

FLEISCHER: The Iraqi people are represented by their government. If there was regime change, the Iraqi—

THOMAS: So they will be vulnerable?

FLEISCHER: Actually, the president has made it

[Knockoffs]

WE'VE CREATED A MUENSTER

The following are titles of books published in China last year. The books were inspired by the success of Who Moved My Cheese? *by Spencer Johnson, which sold 1.6 million copies in China despite the fact that most Chinese have never tasted cheese. Translated from the Mandarin by Crystyl Mo.*

Whose Cheese Should I Move? by He Jun
Can I Move Your Cheese? by Chen Tong
Who Dares to Move My Cheese? by Kang Yanning
I Don't Bother to Move Your Cheese, by Wu Yizhou
Agitating, Alluring Cheese, by Lian Yuming
No One Can Move My Cheese! The New Allegory of Cheese, The New Enlightenment of Allegory, by Zhang Xiaofeng
Make the Cheese by Yourself! by Dong Huangfu
A Piece of Cheese: Reading World Famous Fairy Tales with Mom, by Yi Su
Management Advice 52 from the Cheese, by Fang Yuan
No More Cheese! by Lin Zhanxian
Chinese People Eat Cheese?—Who Took My Meat Bun? by Chuan Xiang

every [illegible] that he [illegible] with the people of [illegible]. That's why the American police [illegible] police [illegible] there [illegible] the people [illegible].

[illegible]: That's a decision for them to make, isn't it? It's their country.

[illegible]: Helen, if you recall, that the people of [illegible] as a practical matter dictate [illegible] their destiny. I don't think [illegible] what happened [illegible].

[illegible]: I think many countries don't have people [illegible] the decision—including [illegible]

[Translation]

DIS COME VEX EVERIBODI

From a United Nations translation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights into Nigerian Pidgin English, a mixed language drawing from English and several African languages. The United Nations published the Universal Declaration in 360 languages.

Dem too recognize say human beings get dia natural gift, dey with us and right way go make all of us friendly with each other, so tay, we all come be like one family. So di be di foundation of our freedom and peace wey de for di whole world.

Since e be like say dem no see our right since time and dem come de do dem as dem like, dis come make people de behave like say dem be animals, dis come vex everibodi, so tay, dem come tell say every human being must to get their freedom, wey go make dem talk any tin say dem like di right time and wen dem de talk, dem no go fear to talk. Na di be di beta time wey all common people want.

Now therefore, dis meeting now come talk say dis universal declaration of human rights tell say na im be di achievement wey all di people and all di nation of di world achieve, sake for say, every person and every ting wey dey for our society must to know all di right and make dem keep am for their mind every time. Dem must to make sure say dem teach everibodi di right and dem must know am, so tay, dem go help promote di to get for di right and freedom of all di people of di kontri dem de control.

Every human being, na im dem born free and dem de equal for dignity and di right wey we get as human beings. Good come give us beta sense wey we de take tink well, well and beta

mind, make for dis we must to treat each other like brodas and sista.

Every one na im be entitle to all di rights and freedom wey dey for dis small book, no mata di kind language wey person dey speak, di kontri wey one come from, di kind religion wey one de do, di kind ting wey one dey tink, di kind person wey one be, di how dem take born one, di kind place wey one come from, di kind property wey one get or weda you be man or woman.

Dem tell say nobodi must to hold di other one like slave or make am be for say dem no go gree at all, at all, no mata how e be.

Dem no go gree make anoda person moles anoda one, make e treat am like say na animal or make person punish anoda person as e like.

Every one na im be, di same for law, no mata wetin di person be or di kind person e be. Di law of our kontri must to make sure say notin happen to am. Di law must to make sure say dem treat everibodi di same, so tay all dis tings we de talk about human right, nobodi go against am, or gada people to go against am.

Dem must not arrest anybodi as dem like or lock am up for one cell or place, so tay nobodi no go scatter am, or force am make e comot im kontri go live for anoda kontri for fear say dem go arrest or kill am for im own kontri.

If comot or anybodi say person do bad, and dem come carry am go court, nobodi fit talk say dat person do bad until say dem judge well well so tay mago mago no de, na dat time dem fit talk say di person na really bad person and e do time we make dem decide of am bring am come court. Di person must to get people wey go defend am before dem fit talk say e do di bad ting wey dem say e do.

Everione naim get right to go anywhere wey e wan go, weda na to go see im friend o, or to go anoda town o, or to travel comot for where e de live to anoda place. Dat na im own palava.

If two people wan marry, so far di two people free say dem like demselves, dem free to marry.

Everione naim get right to tink any ting e like, do as e like or do as im mind tell am to do, do di kind religion e wan do. E fit do dis by im self or make nobodi know or with other people, make everibodi know.

Everione get right make e join any group wey come toge ther, say dem wan do something or say dem wan de hold meeting, so far nobi wetin go bring kata kata, peace must to de.

Naim be say na di people go de vote for di people wey dem want make e rule dem. Di ting be say, everibodi get right to vote o, so far you don reach di age to vote for di kontri.

Everione naim get right say dem wan rest and enjoy demself and also dem get right to work for di kind time wey good for dem, wey



COURTESY LESLIE TONKONOW ARTWORKS + PROJECTS, NEW YORK CITY, AND WEATHERSPOON ART MUSEUM, GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA

Saddlebacked, *by Amy Cutler. Her work is currently on exhibit at the Walker Art Center, in Minneapolis.*

no go give dem wahala at all o, and wen dem work for some time, dem get right say dem wan go rest for some time. Dat time wey dem de rest, dem must to dey get their salary o.

Everione naim get right say dem must to live well, well, wey e be say dem no de sick anyhow, say their bodi de kampe and their family own too. And if dem no get work or dem sick or dem lose wife or husband or dem don old or dem no fit do anyting, dem get everi right, say goment must to look after dem and make dem live well, well like everi other person wey all im bodi correct.

Everi mama and pickin get right say make dem take care of dem well, well and make people helep dem anytime dem need helep. Everi pickin wey dem born, weda di papa marry di mama or di papa and mama no marry dem-self, get right say make dem take care of dem and protect dem well, well.

Everione naim get duty to im society wey e de live, for am to make sure say e develop im-self well, well.

When we de use our rights and freedom, wey we don dey talk about since, we fit use am as dem talk, so fa say, we no use am do anyting wey go, go against di law of di society. Dis na because na dis law be guarantee for di rights and freedom wey other people get.

All dis rights and freedom we get, we must

to use dem, as dem talk say make we use dem, no be say make we go do as dem, no be say make we go do as dem say make we no do.

Nothing for dis small book wey we talk about human right so, talk say any kontri, person or people get any right to do something wey e go destroy all dis rights we dey talk about since.

[Customer Service]

TOTO RECALL?

From an October email exchange between Holger Turck and EMI Music in Germany. Translated from the German by Ben Ewing.

Dear Sir or Madam,

Yesterday I purchased the copy-protected TOTO CD "Through the Looking Glass." The reverse side reads: "It is designed to be compatible with CD audioplayers, DVD players and PC-OS, MS Windows 95, Pentium II 233 MHz 64MB RAM or higher." This statement is definitely false.

- In reality, only tracks 1–8 are playable in my DVD player. I don't own an ordinary CD player anymore, making this CD worthless.
- In reality, my Macintosh plays only tracks 1–7. Result: the CD is worthless.
- In reality, my PC would play the CD only if I were to use the software found on the CD itself. I am very careful when selecting the software that I install on my computer, and I refuse to be coerced into using proprietary software. As a result, this CD is worthless.

This is all the more regrettable, as I am a dedicated fan of the group TOTO and own—among other items—all of their albums. It's a pity that YOU have prevented me from being able to add their most recent work to my collection.

You altogether ignore the simple fact that every purchaser is—by law—allowed to make a copy of his purchased CD. Your behavior is altogether illegal. As a result, I will not purchase another CD that is outfitted with copy-protection from your firm or from any other.

How do you plan to win me back as a customer in the future?

Sincerely,
Holger Turck

Dear Mr. Turck,

We will spare ourselves the trouble of addressing those observations in your email which are obviously uninformed. Simply realize: more than 250 million blank, recordable discs and tapes were sold and used this year, in comparison to 213 million prerecorded albums. Even without formal study in economics, it should be clear to anyone reading this that the music industry cannot continue to exist if the trend holds. The widespread copying of prerecorded audio material via the burning of CD-Rs can only be countered one way: namely, copy protection. We fear, however, that all these facts will not interest you in the slightest, as these measures will herald the end of free music, which surely won't please you at all.

Should you legitimately have a playback problem with the CD that you complained about, we would ask that you specify the exact CD player model for us. The scenario you put forth—multiple players failing to play the CD—can only be the stuff of fairy tales, given our experiences.

In the event that you plan to protest future releases of copy-protected CDs, we can assure you that it is only a matter of months until more or less every CD released worldwide will include copy protection. To that end, we will do everything in our power, whether you like it or not.

Sincerely,
Your EMI Team

[Bayou Justice]

THE BIG SLEAZY

From transcripts of telephone conversations obtained by the FBI and presented as evidence in a lawsuit filed last year against Louisiana district-court judge Ronald D. Bodenheimer, who owns a marina in New Orleans, and Curley J. Chewning. Bodenheimer is accused of conspiring to plant narcotics in the truck of an FBI informant who had made complaints about the marina. The conversations took place between October 2001 and April 2002. Pearl Cato is a marina employee, and Danny DeNoux is a private investigator.

JUDGE RONALD D. BODENHEIMER: He's taking pictures every night. Tell him, if he's got any guts, tell him this: say, "If you got any guts, call Ronnie and talk to him if you got the guts." Just tell him that. Tell him, "You ain't man enough to call Ronnie."

PEARL CATO: You'd tell him something?

BODENHEIMER: Oooh, I'll crucify him.

CATO: Yeah, well, that's what I'll tell him, then.

BODENHEIMER: Yeah, tell him, "You ain't man enough to call Ronnie." Say, "When Ronnie comes out here, you run like a little scared coward." In the meantime, tell, uh, tell the customers you trust to speed when they pass by his house. That'll piss him off.



THE AUTHORS



THE EDITOR

For more than 200 years, the Bill of Rights has stood as a wall between governmental abuse and the rights of a free people. But John Ashcroft, driven by a radical ideology and shamelessly using the events of September 11, 2001 as a subterfuge, has systematically been dismantling that wall.

Today, the government can get a secret warrant to search your home without telling you until long afterwards. Today, the government can monitor your Internet use, read your emails, examine your online purchases with minimal judicial oversight. Today, you can be detained without access to a lawyer, without being charged with a crime. Today, John Ashcroft has authorized the FBI to monitor your political activities, to send agents into your house of worship. We can only guess what tomorrow will bring.

The American Civil Liberties Union is leading the fight to protect your rights, and to stop the Ashcroft assault on our civil liberties. Isn't that your fight too?

ACLU
AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION

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www.aclu.org

Illustration courtesy of Library of Congress



Shawangunk Correctional Facility—Wallkill, NY, *by Sandow Birk, is currently on display at the Samuel Dorsky Museum of Art, State University of New York, New Paltz.*

CATO: Yeah. Whatever it takes.

BODENHEIMER: And he can take pictures of you speeding. Nobody can give you a ticket based upon what his camera shows.

CATO: Right.

BODENHEIMER: Or do what I do when you leave there. When I'm pissed off at him, I just blow the horn in front of his house.

CATO: Oh man—he just pisses me off.

BODENHEIMER: But when he comes back, fuss at him again. Keep fighting about little stuff—that way he'll forget about the big stuff. We'll work it out, don't worry about it. But in the meantime, you know, aggravate the little prick as much as you can.

CATO: You got it, babe.

* * *

CATO: What's the matter?

BODENHEIMER: That boy should've realized, you know, when you piss me off . . . [*Laughs*]

CATO: Well, you know, he's really stupid for constantly calling people like that. I mean, you talking about the government for one.

BODENHEIMER: Right. The only reason I really haven't done something before this is because he's been like a fucking splinter.

CATO: Right.

BODENHEIMER: I been fighting guys with swords, and he's a splinter. Well, the splinter just pissed me off [*laughing*], so fuck the swords—I'm going after the splinter.

CATO: Hey, I hear you.

BODENHEIMER: You know, this boy—the sad part about it, he ain't got a shot. He ain't got a chance. You know, he ain't gonna know what's hit him.

* * *

BODENHEIMER: We gotta do something with that kid, you know. This guy's gonna make a complaint to the fucking Feds. He's gonna go fucking ape shit. Way before this shit happened, when we thought he was just a

regular guy, when we thought he was just a regular guy, they put a fucking fish in his mailbox, and let it decay and stink. Motherfucker had the FBI, fucking Postal Inspectors—I mean, he just sits on the phone and fucking calls people.

DANNY DENOUX: I think somebody ought to kick the fuck out of him.

BODENHEIMER: Nah, I want him hurt worse than that.

DENOUX: Then you just fuck it. I'll just put the crack in the fucking car.

BODENHEIMER: How you gonna get it in there?

DENOUX: He keeps his car locked all the time?

BODENHEIMER: Sure. And when he parks at work, it's parked inside.

DENOUX: Well, let me ask you a question: does he have an alarm on it?

BODENHEIMER: That I don't know.

DENOUX: Well, you just follow him from work and see where he goes, and see if he clicks on an alarm or not. And if he doesn't, then just use a Slim-Jim and put it in there.

BODENHEIMER: He's got fucking cameras on his house watching his car.

DENOUX: I'm talking about when he stops and gets some drinks, after you follow him from work.

***

CURLEY J. CHEWNING: Hello?

BODENHEIMER: What's up, baby?

CHEWNING: Hey, Ron. What's up?

BODENHEIMER: Not much, baby. I just wanted to tell you why I wasn't out there, and I'm going to see you as soon as I can.

CHEWNING: Yeah. I passed over there by my boy's, just kinda scoping things out, you know. So right now, Ronnie, I'm trying to get the product.

BODENHEIMER: Trying to get what?

CHEWNING: That's what I need—the product that I need.

BODENHEIMER: All right. And how much notice will I have?

CHEWNING: Uh, I'll let you know like the day before. Is that enough?

BODENHEIMER: Yeah, that's good. All right, baby.

***

CHEWNING: Hello?

BODENHEIMER: Hey, baby, what you doing?

CHEWNING: Hey, baby, I was just thinking about you.

BODENHEIMER: What you got, baby?

CHEWNING: I got some interesting news, you gonna like this. I tried to do that thing yesterday, but, uh, we couldn't hook up, me and him.

BODENHEIMER: Okay.

CHEWNING: He had something he had to go do and whatever.

BODENHEIMER: All right.

CHEWNING: Seven o'clock tomorrow night, you know, it's all gonna be good with that, you know, because I'm going to be in the truck.

BODENHEIMER: Give me a call when you're finished.

CHEWNING: All right.

BODENHEIMER: You know what this is? It's like a knife fight while dancing.

CHEWNING: [*Laughs*] All right, baby, I'll call you tomorrow night after all this is over. Okay, bye.

BODENHEIMER: Bye-bye.

[Challenge]

THANE IN THE ASS

The following letter was written last October by Stuart Usher, a Scottish aristocrat, and sent to Alistair Campbell, chairman of Brodies WS, an Edinburgh law firm. Usher, who now manages a burger stand, contends that Brodies is responsible for the loss of his family fortune, including his 6,500-acre estate in the Borders, and is suing the firm for $146,000,000. Usher claims that in Scotland it is still legal to settle disputes by combat.

Sir,

You have not responded to my challenge to Trial by Combat within the fourteen days stipulated in my letter to you dated 5/10/2002.

I therefore regard you as a coward and shall publicise this fact to all I meet, as per that letter.

I also re-issue my challenge to you to meet me in Trial by Combat on the following conditions:

1. Weapons: Fists (Bare)

2. Mode: Boxing (Queensberry Rules) and Wrestling

3. Venue: Princes Street Gardens

4. Time: Trial by Combat to commence on the firing of the one o'clock gun (Mons Meg) on Edinburgh Castle

5. Date: Saturday 16th November 2002

6. Prizes:

6.1 My shotgun

6.2 One million pounds sterling

As I am not worth more than a few pounds (largely thanks to the firm of which you are the chairman, Brodies WS), I shall pay you (personally) out of the sum on which my court case is based (£365 million) in the unlikely event of your prevailing against me. If the police have not returned my shotgun at the time of the

Trial by Combat, you will have to collect it from them in the (again) unlikely event of your prevailing against me.

In the likely event of my prevailing against you, I require you to pay me the one million pounds sterling within one month of my victory over you. My information is that you are, not surprisingly, a very wealthy man and well able to pay the £1 million. Should my information be incorrect I expect you to liquidate all your personal assets (with the exception of the clothes and shoes you stand in) and pay the proceeds to me. If you do this in good faith I shall let you off whatever the shortfall might be. You will then get a taste of the poverty which my family and I have had to endure these past few years and have plenty of time to rue the day you commenced your career with Brodies of Edinburgh WS.

Finally I would be obliged if you would confirm or deny (unequivocally) that the firm of which you are the Chairman (Brodies WS) was founded by the successor(s) of the infamous Deacon Brodie, the grave robber and murderer by night and the respectable Deacon of Edinburgh by day. This robber and murderer was hung in the late eighteenth century. I was informed by an Edinburgh resident that the firm of which you are the Chairman (Brodies WS) was founded by the successor(s) of the infamous Deacon Brodie, hence my inquiry.

Yours with sincerity and contempt,
Stuart Usher

[Lacunae]

UNDEREXPOSED

From a list of subjects of film-footage requests submitted to various image archives over the past two years; the requests were made by researchers, television and film producers, and teachers. The list was compiled by Williams Cole, a New York–based documentary producer.

Prehistoric Times
Socrates
Moses parting the Red Sea
Jesus Christ (footage and photographs)
Columbus discovering America
Remains of Noah's Ark
Captain Cook landing in Australia
George Washington crossing the Delaware
The *Titanic* sinking
Slaves working in the fields
Harriet Tubman's Underground Railroad
Founding Fathers signing the Declaration of Independence
The Irish Potato Famine
Lewis Carroll, reading from his work
Jack the Ripper, from around the time of the murders
Hitler in his bunker
Battle of Flodden (1513)
Battle of Waterloo
First hot-air balloon ascension (1783)
The Industrial Revolution, especially trains (circa 1830)
The American Revolution
U.S. Civil War, especially Jackson, Miss.
People with skin complaints being burned at the stake
Clinton and Lewinsky having sexual relations
First lunar landing, shot from the moon

[Manifesto]

RED SQUARES

From "Give a Party for the Party," a pamphlet produced by the New York State branch of the American Communist Party and distributed in the 1930s. David Engerman, a professor of history at Brandeis University, found the pamphlet in 2001.

Let's figure out just what we're trying to do. Raise money? Recruit? How much do we have to raise? What admission can we charge figuring on what we're selling or giving away inside?

PUBLICITY

Mimeograph invitations tracing cartoons from the *Daily Worker*, *New Masses*, etc. Tickets should be printed immediately. The two-color stop system is recommended. Don't be afraid of news releases. ALL MATERIAL MUST BEAR A UNION LABEL.

HOUSE

As to place: first choice, your own headquarters; second, use of an apartment, penthouse, yard; third, go hire a hall. Don't take too large a place; better have it too small than too spacious. Also take something requiring minimum decoration. When you must decorate use most brains and least cash. For example, green branches, Spanish shawls, or other things you can borrow. Have a "guest book" to register names and addresses.



May Day at Girls Preparatory School, Chattanooga, Tennessee," by Lauren Greenfield, from her book Girl Culture, *published in cember by Chronicle Books.*

This makes a mailing list afterward. Provide plenty of ashtrays—LARGE PLATES WILL DO.

ENTERTAINMENT

Dancing? A pianist for up to fifty. Three pieces for a hundred, four for two hundred. Call us for information on union contractors. Where there is no band or piano, you can get portable organs, a banjoist, guitarist. If you use none of these, a radio or "play back" phonograph will do.

KITCHEN

Shop in advance. Last-minute purchases from local delicatessens are costly. Keep things simple but attractive. "Eye appeal" is important. Cutting bread extra thin, coloring in punches, tiny pretzels, colored paper tablecloths and napkins, are good hints. Make all preparations BEFORE THE PARTY STARTS. Get your ice before the iceman closes up. Bring an ice pick. Keep trays with food and drink in circulation; it doubles sales. Mayonnaise is cheaper and will do instead of butter.

IDEA DEPARTMENT

Speech Puzzle: Cut out Mike Gold's column, an editorial from the *Worker*, or any political speech. Cut it in fairly small, irregular pieces and place it in an envelope. Do the same with as many other copies as you need. Divide your party into groups. The first group putting it together reads it out loud and wins a prize. YOU MAY CHARGE A SMALL ENTRY FEE OF EACH "TEAM."

Bike Ride: Place a broomstick on two chairs. Lay a short length of cord over the back of each chair. The contestants balance themselves on the broomstick, feet off the ground, and go through the motions of riding a bicycle. Give them a short stick or cane and have them remove pieces of string while riding. Start over if they topple off. TIME THEM. CONTESTANT COMPLETING STUNT IN SHORTEST TIME WINS.

Pin the Name: Pin the name of a famous or infamous character on the back of each guest as he enters. He must try to guess who he is by the reactions of the others. If they don't guess, play it as Twenty Questions with prizes for the quickest, small fines for the slowest. Arrange pairs such as Charlie McCarthy and Edgar Bergen, Hitler and

Mussolini. This also calls for impromptu skits. TO IT ADD REFRESHMENTS, DANCING, MIX WELL AND DESERT!

Who Are They? Cut out pictures of leading Party members, recent events, etc. Pass them around, providing guests with pencils and paper. The pictures are numbered and shown for a limited time. THE ONE GIVING THE MOST CORRECT TITLES WINS.

[Pep Talk]

BIG BROTHER'S LITTLE HELPER

Lawsuit pending. Pfizer Inc. sued the Pharmaceutical companies Pfizer and Warner-Lambert in 1996 and unsealed last year. The plaintiff, David P. Franklin, was employed by Parke-Davis (a division of Warner-Lambert, which was acquired by Pfizer in 2000) to act as a "medical liaison" between the pharmaceutical company and physicians. The following comments, as recalled by Franklin, were made by John Ford, senior marketing executive for Parke-Davis. Neurontin has been approved by the FDA to be used as adjunctive therapy (in conjunction with other medications) for the treatment of epilepsy only; 80 percent of Neurontin prescriptions are for unapproved uses.

I want you out there every day selling Neurontin. Look, this isn't just me . . . Neurontin is more profitable than Accupril so we need to focus on Neurontin. We all know Neurontin's not growing for adjunctive therapy—besides, that's not where the money is. Pain management, now that's money. Monotherapy, that's money. We don't want to share these patients with everybody, we want them on Neurontin only. We want their whole drug budget—not a quarter, not half—the whole thing. We can't wait for them to ask, we need to get out there and tell them up front. That's where we need you, holding them hand and whispering in their ear: Neurontin for pain, Neurontin for everything. I don't want to see a single patient coming off Neurontin before they've been up to at least 4,800 milligrams a day. I don't want to hear that safety crap, either. Have you tried Neurontin? Every one of you should take one just to see there's nothing. It's a great drug!

Grab Bag: Buy small articles at the five-and-dime (watch out for a red face as a result of inadvertently purchasing goods made in Germany, Italy, or Japan) and pamphlets. Wrap attractively, put them in bag, charge a nominal price (insuring a small profit), and let everybody grab. It is sometimes a good idea to include one more expensive prize and let it be known. This added incentive justifies raising the price a trifle.

Conventions: You pick your own kind of convention—we will supply one example to give you an idea. Suppose this is one on non-intervention in Spain. One guest is made chairman. Another is Chamberlain, another Leon Blum, another Mussolini, etc. Guests are addressed only by their assumed names and speak in character. A clever gathering can do wonders in political satire. IT'S GRAND FUN.

Fortune Gags: Draw a circle about three feet in diameter. Divide it into eight or twelve segments. In each one write a "fortune." "Long Life," "Marriage," "Party Functionary," "Commissar of Millinery, Comes the Revolution," "Love," etc. Put an empty ginger-ale bottle in the center. Guests spin the bottle, and where the neck points there lies their fortune.

Float the Saucer: Float a saucer in a tub of water. Have a dollar's worth of pennies on hand. Guests buy the pennies and, standing three or four feet away (farther if they are too good), toss them at the saucer. Three out of five in the saucer rate a small prize. THE ONES IN THE TUB BELONG TO THE HOUSE.

Gadgets: Buy darts from your stationer's sporting-goods or department store. Draw a picture of Hitler, Mussolini, Hague, or another Girdleresque pest. Put it on a piece of soft board with thumbtacks. SIX THROWS FOR A NICKEL AND A PRIZE IF YOU PASTE HAGUE IN THE PANTS OR TROTSKY IN THE EYE.

HINTS

If possible have separate women's and men's rooms; supply these with rolls of paper towels and a basket for discarded ones. Don't let people "come in to look around," "find someone they are meeting," or other excuses. See to it your own members are on hand to mill around early. A CROWD GATHERS A CROWD, AND PEOPLE SHY AWAY FROM AN EMPTY ROOM. Pour your beer in the center of the glass not down the inside. POURING IN THE MIDDLE GIVES MORE FOAM AND LESS LIQUID—STRETCHES EACH BARREL FURTHER.

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ntered on its magnificent fortified l at the lucrative crossroads of e and Asia, Byzantium was a crux ilizations; a colossus that bestrode ntinents; a crucible where peoples, es, and ideas met and melded to a world at once eastern and westGreek and Latin, classical and tian.

was truly a fulcrum of world histo-



© Corel Stock Photo Library

Hagia Sophia, Istanbul (Constantinople), Turkey

Byzantium's spiritual grandeur and mystical vision of humanity, God, and the cosmos can still be glimpsed in the awesome, soaring dome of the Hagia Sophia—100 feet across and tall enough to hold a modern 17-story building—in the luminous mosaics of San Vitale at Ravenna, Italy, and in countless Orthodox churches on several continents.

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Offer Good Through April 25, 2003



"Sink with Fountain Pictures, Svir Stroi Orphanage," by Misty Keasler, is currently on display at Women & Their Works Gallery, in Austin, Texas.

[Fiction]

I LOOK RUDIMENTARY

From The Only Good Thing Anyone Has Ever Done, *a novel by Sandra Newman, to be published by HarperCollins in June 2003.*

"This Isn't My House and You Aren't My Parents"

1 My name is Chrysalis Moffat.
1.1 I was born in Peru.
1.2 When I was three, I was brought to the United States.
1.3 Here I was adopted by rich white people.
1.4 Insofar as that is possible, I became just like them.

2 I am brown, and my face looks like a South American mask because my parents were South American Indians.
2.1 My body, too, is foreshortened, plump; next to Anglos, I look rudimentary.
2.2 P.C. people make a point of saying I'm beautiful, even to my face.

3 Although I am so brown, I give an impression of whiteness.
3.1 People often remember me wearing white clothes when I was not wearing white clothes.
3.2 They also think my surname is White.
3.3 It's a supernatural phenomenon, I think.

4 My father gave me the name Chrysalis.
4.1 He was a biochemist.

DISCUSS

No one in my family is interesting or praiseworthy; only my father. Born in rural poverty to alcoholic parents, he worked his way through Berkeley, received his Ph.D., and was expected to have a brilliant research career in microbiology. Instead of pursuing it, however, he volunteered for Vietnam.

My father fought in Vietnam for four years.

Although he would refer to the evils of that war, this was more polite, I believe, than sincere. Nor did he seem—though this must surely have been the case—to have fallen in love with jungles, Technicolor murder, freewheelingness, to love the smell of napalm in the morning. In all he did, he was rather the simple, honest man. He was, preeminently, a man who loved dogs.

He got down on the floor and rolled with dogs; he swung children round and round by the hands, playing "airplane." Mom and Dad were always laughing behind their bedroom door when we were very small.

You got the sense that, when all else failed and the world had weakened utterly, succumbing to corruption and mean-spirited trivia, still there would be Father, taller than everyone else and irreducibly blond.

He looked like John Wayne.

5 On the drive to my Uncle Jerry's, we used to pass my father's work.
5.1 It was called BSI: Something Something Institute.
5.2 It had a chicken-wire fence and a checkpoint hut with an orange barrier.
5.3 No buildings were visible from the road, only set-piece maples.
5.4 Eddie and I would try to get the guard to wave.
5.5 Mom would sing out, "Hello, Bull Shit Incorporated!"

6 Early on, we realized there was something about Dad's work.
6.1 He was always going to Chile or Guatemala, conducting studies.
6.2 We couldn't know what he studied; that was a state secret.
6.3 The date of his return was likewise secret.
6.4 Where in Chile, too.

FATHER: ELEMENTARY

A soldierly, upright:
he strode, and grinned, and gave
manly firm handshakes.
A is for Astronaut, like them,
like many Army men, he was
B permanently boyish,
brash, bluff, broad-shouldered
like a B-movie hero.
Or,
just,
BIG.
Moving on to
C he was a cowboy.

[Advice]

SWEET TRANSVESTITE

From "Melanie Speaks!" an audio guide for transsexuals on developing a female voice, by Melanie Anne Phillips.

One of the dead giveaways that you're masculine is the wrong vocabulary. One word that men use more than women is "want." Men want. Women don't "want" things, they "like" things. They "would like" things. A guy will go up to the little speaker box at a fast food restaurant and say, "I want a Big Mac," whereas a woman will say, "I'd like a small salad please."

Men have power in our society. They are in control. Women are still generally brought up believing that they have less power and less control over their own lives. So when a man says he "needs" to do something, he means "I have a goal, a purpose. It is a requirement." While a man "needs" to do something, a woman feels that she "should" do something. Because a woman has a tendency to feel that she's not in control of achieving goals. She may not even be able to set the goals in her life, and therefore if she wants something to happen, she "should" do it. It has more of a sense of obligation than a sense of instigation, and that is a very big difference in the mental attitudes of men and women.

Women can have moods, but they can't have opinions. For example, whereas a man would say, "I'm going to do this," a woman would say, "I was thinking that I ought to do this," meaning "I'm inclined to, but if you have any objections I'll reconsider."

Now, I know this is anathema to feminism, but this is not about how to break stereotypes, it's about how to become one. For feminizing your voice, stay away from those assertive words and go with the "kinda-sorta" words, and words that don't have command value to them, and you will find that your voice will be considered a lot more feminine.

A cracker born in Cody, Texas.
"Howdy, podner, I'm headin' out t'the corral," he'd go, corny for us kids.
We'd cackle,
cry, capsize,
curl up with glee
because he was never there
Conspicuous by his absence.
"Comin' home real soon, chicken—"
D Now he's dead.

[Specialties]

HE'S GOT THE WHOLE WORLD

The following are among the 1,529 purviews of the 4,015 patron saints, as indexed by the Catholic Community Forum website.

abandoned people
advertising
altar boys
art dealers
asses
attacks by dogs
bakers of holy wafers
bald people
bar staff
black people
brigands
bulimics
Cajuns
carnival workers
champagne bottlers
chicken farmers
Chilean army
chivalry
comedians
conquistadors
courtiers
dairymaids
difficult situations
disappointing children
dog fanciers
enemies of religion
eruptions of Mt. Etna
excluded people
expeditious solutions
fiddlers
file makers
fishmongers
French air crews
French monarchs
girls from rural areas
hemorrhoids
horned animals
insect bites
invincible people
Italian architects
jugglers
Mexican young people
old maids
open sores
oversleeping
parents of large families
pawnbrokers
people who are unattractive
people who fight against Communism
perfumeries
procrastination
rain, against
rain, for
Roman housewives
servants who broke masters' property
silence
Spanish poets
spelunkers
state schools
twitching
United States Army Special Forces
unjustly lost lawsuits
venereal disease
writers for television

But these big heads that watch over our childish night skies, a night-light left on to the end of time in a darkened bedroom;
indecipherable and throbbing
nauseous
headachy
with its lolling top-heavy heap of cheap significance.

AT THE DINNER TABLE: 1977

Dad looks like John Wayne. He has grown his hair out of its familiar crew cut and dyed it black to stop the women in Peru asking him for autographs. People in Peru don't know John Wayne is old. Those movies are all brand-new there.

Mom is laughing and laughing. Dad sits up with his hands folded. I think he looks very fair, like when Eddie and I fight and Dad makes us sit down in "court" and come to a "settlement." Next to me, Eddie is making faces because we haven't had dessert yet and he knows there's chocolate-chip ice cream.

"I'd kill to have been there," Mom crows, "the ladies in their ponchos mobbing the shady operative—Señor Wayne! Señor Wayne!" Then she does my father, talking into his wristwatch: "Operation Kookamunga, abort!"

"Lannie," says Dad, "I am not a shady operative."

"Señor Wayne! I see all jour movies!"

"Lannie. Nobody's laughing."

"Laughing? It's an effing laugh riot!"

Mom starts coughing and finally looks in her lap, distracted. Eddie pipes up:

"Mom? Are we having ice cream? I can get it, I can reach."

"Just one minute, Eddie, honestly."

And 'cause it's the dinner table, Mom has her tequila glass in hand, to grab to her mouth, and her head bucks
chucks it down hard
two-handed, one
palm spread over the glass bottom to shove the liquor home
and hold the dry glass for a moment, leaving it time to shine and be seen:

"This Isn't My House and You're Not My Children"

1 My mother was an art historian.
1.1 That's what she put on forms.
1.2 And she held a master's in art history from Berkeley.

2 Really she was just rich.

3 It was family money.
3.1 Her father had made a killing in real estate.
3.2. Pictures of his suburban developments hung in the dining room when she was a child.
3.3 My mother used to think he built the houses himself.

4 Her family were rich people all day long.
4.1 They held their children as if they were vases; the dog was groomed by a company.
4.2 Salad fork for salad, full dress for breakfast.
4.3 They were, in these respects, profoundly, paranoiacally, arriviste.

5 My mother was just . . . common.
- She was never persuaded to like shoes.
- Her knees were skinned, somehow. From her clothes, you knew she had a dog.
- She always looked as if she had just washed her face.

6 Girls who wore makeup were weak, according to my mother.

STORY

When she turned eighteen, my mother's birthday present was a mansion. It was strategically chosen for its location on a dull stretch of California coast. Her father thought the town to be ripe for development. A gift, then, bought in my mother's name for tax reasons.

"But I can't even *live* in it," my mother squalled. "I'm going to college, *remember?*"

"It's an *investment*," said her father. "For your *future*."

They had the hackneyed screaming match, in which father laid down the law and daughter wept; mother fretted, saying patient, reasonable things.

Around them were the beautiful acquisitions—like a jury. High ceilings and marble and even the placid air with its scent of autumnal roses; my mother fought bitterly, at that age, against their sway.

"I'm going to burn it down!" she screamed finally. "I'll invite you all over and burn it down!"

Her parents died in a car accident one year later.

She lived in that mansion for the rest of her life; Eddie and I grew up in it.

Her mother, Lily, who really was like a white funereal flower, used to say that tomboys grew up to be the nicest big ladies.

Her father used to say, "Lannie's going to blow everything we've worked to save, you wait and see!"

1 After her parents' death, she moved into her mansion.
1.1 No one else lived there; there was no gardener, no maid. There was no furniture.
1.2 The derelict guest wing leaked, and moss grew, demarcating the parquet.
1.3 It was 35 rooms, two towers, a private beach, and a cultivated wood.
1.4 In the wood, she found a pointy-eared white mutt she called Remember.
1.5 They used to sleep together on the beach on summer nights.

2 Her brother, Jerry, got away with the bulk of the family fortune.
2.1 She hated him, she called him "King Jerry," she was implacable.
2.2 There were court cases all her life; she never forgot that money.
2.3 The rest of the family backed him, because my mother rode a motorcycle.
2.4 She never forgave them either, though she attended polite family gatherings.

3 When she was at Berkeley, she rode two hours to get to class.
3.1 She was penniless.
3.2 She sold all the mansion's antique doors.
3.3 She had 3 million dollars tied up in a lawsuit, but wouldn't borrow in case the bank "stole" her house.
3.4 When the money came through, she bought three cars.

4 Her mattress on the floor was surrounded by cigarette butts.
4.1 She'd taped cardboard over the broken windows on the ground floor.
4.2 In the courtyard lawn, one of her boyfriends had dug his name.
4.3 "It brought tears to your eyes," my dad said, "Lannie was such a slob."

For a while, he was only one of many rotating boyfriends. Then he put his foot down. He turned up at her house one weekend, wearing a suit, to say, "Okay, Lannie. Now we're going to buy furniture and then you're going to marry me. I've had about enough of this runaround."

He was standing on her cracked white step, in sunlight, bearing a sheaf of flowers. The engagement ring was hooked on the first joint of his pinky; a diamond solitaire she wouldn't like. His stance was easy, friendly. They knew each other well; and he wanted, badly, to put the flowers down and touch her face.

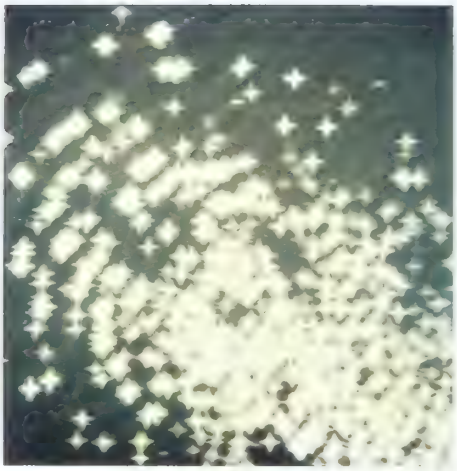
She said, "No!"

But he was right.

Then he was in Vietnam.

Then he was in Chile at a secret destination, conducting studies.

For the rest of her life, my mother always had a mutt who would follow her down, down our private beach and out of sight, on summer nights.









NO MORE UNTO THE BREACH

PART ONE

Why war is futile

By Jonathan Schell

There are moments in history when a crack in time seems to open and swallow the known world: solid-seeming institutions, rotted from within, collapse or are discarded; settled beliefs are unsettled; old truths are discovered to be provisional; acts that were forbidden are permitted or even required; boundaries thought impassable are passed without comment; and outrageous and unreal events, seeming to belong more to comic books than to reality, flood in profusion from some portal of the future that no one was guarding or even watching. Sometimes everything happens at once, but at other times there is a pause between a moment of dissolution and a moment of new foundation. Such intervals may, like the interregnum between the abdication of the Russian czar in February 1917 and the Bolshevik Revolution in October of that year, last just a few months, or they may, like the hiatus between the American Revolution of 1776 and the adoption of the American Constitution in 1788, last for years. At some point, however, decisions are made, often with little warning. Bold authors step in to set up the architecture of the future, or, far more likely, unexpected shocks, often violent, cut short deliberation to dictate the shapes of things to come. These are times that call for exceptional vigilance, because what is at stake is not just who will win and who will lose but the rules by which everyone will have to play from then on. What is decided then, whether by accident or design, will be decided for a long time; what is founded then will endure; and what disappears then will likely be gone forever.



In the twentieth century, there were many formative shocks of this kind, but the most powerful and consequential was certainly the outbreak of the First World War. In his poem "Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen," written at the end of the war, William Butler Yeats looked back with disenchanted longing at the vanished prewar world:

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All [illegible] all ancient tricks unlearned,
And a great army but a showy thing;
What matter that no cannon had been turned
Into a ploughshare?

But in the aftermath of the war, which he called a "foul storm," the sectional peace and progress had changed or been revealed to be a mirage. "Days are dragon-ridden, the nightmare/Rides upon sleep," he wrote, and

We who seven years ago
Talked of honour and of truth,
Shriek with pleasure if we show
The weasel's twist, the weasel's tooth.

But in actuality, even then the foul storm had not run its course. For the breakdown of 1914, we can see in retrospect, set in motion not only the

THE CATASTROPHE OF 1914 REPRESENTED A DECISION TO CONSIGN THE FUTURE OF EUROPE, AND WITH EUROPE THE WORLD, TO THE IMMEMORIAL FINAL ARBITER, FORCE

war itself but a linked series of mass slaughters, both within nations and between them, that were to unfold over most of the rest of the century. The seventy-five-year Bolshevik terror—which Solzhenitsyn called The Red Wheel in the novel of that name—rolled out of the trenches of World War I, as did its jagged counterpart the Nazi swastika, and the aggression and antagonism of these regimes led straight to the Second World War. It was an epic of violence and counterviolence brought to a pause only by the fearful discipline of the even more horrifying violence threatened by the nuclear terror of the Cold War, which paralyzed the great powers by menacing them with a common annihilation.

Annihilation was a prospect that Yeats had also glimpsed. "He who can read the signs," he wrote in "Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen," knew that all human accomplishment was in some new kind of jeopardy—that "no work can stand,/Whether health, wealth or peace of mind were spent," nor "honour leave its mighty monument." Such despair could prompt a nihilistic response:

That image can bring wildness, bring a rage
To end all things, to end
What my laborious life imagined, even
The half-imagined, the half-written page.

It was not, that is, just the existing poems, buildings, and cities but the very source of all these, the human powers of creation, that were at risk of being poisoned and shut down.

One might suppose that it was impossil grasp the terrible import of 1914 contem neously. Yet there were, as there always few who, guided more by intuition th reason, apprehended the event's dire si cance even as it broke on the world. On Henry James. His novels were conce mostly with the conversations, thought loves of refined, rich Americans in the ing rooms of turn-of-the-century Euro not one of his works is any dagger dra gun fired. Politics for the most part see occur on another planet. Yet on the c the war, he sensed before the event ever that Yeats described just after it. In a le his friend Rhoda Broughton on Augu 1914, he wrote:

Black and hideous to me is the tragedy tha ers, and I'm sick beyond cure to have lived see it. You and I . . . should have been spa wreck of our belief that through the long v had seen civilization grow and the worst impossible. The tide that bore us along w all the while moving to *this* as its grand N yet what a blessing we didn't know it. It s me to *undo* everything, everything that w in the most horrible retroactive way—but my face from the monstrous scene!

In retrospect, we can see that the war sequences were as far-reaching as they w cause its outbreak decided a question of mental importance. In the century Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo, Europe caped general war, and many of its g statesmen—conservative as well as lib had labored to create systems of pea could relieve Europe of the danger perm ly. They dreamed that a "holy allianc "Concert of Europe" might institutiona peace. The catastrophe of 1914 represen definitive failure of these efforts and a d to consign the future of Europe, and wh rope the world, once again to the imm final arbiter, force. In the global war that had grown up in the preceding cen decision by force could only mean a wo war fought by rival alliances. Once th war system was in operation, the lati further choice was curtailed drastically. better part of the rest of the century, nah Arendt has written, "Nothing wh being done, no matter how stupid, no how many people knew and foretold th quences, could be undone or prevente event had the finality of a last judg judgment that was passed neither by by the devil, but looked rather like the sion of some unredeemably stupid fata particular, new hopes and schemes f were condemned to a mainly rhetori

almost a dream life, as ineffectual as ere uplifting. The most important of vas, of course, the League of Nations, was first put forward by President ow Wilson in 1917, formally established 9, and then condemned to watch help- s Japan, Italy, and Germany engaged in s of aggression that precipitated the Sec- orld War.

re is little doubt that the attack on the on and destruction of the towers of the Trade Center on September 11, 2001, uted another of history's formative shocks. ministration of President George W. Bush iately launched its global "war on terror"; eorganization of the federal government p to bottom; rewrote the rule book of do- politics; severely curtailed civil liberties and ged the separation of powers ordained by nstitution, especially in regard to the war- g power; and propounded a "revolution- he word is Henry Kissinger's) new foreign that placed at its center the preemptive use e. Elsewhere—in the Middle East, in South within Russia, in North Asia—military ts and confrontations, conventional and r, as if taking their cue from September l the American response to it, flared up ew intensity. The optimism and hopeful- at had largely prevailed since the end of the War more than a decade before gave way in tant to war fever and war.

ight of these events, it's reasonable to ask, ny have, whether September 11 was an- August 1914, turning wenty-first century o the irredeemably fatality that governed ch of the twentieth. parallels are striking. 01, as in 1914, a peri- political liberalization, mic globalization, and (at least in the priv- l zones of the planet) ummarily ended by a t explosion. The fun- ntal decision now, as s then, is whether to our faith in force or in national cooperation e means to reach safe- gain, the world—led time by the United s—has turned to force. n, observers have been pelled, like Henry s in 1914, to acknowl- retroactively that the immediate past was a of illusion—a time when the world was rac- ing toward a precipice but did not know it, or did not care to know it. Again, an unpredictable chain reaction of violent events has been set in motion—some have even said that a third world war is upon us.



And yet, since history does not really repeat itself, the analogy between 1914 and 2001, like all measurements of the present with yardsticks from the past, is useful only for querying events, not for predicting them. There are equally important differences between the two moments, some of them obvious, others less so. In 1914 the great powers' preparations for war were complete. The arms were piled high, the troops massed, the mobilization schedules fixed, the treaties of alliance signed and sealed. Even before the first shot was fired, the whole of the long war to come lay mapped out in the file cabinets of the chanceries of Europe, needing only the right mishap to bring it to life. And when that mishap came and the armies were hurled across the borders, no power on earth, including the governments involved, could call them back until the war had run its full bloody course. Our moment, by contrast, is one of exceptional unpredictability and fluidity. A decade before the towers of the World Trade Center were struck down, let us recall, the Berlin Wall was peacefully dismantled by joyful East Germans, liquidating half a century of global hostility and giving birth to hopes for a peaceful and democratic future. Even today, no ancient quarrel or ideological schism freezes great powers into hostile blocs. No defeated power awaits the hour of revenge, as Germany did after the First World War. No inexorable timetables for mobilization or webs of alliances among great powers drag everyone together into a new abyss. Only one power, the United States, is able or inclined to unleash force on a global scale. The unexpected—new crises, abrupt developments, sudden opportunities—is the order of the day. The strength of the group that attacked on September 11 is unclear and appears likely to wax or wane in response to other events. The Bush Administration has outlined a series of wars that it may decide to fight, but there will be points of decision at every step along the way. Actions summon reactions. Other governments and their publics are watching and waiting uneasily, uncertain where

and how to bring the weight of their influence to bear. Setbacks in the field can quickly change political opinion at home. The proliferation of nuclear weapons can inhibit as well as provoke war. The effect of a series of wars, if such occur, on the global integration of the economy is unknown, and immense uncertainties shadow the economic scene.

Yet if September 11 was not itself an August 1914 it was an unmistakable warning that such a moment may be approaching fast. It pointed to a Niagara higher and more violent than the one that a heartbroken Henry James lived to witness. The gaping "ground zero" on which the World Trade Center towers once stood in lower Manhattan, sickening as it is in itself, is also a portent of that incomparably more spacious and appalling emptiness, the nuclear ground zero that could lie in our future. For the principal sources of danger today are not, as before, the massed conventional armies and systematized hatreds of rival great powers; they are, above all, the widespread, unappeased demons of national, ethnic, and class fury; the prospect that a single superpower, the United States, will respond to these dangers by pursuing a strategy of global military supremacy; and the persistence and spread of biological or chemical weapons. It is impossible to predict how and when these elements might intersect to push history over the precipice. The cataclysm could take the form of nuclear war in South Asia, causing the deaths of tens of millions of people. It could be the use of another weapon of mass destruction. It could be the annihilation of one or several cities, in the United States or elsewhere, by a terrorist attack. It could be a war spinning out of control in the Middle East, leading by that route to the use of weapons of mass destruction. It could be war, conventional or nuclear, in Korea, or war between the United States and China over Taiwan. Or it could be, is even likely to be, some chain of events—some nuclear 1914 or anthrax 1914—that we are at present incapable of imagining.



In sum, September 11, although not itself the point of no return, gave notice that such a moment may be approaching quickly. A new cycle of violence has been initiated, yet it can be broken or reversed. We do not need to look at the world and its future solely throu blood-dimmed lens of September 11. T still scope for choice and will, in the States as elsewhere. There is still time back from the immediate terrors that us, real as they are, and, in a view that passes both the wall and the tower afresh the larger issues of war and peace.

A CONSTITUTION FOR THE WHOLE WORLD

But if we were to resolve to avoid Niagara in our time, does there exist a realistic path that lead from it? A discussion of this questio takes place, would of necessity be very ent from the one occasioned almost a ago by the First World War. For ev briefest review of the efforts of peace from that time forward reveals that qu deep changes, both in the grand archi of the world and in its molecular pro have profoundly altered not only the sl the global structures of violence but a resources available for replacing ther something better.

An essential point of reference in takin of these changes is W attempt in 1919 to lish the League of N In September 191 year after the outb the First World W British foreign secret Edward Grey, dispa telegram to Wilson. the President propo inquired, "that there be a League of N binding themselves against any Power broke a treaty . . . or refused, in case of to adopt some method of settlemen that of war?"

The president The president did. was a revolutionary tablishing the Lea aimed, as he said i don at the war's end, to "do away with an der and to establish a new one." He inten uproot the war system and replace it with tem of international law backed by the f world public opinion. "The question upon the whole future peace and policy of the w pends," he declared in January of 1917,

esent war a struggle for a just and secure
r only for a new balance of power? . . .
nust be, not a balance of power, but a
nity of power; not organized rivalries, but
nized common peace."
watchwords of Wilson's vision of peace
mocracy, freedom, self-determination,
rule of law—principles that have won
ing allegiance between his time and
et Wilson, of course, failed utterly. His
foundered upon the interlocking struc-
violence—imperialism, totalitarianism,
war system itself—that in combination
be the grand venues for the century's
arnage. Application of his principle of
ermination would have required dis-
ng the globe-circling European empires,
speak of the American mini-empire ac-
in the last days of the nineteenth centu-
ely at the expense of Spain. America's
England and France, had no intention of
ishing their empires—and neither, for
atter, did America. Western imperialism
its zenith. The British were still rulers of
ire on which the sun never set. The sec-
Wilson's renowned Four Principles, an-
d on January 29, 1917, as a basis for set-
ne war, was "that people and provinces
t to be bartered about from sovereignty
reignty as if they were mere chattels and
in a game, even the great game, now for-
scredited, of the balance of power." But
the war, England, France, and Italy had
been secretly and shamelessly bartering
es—in, for example, the Sykes-Picot
nent by which England and France had
d up large chunks of the defunct Ot-
Empire between themselves. At the
conference at Versailles, Wilson surren-
ground on specific colonial issues while
ly holding fast to his general beliefs,
ting the English prime minister, David
George, to remark with a chuckle to an
t one point, "He has saved his precious
les, but we got our colonies."
was democracy about to flourish in the
es just ahead. The liberalism seemingly
e rise at the turn of the century was on
rge of its worst reversal since the demo-
revolutions of the late eighteenth centu-
mortal twentieth-century adversary, to-
ianism, born in and of the war, was about
ke its appearance. Liberal principles had
ly gained ground in Europe, and even in
ial Germany and imperial Russia popular
ipation in government had increased.
irst World War and the rise of totalitari-
reversed these trends at a stroke. In a
the blow that the war system had already
d on liberalism turned out to have been
incomparably more powerful than the answering blow from a staggering liberalism. Wilson was in this respect like a man who proposes the construction of additional floors of a building at exactly the moment that the floor he's standing on is collapsing under him.

The most intractable of the large structures of violence that Wilson faced, however, was the one he had targeted most directly: the war system. Notwithstanding the shock and horror of the First World War, that system's foundations had never been more solid, its grip on the community of nations never tighter. War systems had, of course, existed throughout history, arising wherever several armed nations within range of one another had jockeyed for power; but the war system

THE NEW FORCES OF THE MODERN AGE WERE, AS IN THE MARKET SYSTEM, THROWN INTO CONTESTS IN WHICH THE LIFE AND DEATH OF NATIONS AND EMPIRES WERE DETERMINED

that arose in Europe in the modern period and then was extended to envelop the world was unique. Previous war systems had been comparatively static. Innovation in the military arts was gradual. Combat was chiefly hand-to-hand, and the instruments of war—the sword, the spear, the bow and arrow, the trireme, the horse, the chariot, the fortification, the battering ram—were widely available and slow to evolve. Nations could only rarely achieve a sudden, decisive advantage through an improvement in weapons or technique. In the modern period, however, the pace of innovation accelerated sharply, and the leading powers, by adopting new inventions first, could often put themselves in a position to destroy their rivals.

The modern "world system," some scholars have said, was formed by three protracted revolutions—the scientific, the democratic, and the industrial—and each, even as it provided new benefits to life in peacetime, also poured forth vast new resources for the war system. The democratic revolution brought the Rights of Man *and* millions of willing recruits for war; the scientific revolution offered pure knowledge *and* ever more powerful weapons; the industrial revolutions created consumer goods *and* more matériel for larger and longer wars. Military power in this period can be seen as a sort of clearinghouse in which the new forces of the modern age were, in a military counterpart of the market system, assembled, brought into relation, and thrown into the contests in which the life and death of nations and empires were determined. In

the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this system, implacable and merciless, compelled all "backward" nations to reform on pain of destruction—to adapt to the modern Western innovations or die as independent countries. Although the century between Napoleon's defeat and the First World War was a period of relative military restraint and peace in Europe, military establishments were all the while quietly equipping themselves with the new powers of the modern age. On the eve of the First World War, there were 200 divisions ready for battle in Europe. In 1914 the dam burst, and in the words of the war historian John Keegan, "The submerged warrior society . . . sprung armed through the surface of the peaceful landscape."

THAT WILSON'S PLAN COULD NOT BE IMPLEMENTED DID NOT MEAN THAT THE EXISTING WAR SYSTEM HAD TURNED INTO A FORMULA FOR PEACE AND STABILITY

Wilson thus spoke truly when he identified the First World War as a systemic problem. The cause of war in 1914, as he recognized, had not been so much the ambition of one nation or another as the precariousness of the bloated, unitary, deep-rooted global war system of the early twentieth century, which could tip the participants into a sea of fire if the slightest imbalance of power appeared.

Sometimes a revolution can be accomplished in stages. Wilson's plan could not. It had to be implemented all at once or not at all. The reason was not excessive ambition on Wilson's part; it was the nature of the problem that required solution. A fatally dangerous global system required a full systemic substitute—a "new constitution for the whole world . . . produced in eight days," as the French prime minister Georges Clemenceau, who opposed the plan, described it mockingly. Or as the British diplomat Harold Nicolson, who attended the Versailles conference as a member of the British delegation and at first was an ardent supporter of Wilson, observed later, "Instinctively, and rightly, did we feel that if Wilsonism was to form the charter of the New Europe it must be applied universally, integrally, forcefully, scientifically." The war system and the Wilsonian plan were antithetical at every point. The measures that assured safety in the one system spelled danger in the other. In the Wilsonian system the sovereignty of nations had to be abandoned, but in the war system sovereignty had to be kept inviolable. In the Wilsonian system the safety of nations r disarmament, but under the war system required arms. Wilsonism called for a le all nations in a system of cooperative s but the balance of power called for spe liances against specific enemies. Wil harkened to considerations of equity a tice; the war system attended only to c tions of force. If the Wilsonian palace be built, the edifice of the war system ha torn down. If the war system were to sur could not be adulterated with Wilsonism

Thus, although Wilson's insistence full systemic solution may have been h it was anything but gratuitous. He loca source of the problem of his era at i depth and had the courage to outline tion on the scale necessary to solve it. T cure was beyond the capacity or will world of his day does not impeach the a of the diagnosis. Wilson has often bee cized for the naïveté of his solution, l analysis of the problem was more real and more prophetic—than that of his tors. For, unfortunately, the fact that W plan could not be implemented did not that the alternative, the existing war sy the system that had already brought First World War—had turned into a f for peace and stability. Clemenceau sp the French parliament of "an old system appears to be discredited today, but to w am not afraid of saying I am still faithfu his faith, too, was tragically misplaced. is, as George Kennan has remarked, a of realism as well as a naïveté of ide Clemenceau's realist successors fell victi Yet it could have been no great comfort alists that "realism" was as unrealistic a idealism. The interwar period appears t been one of those dispiriting times whe school was condemned to be shrewd in tique of its rival's plan but credulous w came to its own. The balance of pow never righted. The world was not rescue war by its rejection of Wilsonism a plunge back into war, just as Wilson fore

The puzzle was how, without writing stitution for the world in eight days, to the war system that had underlain d Even in retrospect, the diplomat Nicol impaled on the dilemma. The political c offered in *Peacemaking 1919* remained a s tion of Wilson's liberal internationalist fa

> In spite of bitter disillusionment I believe principles of Wilson] today. I believed, wit that the standard of political and intern conduct should be as high, as sensitive, standard of personal conduct. I believed still believe, that the only true patriotis

e desire that one's own tribe or country
l in every particular minister to that idea. I
d with him a hatred of violence in any
and a loathing of despotism in any form. I
ived, as he conceived, that this hatred was
ion to the great mass of humanity, and that
new world this dumb force of popular sen-
it could be rendered the controlling power
man destiny.

ing delivered himself of this anathema
force, Nicolson declared almost in the
eath that force must be the linchpin of
tem he had wanted Wilson to build.
himself how he had come to place his
Wilson at the beginning of the confer-
e answered, "The one thing which ren-
Wilsonism so passionately interesting at
ment was the fact that this centennial
was suddenly backed by the overwhelm-
ources of the strongest Power in the
—the United States. Therefore, he pos-
"the unquestioned opportunity to en-
ese ideas upon the whole world."
was a contradiction to contend with.
as to be expunged from world affairs by the
force that had ever been known. How, in-
ould it be otherwise in the face of the en-
ed war system of that time? Yet if under the
s of the League of Nations enough force
be assembled to overpower the most pow-
ggressors, then the
n of what else might
e with that force nat-
arose. The "war to
ar" would have to do
, it seemed, with as
war as it ended.
eality, of course, the
l States did not join
eague of Nations,
never came remote-
ar to posing such a
t, yet the central
lary had been laid
On the one hand,
was the likelihood
ne League's powers of
ement would not be
enough to overcome
nger of aggression la-
the war system. On
her hand, there was
langer that if the
ie did grow strong
h, it would have to become something like
ld government. Yet a world government
on force would be a global Leviathan. No
ay house, no mere reformist program, could
e this dilemma. And given a choice be-
international anarchy, no matter how
bloody, and global Leviathan, how could anyone who loved liberty—that is, how could any liberal—choose Leviathan?

The liberal tradition, which in its prescriptions for domestic government sought to mitigate the role of force, seemed full of promise for peace in the world, but Wilsonism was unable to deliver on it. In order to have any part of the Wilsonian program, you had to have all of it, but all of it was too much. This was the unsolved riddle that the liberal internationalist project placed before the world in 1919.



NUCLEAR PEACEMAKING

The failure of the twentieth century's second major bout of liberal peacemaking, the foundation of the United Nations, followed the pattern of the League's failure—but only in part. Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill, who first called for such an organization in the Atlantic Charter in 1941, had sought to draw lessons from the League's fate. Instead of assigning the peacekeeping function to a large council, as the League did, they vested it in an alliance of the prospective victors of the Second World War—the United States, the Soviet Union, China, England, and France—each of whom was given a permanent seat on the Security Council and a veto over its decisions. The hope was that this small, tight-knit group of great powers could guarantee the peace more effectively than the multitude of nations charged with that responsibility under the provisions of the League. But almost immediately after the organization's foundation in 1946, this arrangement for all intents and purposes was nullified by the Cold War, whose tensions had reached a crisis point as early as the spring of 1945, when the United States and the Soviet Union found themselves unable to agree on the political future of Poland.

If the onset of the Cold War had been the only reason for the U.N.'s failure, the story would be a familiar one, well known to analysts of the League's collapse: collective security fails to get off the ground because the powers that are supposed to enforce it fall out with one another. The designated peacemakers become the peace breakers, and

no one else is strong enough to bring them into line. In fact, however, the United Nations also failed for another reason—one more relevant to the challenge that faces peacekeeping today.

After 1914 the technology of war kept improving, bringing, among other innovations, improvements in the power of explosives, the heavy bomber, the jet plane, the aircraft carrier, radar, the rocket. The powers, obedient as ever to the compulsions of the modern evolutionary war system, raced to acquire these weapons, and all were used to the full in the Second World War, in which an estimated 70 million human beings were killed. But it was the last time. Even as the war was being fought, an instrument that would make such wars forever impossible was being prepared in the desert of New Mexico. Never has a single technical invention had a more sudden or decisive effect on an entrenched human institution than nuclear weapons had on war. The great clearinghouse of the modern adapt-or-die war system, in which the powers of the modern age were cashed in for the universal currency of military power, was abruptly closed for business at the global level. The set-piece battles that had long been history's favorite grand decision-maker sank into the past. Industrialists might still offer their products, scientists their inventions, and citizens their patriotic zeal, but now their contributions could only increase the overkill—"strengthen our deterrent," or some such. Thereafter, war was forced into other venues. The critical link between military power and political power was severed at the highest level of international operations. For war was a paradoxical freak of evolution—a creature that depended for its survival on that unsung virtue of arms: their weakness. Without weakness, war's critical event, its gift to politics—defeat—could not occur, but human weakness, in the twentieth century, proved a dwindling asset. Like clean air, rain forests, and coral reefs, it was being steadily depleted by technical progress. In July of 1945, it ran out. The bomb revealed that the war system that had defeated Wilsonism and all previous systemic plans for peace was not an everlasting but a historical phenomenon. It had gone the way of the tyrannosaurus rex and the saber-toothed tiger, a casualty not of natural but scientific evolution, whose new powers, as always, the war system could not refuse. Its day was done.



What is less often recognized is that the b was as revolutionary for peacemaking as fo making. By an accident of historical timing bomb arrived in the hiatus between the fra of the United Nations and its foundation. In of 1945, in San Francisco, the United Na Conference on International Organizatio mally agreed on the outlines of the U.N. Ch On October 24, the U.N. came into existen the meantime—on August 6—the destruct Hiroshima radically transformed the natu the main problem, great-power war, that th organization had been fashioned to solve. ceived in one age, the U.N. was born in an Having been designed to cope with a world inated by the global war system, it came int istence after that system's death knell had sounded. The word "nuclear" appears no in the charter.

As the two sides of the Cold War built up nuclear arsenals, the dict that the advent nuclear age had pa upon world war becam creasingly clear. Th derstanding was even ly codified in the doctri nuclear deterrence, or tual assured destruct whose central prescri was that each side wou stopped from attackin other by the know that it would be anni ed in response. War w placed from the battl to a realm of appearan of "credibility," in th gon of the nuclear tra in which terrifying s of nuclear power meant to have the infl that actual fighting ha under the old war sy The new arrangement was called a balan terror, as distinct from a balance of power, might better have been called a balance of erlessness, for its success depended on th mitigated, absolute vulnerability to annihil of all participants.

With these developments, nuclear str acquired a Wilsonian dimension. The had evolved into a war stopper. But th course was also the mission of the U.N., v central purpose, in the words of the pre to its charter, was "to save succeeding ge tions from the scourge of war, which tw our lifetime has brought untold sorr

d." Under the doctrine of deterrence, clear powers of the Cold War jointly er this responsibility. Even as the Cold as disabling the U.N., nuclear deter- as coopting its main role. The bomb ru- orld war by turning it into annihilation. e threat of annihilation was a problem e United Nations had not been designed ess and did not address.

POLITICS IN COMMAND

he ascending spiral of twentieth-century violence—in which conventional war drew the newborn Promethean energies modern age, one after another, into its orbit, leading, in a paradoxical culmina- the terrorized calm of the nuclear stale- -was, however, only one of the two major oments in the metamorphosis of war that ace between Wilson's time and ours. The , concurrent development led in an oppo- ection—away from the blackboards and ter screens in the think tanks, the scientific ories, and the missile ranges, and down or, "underdeveloped" peasant villages and swamps and jungles, where scientifically isticated people were incubating methods are that, in their own way, were scarcely less e than the total war of the great powers and, long run, were to prove the more success- ention. These were the methods of people's nuclear weapons, by spoiling the old final , conventional war, posed the question of sputes in the international sphere *now* were ettled, then people's war, although itself a affair, pointed the way to an answer. For nuclear weapons were producing stalemate, 's war was changing the political map of the And this development, too, would have im- ons as deep for the endeavor of peacemak- for the conduct of war.

e the invention of nuclear weapons, the f people's war had a wider context—the ries-long movement of the peoples of the to achieve self-determination, a move- that Leonard Woolf, a British writer on ialism, called a "world revolt." In 1818, Adams asked, "When will France, Spain, nd, and Holland renounce their selfish, acted, exclusive systems of religion, gov- ent, and commerce?" And he answered a prophecy: "They may depend upon it, present systems of colonization cannot e. Colonies universally, ardently breathe ndependence. No man, who has a soul, ver live in a colony under the present es- hments one moment longer than necessi- mpels him." Substantial fulfillment of Adams's prophecy came in December of 1991, when the president of Russia, Boris Yeltsin, and the leaders of two other republics of the Soviet Union declared the foundation of the Commonwealth of Independent States and the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the last of the European empires. Between these dates, all of the empires that had existed in 1776, whether dynastic or colonial, or both, and all of the empires that subsequently arose, including those built on revolutionary foundations, were destroyed. In the former category were the Russian empire of the czars; the Austro-Hungarian empire of the Hapsburgs; the German empire of the Hohenzollerns; the Ottoman empire; and the overseas empires of Holland and England. In the latter category were the colonial empires of France, Belgium, and Italy, the Napoleonic empire, the Japanese "Co-Prosperity Sphere" in Asia, Hitler's "thousand-year Reich," and the Soviet empire. The self-determination movement also cut across all political dividing lines. No political system, feudal or modern, proved capable of resisting it. Neither monarchies (the Romanovs, the Hapsburgs, the Hohenzollerns, the Ottomans), nor liberal democracies (England, Holland, the United States), nor military dictatorships (France under Napoleon, Spain, Portugal under Salazar and Caetano), nor Communist regimes (the Soviet Union, Vietnam, in its Cambodian venture), were able, in the long run, to perpetuate imperial rule. On the other hand, almost every political creed was adequate for winning independence. Liberal democracy (the United States in 1776, Eastern Europe in the 1980s and '90s), Communism (China, Vietnam, Cambodia, Cuba), racism (the Boers of South Africa), militarism (any number of South American states), theocracy (Iran and Afghanistan in the 1980s), and even monarchy (Germany in the first half of the nineteenth century) all proved adequate foundations on which to base self-determination.

IF NUCLEAR WEAPONS POSED THE QUESTION OF HOW INTERNATIONAL DISPUTES WERE TO BE SETTLED, THEN PEOPLE'S WAR POINTED THE WAY TO AN ANSWER

People's war was a means to redress the gaping military imbalance between the forces of the imperialist West and its colonial victims. In the 1930s and early '40s, battle after battle demonstrated China's inability to face Japan in

conventional war. In June of 1938, Mao Zedong, who had just consolidated his position as undisputed leader of the Communist Party of China, candidly acknowledged that "we are still a weak country, and, in striking contrast to the enemy, are inferior in military, economic and political-organizational power." Japan, by contrast, was "a powerful imperialist country which ranks first in military, economic and political-organizational power in the East and counts as one of the five or six outstanding imperialist countries in the world."

But how, exactly, could people's war enable a weak and backward people to defeat a modern nation-state equipped with the most technically advanced arms? What advantage did it possess? In a single chorus, the leaders of the Chinese revolution broadcast their answer to the world: "politics." Unable to compete in conventional war, China opened up a new field of battle—one on which, Mao believed, China's people themselves could appear in strength. Everything—tactics, strategy, recruitment, logistics, intelligence—must be subordinated to politics, which

PEOPLE'S WAR AND NUCLEAR DETERRENCE BOTH BECAME NOT SO MUCH INSTRUMENTS FOR PRODUCING PHYSICAL RESULTS AS A KIND OF BLOODY SYSTEM OF COMMUNICATION

meant winning the support of the population at large. Mao never tired of making the point:

> What is the relationship of guerrilla warfare to the people? Without a political goal, guerrilla warfare must fail; as it must if its political objectives do not coincide with the aspirations of the people and their sympathy, co-operation, and assistance cannot be gained.

And the most famous:

> Many people think it impossible for guerrillas to exist for long in the enemy's rear. Such a belief reveals lack of comprehension of the relationship that should exist between the people and the troops. The former may be likened to water and the latter to the fish who inhabit it. How may it be said that these two cannot exist together? It is only undisciplined troops who make the people their enemies and who, like the fish out of its native element, cannot live.

Not long after the Chinese revolutionaries' victory in 1949, the power of "politics" was put on spectacular display again in the war in Vietnam. The Vietnamese leaders were veterans of people's war, having been steeped in Chinese revolutionary politics for two decades. Ho Chi Minh had lived in China in the twenties and thirties, and had even spent time in prison there. Many of the strategies the Vietnamese were to use against the French in the fifties had already been battle-tested in China. Most important was the insistence, from start to finish, on the subordination of military action to political goals. As one resolution of the party's Central Committee put it, "Politics forms the actual strength of the revolution; politics is the root and war is the continuation of politics."

THE DEMATERIALIZATION OF POWER

In many respects, nuclear deterrence and people's war, which were the dominant military developments of the Cold War period, were opposites. One was a fruit of the scientific revolution and depended on new technical achievements of unlimited destructive power; the other was mainly a fruit of the democratic revolution and depended on the aroused will of peoples. One was a strategy of the powerful, the other a strategy of the wretched of the earth. One was geopolitical in scope, the other local. One produced stalemate, the other victory. Yet in other respects the two strategies were akin. In both a certain dematerialization of power occurred. In deterrence it was the decline of actual war-fighting in favor of generating fearful appearances—credibility—that became the coinage of military might in the nuclear age. In people's war it was the eclipse of the power that flowed from the barrel of a gun by political power that flowed from the hearts and minds of the people. In both strategies violence became not so much an instrument for producing physical results as a kind of bloody system of communication, through which the antagonists delivered messages to one another about their will. In both the intangible effect upon wills was to mount, and the tangible effect upon the opposing military forces was secondary. In both we see the human will detaching itself from physical fighting, as if getting ready to make a break and turn to other means but without doing so. In both the capacity of force to decide political issues was thrown into doubt. The greatest obstacle to peacemakers, whether of the Wilsonian or some other stamp, had been the assumption, as old as recorded history, that force was the final arbiter in political affairs. But now, both at the surface and in the valleys of the war system, that assumption was losing finality and some new arbiter seemed to be making decisions in the background.

These similarities between deterrence and people's war should not, however, unduly surprise us. Both were responses to the same underlying historical development—the steady increase throughout the modern age of the

ve power of war. Through people's war, Western peoples found a way to defend lves against the West's awesome techni- eriority. Through the strategy of nuclear de- e, those great powers themselves, finding eir weapons had also become too destruc- be used against one another, tried as best uld to accomplish the old purposes with yptic threats. The twentieth century had ed the most extreme violence that the hu- ecies had ever visited upon itself. In the War, those means threatened the species s actual extinction. It was natural—it was sity—that, in different ways, people would gainst this violence, would seek ways to me it, to escape it, to go around it, to re- t with something else. In earlier times, vi- had been seen as the last resort when all ad failed. "Hallowed are the arms where e exists but in them," Livy had written. But twentieth century a new problem forced it- the human mind: What was the resort that last resort had bankrupted itself— no hope existed in arms either? Was there t beyond the "final" resort? Nuclear deter- and people's war were two groping, im- ed, incomplete attempts to find answers to estion. Wilson had tried to impose a whole- lution from above. But now, in the thick nts, people were grappling with the same cts that he had faced and coming up with odes of action that did not so much solve oblem as change its shape.

of course also true—to state what is perhaps obvious—that nuclear deterrence and e's war marked two extremes of physical vi- e, two apogees of total war. Deterrence ed peace only at the price of threatening the with annihilation. People's war sought to as- he people's interests but only by turning section of the population, including wom- d children, into fighters and victims. Both gies simultane- evoke admiration orror. Even as we leased with the onian ambition eterrence has tak- its goal, we are re- l by the unlimited hter it menaces. as we are awed by epic of human ge that people's resented and by obility of its goal ving the interests e least fortunate, we are disgusted by its use ror and the totalitarianism, with its various s and "reeducation camps," to which it has often given birth. Deterrence bought peace at the price of the threat of annihilation. It was only a stay of execution, not a reprieve. People's war immersed the people in the violence from which it then sought to deliver them. And yet in reaching each of these ambiguous extremes, we can, for the first time, catch a glimpse of a far deeper rejection of the twentieth century's legacy of extreme violence, as when climbers, upon reaching a mountaintop, unable to climb higher, first see the new land beyond and turn their steps down the other side.



LIVING IN TRUTH

The forms of political power that appeared in people's war had a further development. For most of history, military victory has been the royal road to political rule over a rival country, a sequence crystallized in the single word "conquest." It was the genius of the inventors of people's war to challenge this deceptively self-evident proposition by discovering, in the very midst of battle, the power of what they called politics. What if, the inventors of people's war had asked, those on the losing side declined to obey the invader even after conventional battlefield defeats? They showed that victory by this means was possible. In people's war, politics did not stand on its own; it was interwoven with the military struggle into what Mao Zedong called a "seamless fabric." Yet Mao and others placed political organization first in the order of importance and military action only second, and this ranking at least suggested the question of whether, if the fabric were unraveled, political action alone might thwart an occupying power. Did revolutions have to be violent? Could nonviolent revolution—that is, purely nonviolent revolution—succeed?

That was the utterly unexpected accomplishment of the activists in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union who pushed the Soviet empire into its grave. They in fact had an anti-imperial predecessor of whom, it appears, they were only dimly aware: Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, leader of India's successful, nonviolent movement for independence from British rule. At the beginning of the century, when Gandhi was fighting for the rights of the Indian community in South Africa, he had thought

deeply about the nature of political power and arrived at a conclusion. All government, he steadily believed, depends for its existence on the cooperation of the governed. If that cooperation were withdrawn, the government would be helpless. Government was composed of civil servants, soldiers, and citizens. Each of these people had a will. If enough of them refused to carry out its commands, it would fall. This idea had admittedly occurred to political thinkers in the past. The philosopher of the English Enlightenment David Hume likewise believed that all government, even tyranny, rested on a kind of support. "The soldan of Egypt, or the emperor of Rome," he wrote, "might drive his harmless subjects, like brute beasts, against their sentiments and inclination: but he must, at least, have led his *mamalukes*, or *praetorian bands*, like men, by their opinion." And James Madison once wrote, "All governments rest on opinion."

Gandhi, however, was the first to found upon this belief a thoroughgoing program of action and a new understanding of the relationship between violence and politics. The central role of consent in all government meant that noncooperation—the withdrawal of consent—was something more than a morally satisfying activity; it was a powerful weapon in the real world. He stated and restated the belief in many ways throughout his life:

> I believe, and everybody must grant that no Government can exist for a single moment without the cooperation of the people, willing or forced, and if people suddenly withdraw their cooperation in every detail, the Government will come to a standstill.



Gandhi's politics was not a politics of the moral gesture. It rested on an interpretation of political power and was an exercise of power—power that played a decisive role in ending British rule in India and, indeed, the British Empire in its entirety. From his surprising premises Gandhi drew a conclusion more surprising still:

> The causes that gave [the English] India enable them to retain it. Some Englishmen state that they took and they hold India by the sword. Both these statements are wrong. The sword is entirely useless for holding India. We alone keep them.

Gandhi does not merely say that English rule is made possible by Indian acquiescence; he step further and charges that Indians "ke English, almost as if the English were str to get away and the Indians were pullin back. His claim flew in the face of the on viction on which everyone else in the in scheme, whether ruler or ruled, agreed—t the words of the London *Times*, it was " sword that we conquered India, and it is sword that we hold it." Some enthusiastic proved of this supremacy of the sword, bowed to it, and some despised it, but onl dhi denied that it was a fact. Not only, i dhi's thinking, was force not the final arb was no arbiter at all. What arbitrated was c and the cooperation and support that flowe it, and these were the foundation of dictat as well as democratic government.

Many observers later claimed that Ga movement could thrive only because in Bri faced an imperial overlord that, although sive in India, based its rule on consent and home. Faced with a totalitarian foe, they be nonviolent resistance have been powerles tainly, if you believe force was the final arb political affairs, then r had ever looked mor oughly immune to ch from within than the et Union. The nuclea mate only seemed to pressure to the already ing weight of totalitar pression. As Václav the leader of Czech tance to Soviet rule a til recently the presi the Czech Republic, in his analysis of the empire, the "stale world of nuclear par course . . . endows the with an unprecedent gree of external stab After Stalin's death, t viet ruling class congealed into the privileg status-hungry nomenklatura, the "new cla "Red bourgeoisie." The historian Adam Ul aptly called their philosophy *immobilisme* a state they ran a bureaucrats' paradise. A conv unknown perhaps since the days of the I Empire or certain dynasties of ancient Chin root that the current shape of things was lik remain unchanged more or less forever.

And yet the universal conviction that rule could not be challenged from within p wrong—stupendously wrong. The Cold frozen solid at the upper reaches of the wo

is in the lower reaches moving toward its ement along unnoticed, circuitous path- Change, blocked in the time-tested arter- nilitary action, was forced into the world's arked-on capillary system, where, disre- , it quietly advanced. And then it burst n mass resistance by entire societies. A s so novel that one of its pioneers, the Gyorgy Konrád of Hungary, called it "Anti- s," was about to initiate the downfall of nense empire. The actors were, among oth- rkers on factory floors, rebellious students, ctuals talking to one another over kitchen or "writing for the drawer," dissidents who romptly dispatched to concentration camps, cted technocrats, and even bureaucrats in ate apparatus. Every step they took was ed without a chart or a clear destination. e revolution they made was peaceful, de- tic, and thorough.

il very late in the day, the Eastern Euro- ctivists who initiated the process of the So- llapse did not envision even the downfall r local, satellite governments, much less the all of the whole Soviet system. On the ary, one of their greatest achievements in te 1970s was to discover a way to fight for modest, immediate goals without chal- g the main structures of totalitarian pow- eir ambition—itself widely condemned as n by Western observers—was merely to zones of freedom, including free trade s, within the Soviet framework. Activism, said, should be directed at achieving im- te changes in daily life. He proposed what led "living in truth," which consisted of an kable commitment to achieving modest, ete goals in one's life and locality. "De- g the aims of life, defending humanity," he ed, "is not only a more realistic approach, it can begin right now and is potentially popular because it concerns people's every- ves; at the same time (and perhaps pre- because of this) it is also an incomparably consistent approach because it aims at the ssence of things." In Poland in 1976 mean- , the activist Adam Michnik was explain- I believe that what sets today's opposition from the proponents of those ideas [of re- in the past] is the belief that a program for tion ought to be addressed to an indepen- public, not to totalitarian power. Such a pro- should give directives to the people on to behave, not to the powers on how to re- themselves."

chnik's words fell on fertile ground. They ipated (and helped to produce) a blossom- f civic and cultural activity in Poland. An example was the Workers' Defense Com- e. Its purpose was to give concrete assis- tance to workers in trouble with the authori- ties—assistance that the organization referred to as "social work." Aid was given to the fami- lies of workers jailed by the government. Inde- pendent, underground publications multiplied. A "flying university," which offered uncensored courses in people's apartments and other infor- mal locations, was founded. Organizations de- voted to social aims of all kinds—environmen- tal, educational, artistic, legal—sprouted. In both form and content, these groups were pre- cursors to the 10-million-strong Solidarity movement that arose in 1980. Of such was the stuff of revolution without violence.

EASTERN EUROPEAN ACTIVISTS FOUND A WAY TO FIGHT FOR MORE MODEST, IMMEDIATE GOALS WITHOUT CHALLENGING THE MAIN STRUCTURES OF TOTALITARIAN POWER

For once the disintegration of totalitarian rule had begun in society, it turned out, to the surprise of its creators, to spread unstoppably to the satellite regimes, and from there, in new variations, to the heart of the empire, the Soviet Union. The contagion, which at every stage combined a longing for national self-determination with a longing for freedom, proceeded, in an unbroken progression from the Eastern European satellites to the peripheral republics of the union (in particular, Lithuania), and then to Moscow itself, where, under the leadership of its newly elected president, Boris Yeltsin, great Russia joined the company of rebels against the Soviet Union, which, lacking now any territory to call its own, melted into thin air. Seeking modest, limited change, the anti-Soviet activists found, to their own astonishment and everyone else's, that they had opened a new era in world history.

A NEW KIND OF POWER

That the nonviolence of the Soviet collapse was no historical fluke is indicated by the fact that both before and after that event dozens of other repressive regimes of every ideological coloration were ushered out of power by nonviolent processes. Nations in which this occurred include Greece, Portugal, Spain, the Philippines, South Korea, Argentina, Chile, Brazil, South Africa, Indonesia, and Serbia. Of equal importance, almost all of the governments founded by mainly nonviolent means were democratic. The liberal democratic

revival of the late twentieth century, which has been celebrated and even over-celebrated by many writers, was at the same time a flowering of nonviolent action. By that unexpected means, the interrupted liberal development that had been snapped by the global descent into violence in 1914 were picked up again in the century's final years.

No less striking is the historical inclination, which has also been commented on recently by many writers, of liberal democracies to refrain from war among themselves. The liberal democratic revival, however, must have a central place in any discussion of peacemaking for a reason that is deeper and more integral to the nature of this form of government. The goal of taming the violence endemic in human affairs has always been at the very core of the liberal program. To the degree that the ideal is realized, a country's constitution and its laws become a hugely ramified road map for the peaceful settlement of disputes, large and small. The liberal democratic state systematizes nonviolence. For if it is true, as the Romans said, that when arms speak the laws fall silent, it is equally true that when the laws speak arms fall silent. Otherwise, who would bother with laws? Every peaceable transfer of power in accord with the decision of an electorate is a coup d'état avoided. Every court case—however acrimonious the lawyers—is a possible vendetta or bloodbath averted. And so the spread of democracy, if it rests on a solid foundation, is an expansion of the zone in which the business of politics is conducted along mainly nonviolent lines. In this basic respect, the long march of liberal democracy is a "peace movement"—possibly the most important and successful of them all.

Thus in some parts of the world, at least, a beneficent cycle—a sort of cycle of nonviolence—had made a dramatic appearance. Peaceful revolution tended to produce peaceful rule (liberal democracy), which in turn has contributed to international peace. Even as, thanks to nuclear arms, the structures of war—the immemorial final arbiter—were being paralyzed, a new arbiter, a new kind of political power, was making its debut. It was the political power of people to resist oppressors and achieve self-rule, and it didn't flow from the barrel of a gun. Nor was the appearance of this force—let us call it cooperative power, as distinct from the coercive power of warfare and other violence—a marginal historical phenomenon. Political power is a capacity to decide something and make the decision stick in the realm of human affairs. In conventional wisdom, power has been equated with force. If you didn't use force you would lose, and therefore to shun force was to abdicate: to let the foe into your cou perhaps to destroy your town and kill your ly; to dictate your faith; to rule over you; t termine the shape of the future. But in ou the bearers of superior force have, in an widening sphere, failed to make their dec stick. If force remained the essence of p and the final arbiter in politics, then the B today would rule India, the United S would preside over South Vietnam, apartheid regime would survive in S Africa, the Communist Party would rule the Soviet Union, and the Soviet Union w rule over Eastern Europe. That none of things is the case testifies to the capacity operative power to defeat superior force popular resistance that brought down the B Wall was as historically consequential—as an arbiter—as either of the two world wars what William James called the "moral eq lent of war" ever been more clearly demon ed.' It ended Soviet Communism and w the famous "specter" of "international co nism." It finished off a great empire whos gins in fact predated the Communists by dreds of years. It set in motion the creati more than a dozen new countries. It wa equivalent of a third world war except i particular—it was not a war.

A NOTE ON PART TWO

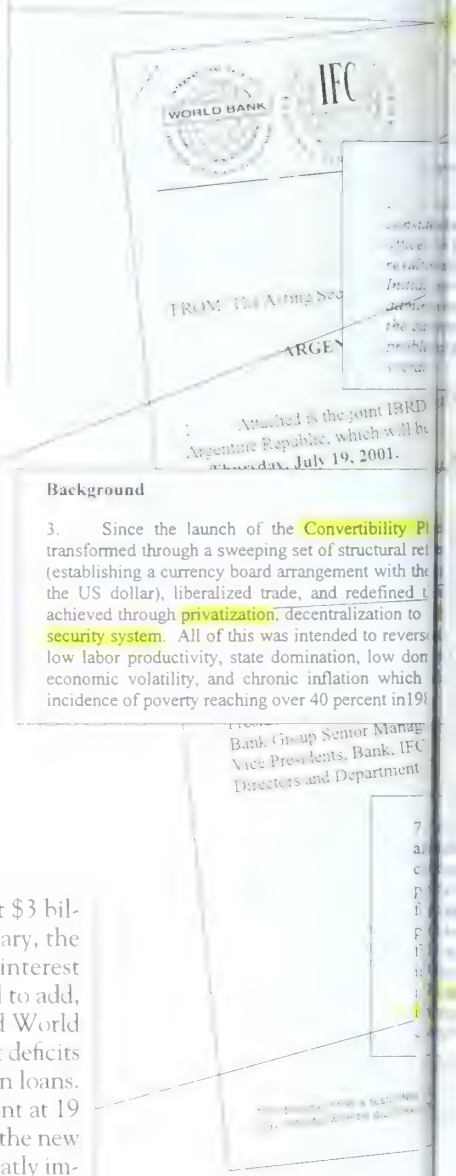
Wilson tried to establish a syst peace all at once, and he failed en the realities of the war system time, he probably had no choice. But decades between then and now, those re have changed radically in ways favora peace, and there are solid reasons for bel that a new approach, aiming at Wilsonia with new means, is feasible. The paraly great power war (and, increasingly, of n power war) by nuclear arsenals; the abse any global ideological schism that divid great powers; the nearly universal success world revolt and the collapse of all ter empires; the broadening democratic revival last several decades; the fall of totalitari in its countries of origin; and the spect success of revolutions using only "polit their means are features of a new interna landscape fundamentally different from t Wilson faced. As I will discuss in the nex they are new grounds for optimism in t stricted but real sense that *if* the will t away from force and toward cooperative were to develop, history has provided m tensive and solid foundations for accomp this than have ever existed before.


nuine Russian vodka,
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RESOLV

The World Bank/IMF tak

Green-haired protesters in the streets of Seattle were ridiculed for their belief that the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the world's finance ministers enter into secret agreements to impoverish developing nations. Here, in fact, is one such agreement: Argentina's "Country Assistance Strategy Progress Report" from June 2001. This document, nominally produced by the World Bank, represents the interlocking directives of both the Bank and the IMF, as well as, indirectly, the wishes of both institutions' largest patron, the United States Treasury Department. Marked "Confidential" or "Official Use Only," these reports are seldom publicized to the citizenry bound up in their stipulations. Yet for the 100-plus nations that rely on IMF and World Bank loans—countries such as Argentina, Tanzania, Ecuador, Sierra Leone—such agreements serve as de facto legislation, meticulous in detail and ideological in thrust. Although couched as loan conditions or as helpful development advice, these reports more closely resemble the minutes of a financial coup d'etat.


WORLD BANK IFC

Background

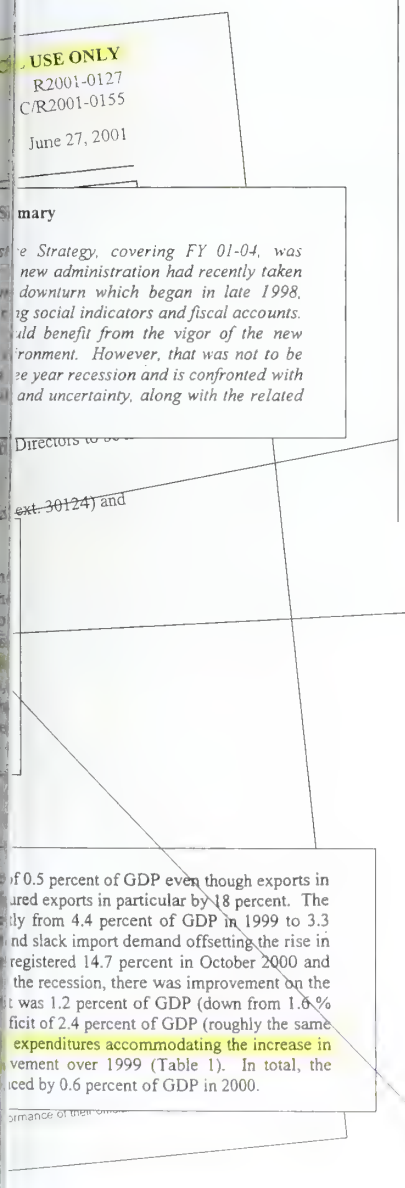
3. Since the launch of the Convertibility Pl
transformed through a sweeping set of structural ref
(establishing a currency board arrangement with the
the US dollar), liberalized trade, and redefined t
achieved through privatization, decentralization to
security system. All of this was intended to revers
low labor productivity, state domination, low don
economic volatility, and chronic inflation which
incidence of poverty reaching over 40 percent in19

At the outset, the authors of this Argentina report pause to reflect on how their strategy had performed in the past year. Twelve months prior, in June 2000, unemployment stood at 15 percent; the country had already suffered through two years of recession, during which industrial production had declined by more than 10 percent. To cut government spending in such an economy is akin to turning off the engines of an airplane in stall. And yet in a September 2000 agreement with the IMF, Argentina had been required to cut its budget deficit from $5.3 billion in 2000 to $4.1 billion in 2001. The consequences were predictable: such "austerity" had led, in the first three months of 2001, to a 2.6 percent decline in GDP from the previous year.

To reduce its deficit per IMF decree, Argentina had cut $3 billion from government spending—a cut that was necessary, the authors note here, to "accomodat[e] the increase in interest obligations." These obligations, the report did not need to add, were largely to foreign creditors, including the IMF and World Bank themselves. Since 1994, in fact, Argentina's budget deficits were entirely attributable to interest payments on foreign loans. Excluding such payments, spending had remained constant at 19 percent of GDP. Despite the visible harm caused by cuts, the new plan ordered more. This, the report promised, would "greatly improve the outlook for the remainder of 2001 and for 2002, with growth expected to recover in the later half of 2001." The Bank was slightly off the mark. By December 2001, Buenos Aires' middle class, unaccustomed to hunting the streets for garbage to eat, joined the poor in mass demonstrations.

) RUIN

sy steps, *by Greg Palast*


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June 27, 2001
mary
e Strategy, covering FY 01-04, was
new administration had recently taken
downturn which began in late 1998.
g social indicators and fiscal accounts.
uld benefit from the vigor of the new
ronment. However, that was not to be
e year recession and is confronted with
and uncertainty, along with the related
Directors to
ext. 30124) and
of 0.5 percent of GDP even though exports in
ured exports in particular by 18 percent. The
ly from 4.4 percent of GDP in 1999 to 3.3
nd slack import demand offsetting the rise in
registered 14.7 percent in October 2000 and
the recession, there was improvement on the
t was 1.2 percent of GDP (down from 1.6 %
ficit of 2.4 percent of GDP (roughly the same
expenditures accommodating the increase in
vement over 1999 (Table 1). In total, the
ced by 0.6 percent of GDP in 2000.
ormance of their

How had Argentina arrived at such an impasse? In the 1990s the nation was the poster child for globalization, having followed without question the IMF and World Bank program. The "reform" plan for Argentina, as for every nation, had *four steps*. The first of these, *capital-market liberalization*, was achieved by 1991's "Convertibility Plan," which pegged the Argentine peso in a one-to-one relationship with the U.S. dollar. This peg was designed both to keep inflation low and to make deficit spending difficult, in hopes of attracting and comforting foreign investors. Liberalized markets free capital to flow in and out across borders. But once Argentina's economy began to wobble, money simply flowed out. In July 2001, for example, Argentina bled out 6 percent of the nation's bank deposits: in panic, Argentines were withdrawing their convertible pesos as dollars, which the government was forced to borrow back at more than 20 percent to maintain the one-to-one-exchange rate. To finance this lopsided trade in the Yankee dollar, Argentina was forced to cut government pensions and salaries by 13 percent. In 2000, Ecuador did Argentina one better and "dollarized"—i.e., adopted the U.S. dollar as currency—causing the purchasing power of wages to fall by half.

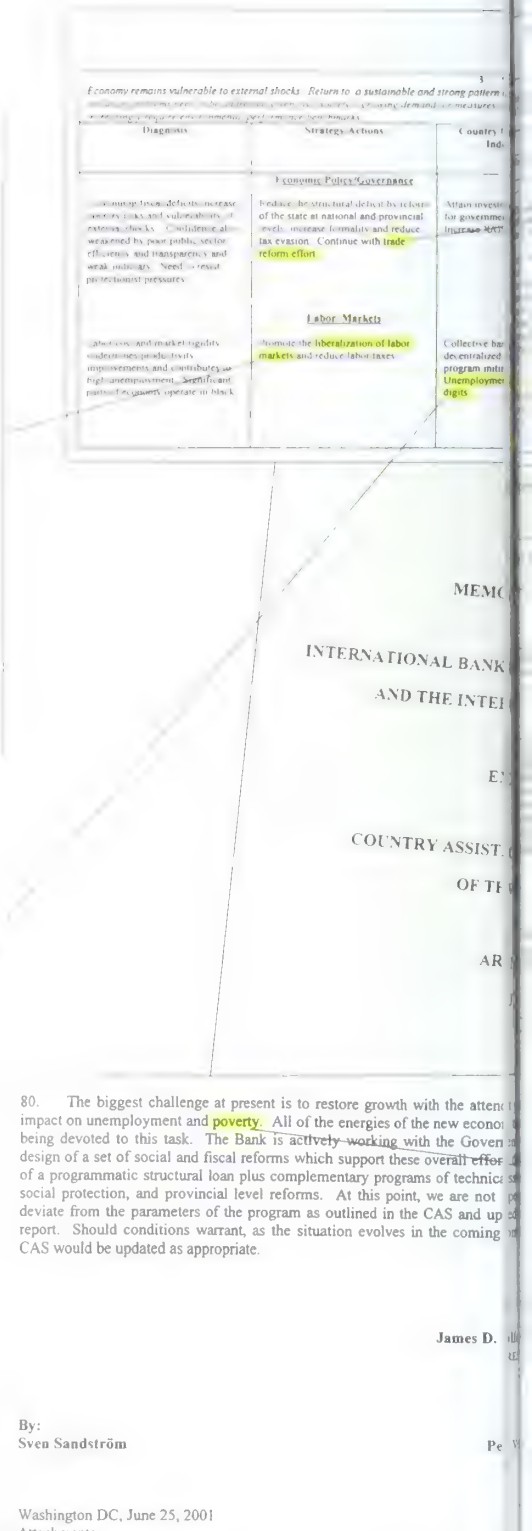
The second step in the IMF/World Bank regimen is *privatization*. Both at the urging of lenders and out of financial necessity, Argentina throughout the nineties sold off what Argentines ruefully call "las joyas de mi abuela," grandmother's jewels: the state's oil, gas, water, and electric companies and the state banks. It was quite a fire sale. Vivendi of France won rural water systems; Enron of Texas, the pipes of Buenos Aires; Fleet of Boston took the provincial banks. By the panic of 2001, there was nothing left to sell: "Almost all major public utilities have been privatized," this memo laments elsewhere. Vivendi raised water prices as much as 200 percent; Enron, too, demanded rate increases, even as its water was inadequately cleaned and its service plagued by interruptions. Former chief World Bank economist Joseph Stiglitz says the wholesale privatizations ordered by the Bank and IMF were so corrupt that he dubbed them "briberizations." Argentina's former public-works minister claims that, in 1988, an Enron lobbyist offered to "take care" of him if he would sell rights to the nation's natural gas for a fifth of the world price.

In 1994, at the World Bank's urging, Argentina partially privatized even its social-security system, diverting much of it into private accounts. The U.S.-based Center for Economic and Policy Research calculated the revenue loss from this decision alone to be almost equal to the nation's deficits during the period.

ports for BBC's Newsnight *and the* Guardian
Last month, Penguin Plume released an ex-
ican edition of his book The Best Democracy
Buy, which collects his writings on the IMF and
among other topics. His last article for Harper's
Ex-Con Game," appeared in March 2002.

The third prong of the laissez-faire putsch is *market-based pricing*. In Argentina the main target of this initiative has been labor, that most inflexible of commodities. "A major advance was made to eliminate out dated labor contracts," states this report, noting approvingly that "labor costs" (i.e., wages) had fallen due to "labor market flexibility induced by the de facto liberalization of the market via increased informality." Translation: workers who lost unionized jobs were forced into ad hoc arrangements, with far less protection. Here, the report asks the government to decentralize collective bargaining, a move that would further reduce union power. In Tanzania, when the nation's HIV epidemic was beginning in the early nineties, the IMF and World Bank required the government to charge "user fees" for visits to government hospitals. After the introduction of such fees in Dar es Salaam in 1994, the number of patients treated in the city's three largest public hospitals dropped by 53 percent. Bowing to pressure, the Bank has in recent years retreated from its demands for user fees. In June 2000 it noted in frustration that, despite its efforts, market reforms had failed to win over the Tanzanians: "One legacy of socialism is that most people continue to believe the State has a fundamental role in promoting development and providing social services."

Far from achieving this goal of "unemployment in single digits," the World Bank and IMF saw the jobless figure in the Buenos Aires area rise from 17 percent to a staggering 22 percent in the year after this report's issuance. The violence and looting that rocked the city in December 2001 thus represents a stage in the "austerity" process that Stiglitz terms the "IMF riot." When a nation, he said, "is down and out, [the IMF] takes advantage and squeezes the last pound of blood out of them. They turn up the heat until, finally, the whole cauldron blows up." A similar situation gripped Indonesia in 1998, when, after the IMF ordered a reduction in food subsidies, Jakarta erupted in fiery riots. In some cases the insurrection is literally written into the plan. Under the terms of Ecuador's 2000 agreement with the IMF, the country was required to raise the price of cooking gas by 80 percent; the Bank's strategy report for the same year, meanwhile, acknowledged that "social unrest cannot be ruled out" if such plans were implemented. One cannot accuse the Bank of inaccuracy. In early 2001 a hungry and impoverished Indian population descended from the Andes and burned cars in Quito. The report had counseled authorities to meet its detractors with "political resolve"; which, as a practical matter, meant troops in the streets.



Economy remains vulnerable to external shocks. Return to a sustainable and strong pattern

Diagnosis | Strategy Actions | Country

Economic Policy/Governance

Reduce the structural deficit by reform of the state at national and provincial levels, increase formality and reduce tax evasion. Continue with trade reform effort

Attain investm for governmen Increase

Labor Markets

Promote the liberalization of labor markets and reduce labor taxes

Collective ba decentralized program matu Unemploymen digits

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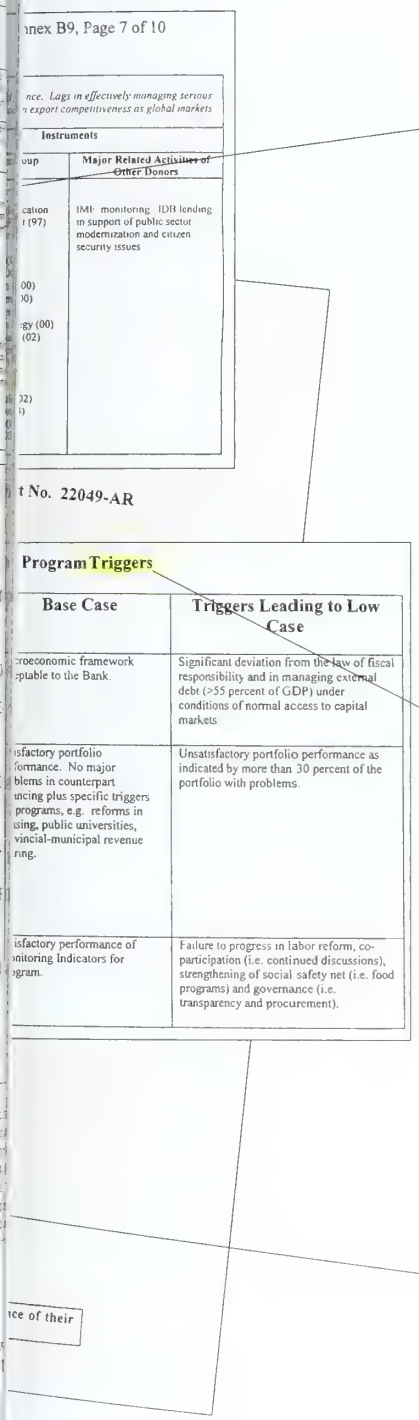
80. The biggest challenge at present is to restore growth with the attenc impact on unemployment and poverty. All of the energies of the new econo being devoted to this task. The Bank is actively working with the Goven design of a set of social and fiscal reforms which support these overall effor of a programmatic structural loan plus complementary programs of technic social protection, and provincial level reforms. At this point, we are not deviate from the parameters of the program as outlined in the CAS and up report. Should conditions warrant, as the situation evolves in the coming CAS would be updated as appropriate.

James D.

By:
Sven Sandström

Pe

Washington DC, June 25, 2001
Attachments



nnex B9, Page 7 of 10

nce. Lags in effectively managing serious
n export competitiveness as global markets

Instruments

oup | Major Related Activities of Other Donors

cation (97) | IMF monitoring; IDB lending in support of public sector modernization and citizen security issues

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Program Triggers

Base Case	Triggers Leading to Low Case
roeconomic framework ptable to the Bank.	Significant deviation from the law of fiscal responsibility and in managing external debt (>55 percent of GDP) under conditions of normal access to capital markets
isfactory portfolio formance. No major blems in counterpart ncing plus specific triggers programs, e.g. reforms in sing, public universities, vincial-municipal revenue ring.	Unsatisfactory portfolio performance as indicated by more than 30 percent of the portfolio with problems.
isfactory performance of nitoring Indicators for gram.	Failure to progress in labor reform, co-participation (i.e. continued discussions), strengthening of social safety net (i.e. food programs) and governance (i.e. transparency and procurement).

ice of their

Step four of the IMF/World Bank program is *free trade*. The loan terms of the two institutions had required Argentina to accept "an open trade policy." As recession set in, Argentina's exporters—whose products were effectively priced, via the peg, in U.S. dollars—were forced into a spectacularly unequal competition against Brazilian goods priced in that nation's devalued currency. Argentina grows a special kind of long-grain rice favored by Brazilians, and yet even as Brazil faced a hunger crisis tons of rice went unsold. One of the Bank's first ventures into "liberalizing" African markets was in Ghana, which was directed to end price subsidies for its cotton production; a Bank report from May 2002 admitted that this has left the Ghanaian cotton industry "close to collapse." In a footnote, the same report observed that under the new U.S. farm bill, the share of a typical American farm's cotton revenue that is derived from subsidies will rise to 45 percent. Stiglitz likens the West's hypocritical free-trade policies to the Opium Wars, noting, "That too was about opening markets."

Although they make demands separately, the IMF, the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization have become interchangeable masks of a single governance system. World Bank borrowers must be members of the IMF, which requires its borrowers to adhere to WTO rules. It is perhaps not a coincidence, then, that the "triggers" of these loans so often are friendly to the interests of Western corporations. In Ecuador's 2000 CAS report, the country's loan was triggered only after it permitted the construction of a controversial gas pipeline over the Andes that had long been sought by British Petroleum. In Sierra Leone, one of the "performance criteria" imposed by the IMF in 2001 was that the nation stop requiring import licenses on foreign-made cigarettes. A study by a Harvard economist found that the IMF alone held borrowing nations to an average of eighty-one "conditionalities" or other requirements.

Although these reports rarely fail to couch their fiats in terms of "reducing poverty," their performance in Argentina on this score is sadly typical. Before 1980, when the World Bank and IMF set out to rearrange the economies of developing nations, nearly all of them adhered to Keynesianism or socialism. Following the "import-substitution model," they built locally owned industry through government investment, behind a protective wall of tariffs and capital controls. In those supposed economic dark ages, spanning roughly from 1960 to 1980, per-capita income grew by 73 percent in Latin America and by 34 percent in Africa. By comparison, since 1980, Latin American income growth has slowed to a virtual halt—to less than 6 percent over twenty years—while African incomes have declined by 23 percent. The IMF itself, in a statement accompanying its April 2000 "World Economic Outlook" report, noted that "in recent decades, too many countries, and nearly one-fifth of the world population, have regressed. . . . This is arguably one of the greatest economic failures of the 20th Century." On this, at least, the IMF had it right.

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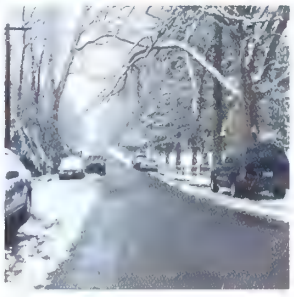
Undercover among America's secret theocrats

By Jeffrey Sharlet









And a man's foes shall be they of his own household.
—Matthew 10:36

This is how they pray: a dozen clear-eyed, smooth-skinned "brothers" gathered together in a huddle, arms crossing arms over shoulders like the weave of a cable, leaning in on one another and swaying like the long grass up the hill from the house they share. The house is a handsome, gray, two-story colonial that smells of new carpet and Pine-Sol and aftershave; the men who live there call it Ivanwald. At the end of a tree-lined cul-de-sac, quiet but for the buzz of lawn mowers and kids playing foxes-and-hounds in the park across the road, Ivanwald sits as one house among many, clustered together like mushrooms, all devoted, like these men, to the service of Jesus Christ. The men tend every tulip in the cul-de-sac, trim every magnolia, seal every driveway smooth and black as boot leather. And they pray, assembled at the dining table or on their lawn or in the hallway or in the bunk room or on the basketball court, each man's head bowed in humility and swollen with pride (secretly, he thinks) at being counted among such a fine corps for Christ, among men to whom he will open his heart and whom he will remember when he returns to the world not born-again but remade, no longer an individual but part of the Lord's revolution, his will transformed into a weapon for what the young men call "spiritual war."

"Jeff, will you lead us in prayer?"

Surely, brother. It is April 2002, and I have lived with these men for weeks now, not as a Christian—a term they deride as too narrow for the world they are building in Christ's honor—

Jeffrey Sharlet is an editor of the online magazine KillingtheBuddha.com and a co-author of the forthcoming book Killing the Buddha: A Heretic's Bible *(The Free Press).*

Photographs by Jason Fulford

but as a "believer." I have shared the brothers' meals and their work and their games. I have been numbered among them and have been given a part in their ministry. I have wrestled with them and showered with them and listened to their stories: I know which man resents his father's fortune and which man succumbed to the flesh of a woman not once but twice and which man dances so well he is afraid of being taken for a fag. I know what it means to be a "brother," which is to say that I know what it means to be a soldier in the army of God.

THE FAMILY IS AN "INVISIBLE" ORGANIZATION, THOUGH ITS MEMBERSHIP HAS ALWAYS CONSISTED MOSTLY OF PUBLIC MEN

"Heavenly Father," I begin. Then, "O Lord," but I worry that this doesn't sound intimate enough. I settle on, "Dear Jesus." "Dear Jesus, just, please, Jesus, let us fight for Your name."

Ivanwald, which sits at the end of Twenty-fourth Street North in Arlington, Virginia, is known only to its residents and to the members and friends of the organization that sponsors it, a group of believers who refer to themselves as "the Family." The Family is, in its own words, an "invisible" association, though its membership has always consisted mostly of public men. Senators Don Nickles (R., Okla.), Charles Grassley (R., Iowa), Pete Domenici (R., N.Mex.), John Ensign (R., Nev.), James Inhofe (R., Okla.), Bill Nelson (D., Fla.), and Conrad Burns (R., Mont.) are referred to as "members," as are Representatives Jim DeMint (R., S.C.), Frank Wolf (R., Va.), Joseph Pitts (R., Pa.), Zach Wamp (R., Tenn.), and Bart Stupak (D., Mich.). Regular prayer groups have met in the Pentagon and at the Department of Defense, and the Family has traditionally fostered strong ties with businessmen in the oil and aerospace industries. The Family maintains a closely guarded database of its associates, but it issues no cards, collects no official dues. Members are asked not to speak about the group or its activities.

The organization has operated under many guises, some active, some defunct: National Committee for Christian Leadership, International Christian Leadership, the National Leadership Council, Fellowship House, the Fellowship Foundation, the National Fellowship Council, the International Foundation. These groups are intended to draw attention away from the Family, and to prevent it from becoming, in the words of one of the Family's leaders, "a target for misunderstanding."* The Fa
only publicized gathering is the National
Breakfast, which it established in 195
which, with congressional sponsorship, it
tinues to organize every February in Wa
ton, D.C. Each year 3,000 dignitaries,
senting scores of nations, pay $425 e
attend. Steadfastly ecumenical, too bland
years to merit much press, the breakfast
garded by the Family as merely a tool in a
purpose: to recruit the powerful attendee
smaller, more frequent prayer meetings,
they can "meet Jesus man to man."

In the process of introducing powerful
to Jesus, the Family has managed to ef
number of behind-the-scenes acts of dip
cy. In 1978 it secretly helped the Carte
ministration organize a worldwide c
prayer with Menachem Begin and Anw
dat, and more recently, in 2001, it brou
gether the warring leaders of Congo and
da for a clandestine meeting, leading
two sides' eventual peace accord last July
benign acts appear to be the exception
rule. During the 1960s the Family forge
tionships between the U.S. governme
some of the most anti-Communist (and
torial) elements within Africa's postco
leadership. The Brazilian dictator Genera
ta e Silva, with Family support, was over
regular fellowship groups for Latin Am
leaders, while, in Indonesia, General S
(whose tally of several hundred tho
"Communists" killed marks him as one
century's most murderous dictators) was
ing over a group of fifty Indonesian legis
During the Reagan Administration the
helped build friendships between the U.S
ernment and men such as Salvadoran g
Carlos Eugenios Vides Casanova, convic
a Florida jury of the torture of thousand
Honduran general Gustavo Alvarez Ma
himself an evangelical minister, who was
to both the CIA and death squads bef

* *The* Los Angeles Times *reported in September*
Fellowship Foundation alone has an annual budg
million, but that represents only a fraction of the F
finances. Each of the Family's organizations rais
independently. Ivanwald, for example, is financed
in part by an entity called the Wilberforce Foundatio
er projects are financed by individual "friends"
businessmen, foreign governments, church congre
or mainstream foundations that may be unawar
scope of the Family's activities. At Ivanwald,
asked to what organization a donation check m
made, I was told there was none; money was rai
"man-to-man" basis. Major Family donors name
Times *include Michael Timmis, a Detroit law*
Republican fund-raiser; Paul Temple, a private
from Maryland; and Jerome A. Lewis, former CE
Petro-Lewis Corporation.

mise. "We work with power where we
he Family's leader, Doug Coe, says,
ew power where we can't."
ne 1990 National Prayer Breakfast,
H.W. Bush praised Doug Coe for what
ribed as "quiet diplomacy, I wouldn't
ret diplomacy," as an "ambassador of
Coe has visited nearly every world capi-
n with congressmen at his side, "mak-
ends" and inviting them back to the
's unofficial headquarters, a mansion
own the road from Ivanwald) that the
bought in 1978 with $1.5 million do-
y, among others, Tom Phillips, then the
of arms manufacturer Raytheon, and
sen, the founder and president of Digi-
ipment Corporation. A waterfall has
arved into the mansion's broad lawn,
hich a bronze bald eagle watches over
tomac River. The mansion is white and
l and surrounded by magnolias, and by
es that do not so much tower above it as
r. The mansion is named for these trees;
lled The Cedars, and Family members
of it as a person. "The Cedars has a heart
poor," they like to say. By "poor" they
not the thousands of literal poor living
a mile away but rather the poor *in spirit*,
irs is the kingdom: the senators, gener-
d prime ministers who coast to the end
enty-fourth Street in Arlington in black
ines and town cars and hulking S.U.V.'s
et one another, to meet Jesus, to pay
e to the god of The Cedars.
re they forge "relationships" beyond the
vox populi (the Family's leaders consider
racy a manifestation of ungodly pride) and
away religion" in favor of the truths of the
. Declaring God's covenant with the Jews
, the group's core members call themselves
ew chosen."
e brothers of Ivanwald are the Family's
generation, its high priests in training. I
een recommended for membership by a
r acquaintance, a recent Ivanwald alum-
who had mistaken my interest in Jesus for
. Sometimes the brothers would ask me
was there. They knew that I was "half
," that I was a writer, and that I was from
York City, which most of them considered
only slightly less wicked than Baghdad or
erdam. I told my brothers that I was there
to meet Jesus, and I was: the new ruling
Jesus, whose ways are secret.

At Ivanwald, men learn to be leaders by
g their leaders. "They're so busy loving us,"
her once explained to me, "but who's lov-
nem?" We were. The brothers each paid
per month for room and board, but we were
also the caretakers of The Cedars, cleaning its gutters, mowing its lawns, whacking weeds and blowing leaves and sanding. And we were called to serve on Tuesday mornings, when The Cedars hosted a regular prayer breakfast typically presided over by Ed Meese, the former attorney general. Each week the breakfast brought together a rotating group of ambassadors, businessmen, and American politicians. Three of Ivanwald's brothers also attended, wearing crisp shirts starched just for the occasion; one would sit at the table while the other two poured coffee.

The morning I attended, Charlene, the cook, scrambled up eggs with blue tortillas, Italian sausage, red pepper, and papaya. Three women from Potomac Point, an "Ivanwald for girls" across the road from The Cedars, came to help serve. They wore red lipstick and long skirts (makeup and "feminine" attire were required) and had, after several months of cleaning and serving in The Cedars while the brothers worked outside, become quite unimpressed by the high-powered clientele. "Girls don't sit in on the breakfasts," one of them told me, though she said that none of them minded because it was "just politics."

The breakfast began with a prayer and a sprinkle of scripture from Meese, who sat at the head of the table. Matthew 11:27: "No one knows the









Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him." That morning's chosen

introduced themselves. They were businessmen from Dallas and Oregon, a Chinese Christian dissident, a man who ran an aid group for Tibetan refugees (the Dalai Lama had been very positive on Jesus at their last meeting, he reported). Two ambassadors, from Benin and Rwanda, sat side by side. Rwanda's representative, Dr. Richard Sezibera, was an intense man who refused to eat his eggs or even any melon. He drank cup after cup of coffee, and his eyes were bloodshot. A man I didn't recognize, whom Charlene identified as a former senator, suggested that negotiators from Rwanda and Congo, trapped in a war that has slain more than 2 million, should stop worrying about who will get the diamonds and the oil and instead focus on who will get Jesus. "Power sharing is not going to work unless we change their hearts," he said.

Sezibera stared, incredulous. Meese chuckled and opened his mouth to speak, but Sezibera interrupted him. "It is not so simple," the Rwandan









said, his voice flat and low. Meese smiled. Everyone in the Family loves rebukes, and here was Rwanda rebuking them. The former senator nodded. Meese murmured, "Yes," stroking his maroon leather Bible, and the words "Thank you, Jesus" rippled in whispers around the table as I poured Sezibera another cup of coffee.

The brothers also served at the Family's four-story, redbrick Washington town house, a former convent at 133 C Street S.E. complete with stained-glass windows. Eight congressm[en], including Senator Ensign and seven repres[en]tatives — lived there, brothers in Christ just [as] only more powerful. We scrubbed their to[il]ets, hoovered their carpets, polished their silver[ware]. day I worked at C Street I ran into Doug Coe [who] was tutoring Todd Tiahrt, a Republican con[-] gressman from Kansas. A friendly, plainspo[ken] man with a bright, lazy smile, Coe has worked [for] the Family since 1959, soon after he graduated from college, and has led it since 1969.

Tiahrt was a short shot glass of a man [with] parts flawless hair and one part teeth. He [want]ed to know the best way "for the Christian [to] win the race with the Muslim." The Muslim, [he] said, has too many babies, while Americans [have] too many of theirs.

Doug agreed this could be a problem. But [he] was more concerned that the focus on labels [like] "Christian" might get in the way of the con[-] gressman's prayers. Religion distracts people [from] Jesus, Doug said, and allows them to [ignore] Christ's will from their work in the world.

"People separate it out," he warned T[iahrt]. "'Oh, okay, I got religion, that's private.' A [lot of] sus doesn't know anything about building [new] ways, or Social Security. We gotta take Jesus [out] of the religious wrapping."

"All right, how do we do that?" Tiahrt [asked].

"A covenant," Doug answered. The congress[-] man half-smiled, as if caught between confessing his ignorance and pretending he knew what [he] was talking about. "Like the Mafia," Doug [clari]fied. "Look at the strength of their bonds." He made a fist and held it before Tiahrt's face. Tiahrt nodded, squinting. "See, for them it's hon[or]," Doug said. "For us, it's Jesus."

Coe listed other men who had changed the world through the strength of the covenant they had forged with their "brothers": "Look at Hitler," he said. "Lenin, Ho Chi Minh, Bin Laden. The Family, of course, possessed a weapon those [oth]ers lacked: the "total Jesus" of a brotherhood [in] Christ.

"*That*'s what you get with a [true] nant," said Coe. "Jesus plus noth[ing]."

To the Family, Jesus is not just a nam[e]. is also a real man. "An awesome guy," a F[am]ily employee named Terry told the brothers [at] breakfast one morning. "He excelled in [ev]

According to the Los Angeles Times, *congressm[en] have lived there include Rep. Mike Doyle (D., Pa.), former Rep. Ed Bryant (R., Tenn.), and former Rep. Elias Baldacci (D., Maine). The house's eight congre[ss] tenants each pay $600 per month in rent for use of [the] house that includes nine bathrooms and five living [rooms]. When the* Times *asked then-resident Rep. Bart [Stupak] (D., Mich.) about the property, he replied, "We sort of talk to the press about the house."*

He was a great teacher, sure, but he a real guy's guy. He would have made *ent* athlete."

y first day at Ivanwald, on an uneven hind the house, I learned to play a two- ant of basketball called "bump" that was to sharpen both body and soul. In bump, compete at free throws, each vying to own before the man behind him sinks his. s first then you're out, with one exception: et's net narrows at the chute so that the netimes sticks, at which point another an hurl his ball up from beneath, knock- irst ball out. In this event everyone cries *mp*," with great joy.

began it. He was one of the house's lead- enty-four-year-old North Carolinian with and spiky eyebrows and a loud, disarm- h that made him sound like a donkey. side the house, waiting for a phone call, ed a second-floor window and called to for a ball. Gannon, the son of a Texas worked as a Senate aide*; he had blond d a chin like a plow, and he sang in a He tossed one up, which Bengt caught and ed toward the basket. "Nice," Gannon as the ball sank through.

on as the ball bounced off the rim, Beau he free-throw line, taking his shot. Beau od-natured Atlantan with the build of a ; as a bumper he was second only to Bengt. okay if you bump into the other guys, annon told me as my turn approached. lea's kinda to get that tension building." of me Beau bent his knees to take anoth- The moment the ball rolled off his fingers, , also from Georgia, jumped up and hurled ball over Beau's head. As he returned to is elbow descended on Beau's shoulder like ner. "Bump *that*," he said.

p was designed to bring out your hostili- ne Family believes that you can't grow in nless you "face your anger," and then aban- When bump worked right, each man was ed to lose himself, forgetting even the pre- f the game. Sometimes you wanted to get l in, sometimes you wanted to knock it out. , it didn't matter. Your ball, his, who cared? wasn't horseplay, it was a physicalized the- It was to basketball what the New Testa- s to the Old: stripped down to one simple hat always ends the same. Bump, Jesus. , Jesus.

epped to the line and, after missing, moved in for a layup. Wayne jumped to the line and shot. "Dude!" he shouted. I looked up. His ball, meant to hit mine, slammed into my forehead. *Bu-u-ump!* the boys hollered. They had bumped me with Christ.

Bengt bumped. Beau bumped. Gannon bumped. I was out of contention. Gannon joined me, then Beau. The game was down to Bengt and Wayne. When Wayne threw from behind Bengt, he hurled the ball with such force that it sent Bengt chasing his ball into the neighboring yard. "Tenacious Wayne!" Gannon roared. Wayne scooped up his own ball, leapt, and slam-dunked Bengt out. "That's yo motha!" he hollered.

JESUS "WAS A GREAT TEACHER, SURE, BUT HE WAS ALSO A REAL GUY'S GUY. HE WOULD HAVE MADE AN *EXCELLENT* ATHLETE"

Trotting back to the court, Bengt shook his head. "You the man, Wayne," he said. "Just keep it calm." Wayne was ready to burst.

"Huddle up guys," said Bengt. We formed a circle, arms wrapped around shoulders. "Okay," he said. "We're gonna pray now. Lord, I just want to thank you for bringing us out here today to have fellowship in bump and for blessing this fine day with a visit from our new friend Jeff. Lord, we thank you for bringing this brother to us from up north, because we know he can learn to bump, and just—love you, and serve you and Lord, let us all just—Lord, be together in your name. Amen."

The regimen was so precise it was relaxing: no swearing, no drinking, no sex, no self. Watch out for magazines and don't waste time on newspapers and never watch TV. Eat meat, study the Gospels, play basketball: God loves a man who can sink a three-pointer. *Pray to be broken.* O Heavenly Father. Dear Jesus. Help me be humble. Let me do Your will. Every morning began with a prayer, some days with outsiders—Wednesdays led by a former Ivanwald brother, now a businessman; Thursdays led by another executive who used tales of high finance to illuminate our lessons from scripture, which he supplemented with xeroxed midrash from *Fortune* or *Fast Company*; Fridays with the women of Potomac Point. But most days it was just us boys, bleary-eyed, gulping coffee and sugared cereal as Bengt and Jeff Connolly, Bengt's childhood friend and our other house leader, laid out lines of Holy Word across the table like strategy.

The dining room had once been a deck, but the boys had walled it in and roofed it over and unrolled a red Persian carpet, transforming the room

ion worked for Senator Don Nickles, then the -ranking Republican. The man who oversaw ld and interviewed us for admission was a lawyer Steve South, who formerly had been Senator 's chief counsel and was still a close associate.

into a sort of monastic meeting place, with two benches [illegible] and two benches. The first day I visited Ivanwald, Bengt cleared a space for me at the head of the table and sat to my right. Beside him, Wayne slumped in his chair, his eyes hidden by a cowboy hat. Across from him sat Beau, still wearing the boxers and T-shirt he'd slept in. Bengt alone looked sharp, his hair combed, golf shirt tucked tightly into pleated chinos.

Bengt told Gannon to read our text for that morning, Psalm 139: "'O Lord, you have searched me and you know me.'" The very first line made Bengt smile; this was, in his view, an awesome thing for God to have done. Bengt's manners and naive charm preceded him in every encounter. When you told him a story he would respond "Cool" or "That's nice." When genuinely surprised he would exclaim, "*Good ni-ight!*" Sometimes it was hard to remember that he was a self-professed revolutionary.

He asked Gannon to keep reading, and then leaned back and listened.

"'Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.'"

Bengt raised a hand. "That's great, dude. Let's talk about that." The room fell silent as Bengt stared into his Bible, running his finger up and down the gilded edge of the page. "Guys," he said. "What—how does that make you feel?"

"Known," said Gannon, almost in a whisper.

Bengt nodded. He was looking for something else, but he didn't know where it was. "What does it make you think of?"

"Jesus'" said Beau.

Bengt stroked his chin. "Yeah . . . Let me read you a little more." He read in a monotone, accelerating as he went, as if he could persuade us through a sheer heap of words. "'For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb,'" he concluded. His lips curled into a half smile. "Man! I mean, that's intense, right? 'In my mother's womb!' God's right in there with you." He grinned. "It's like," he said, "it's like, you *can't* run. Doesn't matter where you turn, 'cause Jesus is gonna be there, just waiting for you."

Beau's eyes cleared and Gannon nodded. "Yeah, brother," Bengt said, an eyebrow arched. "Jesus is *smart*. He's gonna get you."

Gannon shook his head. "Oh, he's already got me."

"Me, too," Beau chimed, and then each man clasped his hands into one fist and pressed it against his forehead or his chin and prayed, eyes closed and Jesus [illegible] over his skin.

WE INSTITUTED A RULE: EVERY MAN MUST WIPE THE TOILET AFTER HE PISSES, NOT FOR CLEANLINESS BUT TO CRUSH HIS "INNER REBEL"

We prayed to be "nothing." We we[illegible] there to "soften our hearts to authority." W[illegible] instituted a rule that every man must wipe t[illegible] toilet bowl after he pisses, not for cleanlin[illegible] but to crush his "inner rebel." Jeff C. did so [illegible] abstaining from "shady" R-rated movies, l[illegible] they provoke dreams of women. He was bu[illegible] like a leprechaun, with curly, dark blond h[illegible] and freckles and a brilliant smile. The Potom[illegible] Point girls brought him cookies; the wives [illegible] the Family's older men asked him to visit. O[illegible] night, when the guys went on a swing-dancin[illegible] date with the Potomac Pointers, more world[illegible] women flocked to Jeff C., begging to be dipp[illegible] and twirled. The feeling was not mutual. "I ju[illegible] don't like girls as much as guys," he told m[illegible] one day while we painted a new coat of "Ge[illegible] tysburg Gray" onto Ivanwald. He was speakin[illegible] not of sex or of romance but of brotherhood. [illegible] like"—he paused, his brush suspended mi[illegible] stroke—"*competence*."

He ran nearly every day, often alone, dow[illegible] by the Potomac. On the basketball court ang[illegible] sometimes overcame him: "*Shoot* the ball!" h[illegible] would snap at Rogelio, a shy eighteen-year-ol[illegible] from Paraguay, one of several international broth[illegible] ers. But later Jeff C. would turn his lapse into [illegible] lesson, citing scripture, a verse we were to mem[illegible] orize or else be banished, by Jeff C. himself, to [illegible] night in the basement. Ephesians, chapter 4, ver[illegible] es 26–27: "'In your anger do not sin': Do not l[illegible] the sun go down while you are still angry, and d[illegible] not give the devil a foothold."

Jeff C.'s pride surfaced in unexpected ways[illegible] Once, together in the kitchen after lunch, [illegible] mentioned that I'd seen the soul singer Al Gree[illegible] live. Jeff C. didn't answer. Instead he disap[illegible] peared, reemerged with a Green CD, and set i[illegible] in the boom box. He pressed PLAY, and cracke[illegible] his knuckles and his neck bones. His hands balle[illegible] into fists, his eyes widened, and his torso becam[illegible] a jumping bean as his chest popped out on th[illegible] downbeat. He heard me laughing, applauding, bu[illegible] he didn't stop. He started singing along with the [illegible] Reverend. He grabbed his crotch and wrenche[illegible] his shirt up and ran his hand over his stomach [illegible] Then he froze and dropped back to his ordinary [illegible] voice as if narrating.

"I used to work in this pizza parlor," he said. "It [illegible] was, like, a buncha . . . I dunno, *junkies*. Heroin." [illegible] He grinned. "But man, they *loved* Al Green. We [illegible] had a poster of him. He was, he was . . . man! [illegible] Shirtless, leather pants. *Low* leather pants." Jeff [illegible] C. tugged his waistband down. "Hips cocked." [illegible] He shook his head and howled. Moonwalking

ay, he snapped his knees together, his feet ead wide, his hands in the air, testifying.

eff C. figured I had a thing against South- ers. Once, he asked if I thought the South was cist." I got it, I tried to tell him, I knew the rth was just as bad, but he wouldn't listen. He d me I could call him a redneck or a hillbilly never called him either), but the truth was that was "blacker" than me. He told me of his ep love for black gospel churches. Loving black ople, he told me, made him a better follower Christ. "Remember that story Cal Thomas d?" he asked. Thomas, a syndicated colum- st, had recently stopped by Ivanwald for a mix- with young congressional staffers. He had re- led his audience with stories about tweaking his eral colleagues, in particular about when he d addressed a conference of nonbelievers by king if anyone knew where to buy a good "ne- o." Jeff C. thought it was hilarious but also ofound. What Thomas had meant, he told me, as that absent the teachings of Jesus there was no reason for the strong not to enslave the weak.

Two weeks into my stay, David Coe, Doug's n and the presumptive heir to leadership of ie Family, dropped by the house. My brothers nd I assembled in the living room, where avid had draped his tall frame over a bur- ndy leather recliner like a frat boy, one leg anging over a padded arm.

"You guys," David said, "are here to learn how rule the world." He was in his late forties, with ark, gray-flecked hair, an olive complexion, and eeth like a slab of white marble. We sat around im in a rough circle, on couches and chairs, as ie afternoon light slanted through the wooden linds onto walls adorned with foxhunting lith- graphs and a giant tapestry of the Last Supper. Rafael, a wealthy Ecuadoran who'd been a college occer star before coming to Ivanwald, had a hard ime with English, and he didn't understand what David had said. So he stared, lips parted in puz- lement. David seemed to like that. He stared ack, holding Raf's gaze like it was a pretty thing e'd found on the ground. "You have very in- ense eyes," David said.

"Thank you," Raf mumbled.

"Hey," David said, "let's talk about the Old Testament. Who would you say are its good guys?"

"David," Beau volunteered.

"King David," David Coe said. "That's a good ne. David. Hey. What would you say made King David a good guy?" He was giggling, not from ervousness but from barely containable delight.

"Faith?" Beau said. "His faith was so strong?"

"Yeah." David nodded as if he hadn't heard hat before. "Hey, you know what's interesting bout King David?" From the blank stares of the others I could see that they did not. Many didn't even carry a Hebrew Bible, preferring a slim volume of just the New Testament Gospels and Epistles and, from the Old, Psalms. Others had the whole book, but the gold gilt on the pages of the first two thirds remained undisturbed. "King David," David Coe went on, "liked to do really, really bad things." He chuckled. "Here's this guy who slept with another man's wife—Bathsheba, right?—and then basically murders her husband. And this guy is one of our heroes." David shook





his head. "I mean, Jiminy Christmas, God likes this guy! What," he said, "is *that* all about?"

The answer, we discovered, was that King David had been "chosen." To illustrate this point David Coe turned to Beau. "Beau, let's say I hear you raped three little girls. And now here you are at Ivanwald. What would I think of you, Beau?"

Beau shrank into the cushions. "Probably that I'm pretty bad?"

"No, Beau. I wouldn't. Because I'm not here to judge you. That's not my job. I'm here for only one thing."

"Jesus?" Beau said. David smiled and winked.

He walked to the National Geographic map of the world mounted on the wall. "You guys know about Genghis Khan?" he asked. "Genghis was a man with a vision. He conquered"—David stood on the couch under the map, tracing, with his hand, half the northern hemisphere—"nearly everything. He devastated nearly everything. His enemies? He beheaded them." David swiped a finger across his throat. "Dop, dop, dop, dop."

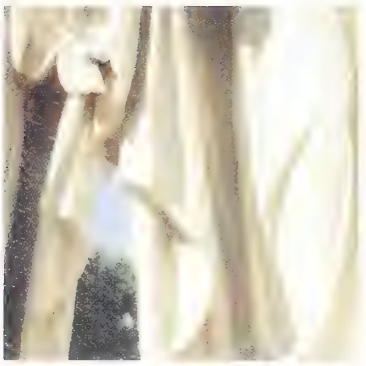
David explained that when Genghis entered a defeated city he would call in the local headman and have him stuffed into a crate. Over the crate would be spread a tablecloth, and on the tablecloth would be spread a wonderful meal. "And then, while the man suffocated, Genghis ate, and he didn't even hear the man's screams." David still stood on the couch, a finger in the air. "Do you know what that means?" He was thinking of Christ's parable of the wineskins. "You can't pour new into old," David said, returning to his

"We elect our leaders. Jesus elects his."

He reached over and squeezed the arm of a brother. "Isn't that great?" David said. "That's the way everything in life happens. If you're a person known to be around Jesus, you can go and do anything. And that's who you guys are. When you leave here, you're not only going to know the value of Jesus, you're going to know the people who rule the world. It's about vision. 'Get your vision straight, then relate.' Talk to the people who rule the world, and help *them* obey. Obey Him. If I obey Him myself, I help others do the same. You know why? Because I become a warning. *We* become a warning. We warn everybody that the future king is coming. Not just of this country or that, but of the world." Then he pointed at the map, toward the Khan's vast, reclaimable empire.

One night I asked Josh, a brother from Atlanta who was hoping to do mission work overseas, if I could look at some materials the Family had given him. "Man, I'd love to share them with you," he said, and retrieved from his bureau drawer two folders full of documents. While my brothers slept, I sat at the end of our long, oak dining table and copied them into my notebook.

In a document entitled "Our Common Agreement as a Core Group," members of the Family are instructed to form a "core group," or a "cell,"





which is defined as "a publicly invisible but privately identifiable group of companions." A document called "Thoughts on a Core Group" explains that "Communists use cells as their basic structure. The mafia operates like this, and the basic unit of the Marine Corps is the four man squad. Hitler, Lenin, and many others understood the power of a small core of people."

Another document, "Thoughts and Principles of the Family," sets forth political guidelines, such as

> 21. We recognize the place and responsibility of national secular leaders in the work of advancing His Kingdom.

> 23. To the world in general we will say that we "in Christ" rather than "Christian"—"Christian" having become a political term in most of the world and in the United States a meaningless term.

> 24. We desire to see a leadership led by God—leaders of all levels of society who direct projects as they are led by the spirit.

and self-examination questions:

> 4. Do I give only verbal assent to the policies of the family or am I a partner in seeking the mind of the Lord?

> 7. Do I agree with and practice the financial precepts of the family?*

> 13. Am I willing to work without human recognition?

When the group is ready, "Thoughts on a Core Group" explains, it can set to work:

> After being together for a while, in this closer relationship, God will give you more insight into your own geographical area and your sphere of influence—make your opportunities a matter of prayer. . . . The primary purpose of a core group is not to become an "action group," but an invisible "believing group." However, activity normally grows out of agreements reached in faith and in prayer around the person of Jesus Christ.

Long-term goals were best summarized in a document called "Youth Corps Vision." Another Family project, Youth Corps distributes pleasant brochures featuring endorsements from political leaders—among them Tsutomu Hata, former prime minister of Japan, former secretary of state James Baker, and Yoweri Museveni, president of Uganda—and full of enthusiastic rhetoric about helping young people to learn the principles of leadership. The word "Jesus" is unmentioned in the brochure.

But "Youth Corps Vision," which is intended only for members of the Family ("it's kinda secret," Josh cautioned me), is more direct.

> The Vision is to mobilize thousands of young people world wide—committed to principle precepts, and person of Jesus Christ. . . .
>
> A group of highly dedicated individuals who are united together having a total commitment to use their lives to daily seek to mature into people who talk like Jesus, act like Jesus, think like Jesus. This group will have the responsibility to:
>
> —see that the commitment and action is maintained to the overall vision;
>
> —see that the finest and best invisible organization is developed and maintained at all levels of the work;
>
> —even though the structure is hidden, see that the family atmosphere is maintained, so that all people can feel a part of the family.

* *The Family's "financial precepts" apparently amount to the practice of soliciting funds only privately, and often indirectly. This may also refer to what some members call "biblical capitalism," the belief that God's economics are laissez-faire.*

another document—"Regional Reports, Jan- 3, 2002"—lists some of the nations where ith Corps programs are already in operation: sia, Ukraine, Romania, India, Pakistan, Ugan- Nepal, Bhutan, Ecuador, Honduras, Peru. ith Corps is, in many respects, a more aggres- version of Young Life, a better-known network Christian youth groups that entice teenagers h parties and sports, and only later work Jesus o the equation. Most of my American broth- at Ivanwald had been among Young Life's e, and many had returned to Young Life dur- their college summers to work as counselors. uth Corps, whose programs are often centered und Ivanwald-style houses, prepares the best of recruits for positions of power in business and vernment abroad. The goal: "Two hundred na- nal and international world leaders bound together relationally by a mutual love for God and the family."

Between 1984 and 1992 the Fellowship undation consigned 592 boxes—decades of e Family's letters, sermons, minutes, Christmas rds, travel itineraries, and lists of members—an archive at the Billy Graham Center of Wheaton College in Illinois. Until I visited last ll, the archive had gone largely unexamined.

The Family was founded in April 1935 by braham Vereide, a Norwegian immigrant who ade his living as a traveling preacher. One ght, while lying in bed fretting about socialists, Wobblies, and a Swedish Communist who, he was ire, planned to bring Seattle under the control Moscow, Vereide received a visitation: a voice, nd a light in the dark, bright and blinding. The ext day he met a friend, a wealthy businessman nd former major, and the two men agreed upon spiritual plan. They enlisted nineteen business xecutives in a weekly breakfast meeting and to- ether they prayed, convinced that Jesus alone ould redeem Seattle and crush the radical unions. They wanted to give Jesus a vessel, and so they sked God to raise up a leader. One of their num- er, a city councilman named Arthur Langlie, tood and said, "I am ready to let God use me." Langlie was made first mayor and later governor, acked in both campaigns by money and muscle rom his prayer-breakfast friends, whose number ad rapidly multiplied.* Vereide and his new rothers spread out across the Northwest in chauf- feured vehicles (a $20,000 Dusenburg carried brothers on one mission, he boasted). "Men," wrote Vereide, "thus quickened." Prayer breakfast groups were formed in dozens of cities, from San Francisco to Philadelphia. There were already enough men ministering to the down-and-out, Vereide had decided; his mission field would be men with the means to seize the world for God. Vereide called his potential flock of the rich and powerful, those in need only of the "real" Jesus, the "up-and-out."

Vereide arrived in Washington, D.C., on September 6, 1941, as the guest of a man referred to only as "Colonel Brindley." "Here I am finally," he wrote to his wife, Mattie, who remained in Seattle. "In a day or two—many will know that I am in town and by God's grace it will hum." Within weeks he had held his first D.C. prayer meeting, attended by more than a hundred congressmen. By 1943, now living in a suite at Colonel Brindley's University Club, Vereide was an insider. "My what a full and busy day!" he wrote to Mattie on January 22.

> The Vice President brought me to the Capitol and counseled with me regarding the programs and plans, and then introduced me to Senator [Ralph Owen] Brewster, who in turn to Senator [Harold Hitz] Burton—then planned further the program [of a prayer breakfast] and enlisted their cooperation. Then to the Supreme Court for visits with some of them . . . then back to the Senate, House. . . . The hand of the Lord is upon me. He is leading.

By the end of the war, nearly a third of U.S. senators attended one of his weekly prayer meetings.

In 1944, Vereide had foreseen what he called "the new world order." "Upon the termination of the war there will be many men available to carry on," Vereide wrote in a letter to his wife. "Now the ground-work must be laid and our leadership brought to face God in humility, prayer and obedience." He began organizing prayer meetings for delegates to the United Nations, at which he would instruct them in God's plan for rebuilding from the wreckage of the war. Donald Stone, a high-ranking administrator of the Marshall Plan, joined the directorship of Vereide's organization. In an undated letter, he wrote Vereide that he would "soon begin a tour around the world for the [Marshall Plan], combining with this a spiritual mission." In 1946, Vereide, too, toured the world, traveling with letters of introduction from a half dozen senators and representatives, and from Paul G. Hoffman, the director of the Marshall Plan. He traveled also with a mandate from General John

THERE WERE ALREADY ENOUGH MEN MINISTERING TO THE DOWN-AND-OUT; VEREIDE CALLED HIS FLOCK THE "UP-AND-OUT"

As Vereide recounted in a 1961 biography, Modern Viking, one union boss joined the group, proclaiming that the prayer movement would make unions obsolete. He said, "'I got down on my knees and asked God to forgive me . . . for I have been a disturbing factor and a thorn in Your flesh.'" A "rugged capitalist who had been the chairman of the employers' committee in the big strike" put his left hand on the labor leader's shoulder and said, "'Jimmy, on this basis we go on together.'"

Hildring, assistant secretary of state, to oversee the [illegible] were being held for having "the faintest connection" with the Nazi regime), who could be released [illegible] ity in the tremendous task of reconstruction." Vereide met with Jewish survivors and listened to their stories, but he nevertheless considered ex-Nazis well suited for the demands of "strong" government, so long as they were willing to worship Christ as they had Hitler.

In 1955, Senator Frank Carlson, a close adviser to Eisenhower and an even closer associate of Vereide's, convened a meeting at which he declared the Family's mission to be a "worldwide spiritual offensive," in which common cause would be made with anyone opposed to the Soviet Union. That same year, the Family financed an anti-Communist propaganda film, *Militant Liberty*, for use by the Defense Department in influencing opinion abroad. By the Kennedy era, the spiritual offensive had fronts on every continent but Antarctica (which Family missionaries would not visit until the 1980s). In 1961, Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia deeded the Family a prime parcel in downtown Addis Ababa to serve as an African headquarters, and by then the Family also had powerful friends in South Africa, Nigeria, and Kenya. Back home, Senator Strom Thurmond prepared several reports for Vereide concerning the Senate's deliberations. Former president Eisenhower, Doug Coe would later claim at a private meeting of politicians, once pledged secret operatives to aid the Family's operations. Even in Franco's Spain, Vereide once boasted at a prayer breakfast in 1965, "there are secret cells such as the American Embassy [and] the Standard Oil office [that allow us] to move practically anywhere."

IN 1955 SENATOR FRANK CARLSON DECLARED THE FAMILY'S MISSION TO BE A "WORLDWIDE SPIRITUAL OFFENSIVE"

By the late sixties, Vereide's speeches to local prayer breakfast groups had become minor news events, and Family members' travels on behalf of Christ had attracted growing press attention. Vereide began to worry that the movement he had spent his life building might become just another political party. In 1966, a few years before he was "promoted" to heaven at age eighty-four, Vereide wrote a letter declaring it time to "submerge the institutional image of [the Family]." No longer would the Family recruit its powerful members in public, nor recruit so many. "There has always been one man," wrote Vereide, "or a small core who have caught the vision for their country [illegible] become aware of what a 'leadership led by G[illegible] could mean spiritually to the nation and to [illegible] world. . . . It is these men, banded together, w[illegible] can accomplish the vision God ga[illegible] the world."

Two weeks into my stay, Bengt announced to the brothers that he was applying to graduate school. He had chosen a university close enough to commute from the house, with a classics program he hoped would complement (maybe even renew, he told me privately) his relationship with Christ. After dinner every night he would disappear into the little office beside his upstairs bunk room to compose his statement of purpose on the house's one working computer.

Knowing I was a writer, he eventually gave me the essay to read. We sat down in Ivo Lapenwald's "office," a room barely big enough for the two of us. We crossed our legs in opposite directions so as not to knock knees.

My formal education has been a progression from confusion and despair to hope, the essay began. Its story hewed to the familiar fundamentalist routine of lost and found: every man and woman a sinner, fallen but nonetheless redeemed. And yet Bengt's sins were not of the flesh but of the mind. In college he had abandoned his boyhood ambition of becoming a doctor to study philosophy: Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, Hegel. Raised in the faith, his ideas about God crumbled before the disciplined rage of the philosophers. "I cut and ran," he told me. To Africa, where by day he worked on ships and in clinics, and by night read Dostoevsky and the Bible, its darkest and most seductive passages: Lamentations, Job, the Song of Songs. These authors were alike, his essay observed: *They wrote about [suffering] like a companion.*

I looked up. "A double," I said, remembering Dostoevsky's alter egos.

Bengt nodded. "You know how you can stare at something for a long time and not see it the way it really is? That's what scripture had been to me." Through Dostoevsky he began to see the Old Testament for what it is: relentless in its horror, its God a fire, a whirlwind, a "bear lying in wait," "a lion in secret places." Even worse is its Man: a rapist, a murderer, a wretched thief, a fool.

"But," said Bengt, "that's not how it ends."

Bengt meant Jesus. I thought of the end of *The Brothers Karamazov*: the saintly Alyosha, leading a pack of boys away from a funeral to feast on pancakes, everyone clapping hands and proclaiming eternal brotherhood. In Africa, Bengt had seen people who were diseased, starving,

ped by war, but who seemed nonetheless to erience joy. Bengt recalled listening to a group arving men play the drums. "Doubt," he said, ust a prelude to joy."

had heard this before from mainstream Chris- s, but I suspected Bengt meant it differently. ine in Dostoevsky's *The Possessed* reminded of him: when the conservative nationalist tov asks Stavrogin, the cold-hearted radical, asn't it you who said that even if it was proved ou mathematically that the Truth was outside ist, you would prefer to remain with Christ out- the Truth?" Stavrogin, who refuses to be cor- ed, denies it.

Exactly," Bengt said. In Africa he had seen trappings of Christianity fall away. All that ained was Christ. "You can't argue with ab- ute power."

put the essay down. Bengt nudged it back o my hands. "I want to know what you nk of my ending."

As I have read more about Jesus, it ran, *I have been intrigued by his style of interaction with er people.* He was fascinated in particular by encounter in the Gospel of John, chapter 1, rse 35–39, in which Jesus asks two men why ey are following him. In turn, the men ask ere Jesus is staying, to which he replies, ome and see." *I am not sure how Jesus asks the estion,* Bengt had concluded, *but from the re- onse, it seems like he is asking, "What do you sire?"*

"That's what it's about," Bengt said. "De- e." He shifted in his chair. "Think about it: What do you desire?'"

"God?"

"Yes."

"That's the answer?" I asked.

"He's the question," Bengt retorted, half-smil- g, satisfied with his inversion by which doubt ecame the essence of a dogma. God was just hat Bengt desired Him to be, even as Bengt as, in the face of God, "nothing." Not for aes- hetics alone, I realized, did Bengt and the Fami- reject the label "Christian." Their faith and heir practice seemed closer to a perverted sort f Buddhism, their God outside "the truth," heir Christ everywhere and nowhere at once, His commands phrased as questions, His will as mple to divine as one's own desires. And what he Family desired, from Abraham Vereide to Doug Coe to Bengt, was power, worldly power, with which Christ's kingdom can be built, cell by cell.

Not long after our conversation, Bengt ut a bucket beside the toilet in the downstairs unk room. From now on, he announced, all ersonal items left in the living room would go nto the bucket. "If you're missing anything, guys," Bengt said over dinner, "look in the bucket."

I looked in the bucket. Here's what I found: One pair of flip-flops. One pocket-sized edition of the sayings of Jesus. One Frisbee. One copy of *Executive Orders,* by Tom Clancy, hardcover. One brown-leather Bible, well worn, beautifully printed on onion skin, given to Bengt Carlson by Palmer Carlson. One pair of dirty underwear.

When I picked up the Bible the pages flipped open to the Gospel of John, and my eyes fell on a single underlined phrase, chapter 15, verse 3: "You are already clean."

Whenever a sufficiently large crop of God's soldiers was bunked up at Ivanwald, Doug Coe made a point of stopping by for dinner. Doug was, in spirit, Christ's closest disciple, the master bumper; the brothers viewed his visit as far more important than that of any senator or prime minister. The night he joined us he wore a crisply pressed golf shirt and dark slacks, and his skin was well tanned. He brought a guest with him, an Albanian politician whose pale face and ill-fitting gray suit made Doug seem all the more radiant. In his





early seventies, Doug could have passed for fifty: his hair was dark, his cheeks taut. His smile was like a lantern.

"Where," Doug asked Rogelio, "are you from, in Paraguay?"

"Asunción," he said.

Doug smiled. "I've visited there many times." He chewed for a while. "Asunción. A Latin leader was assassinated there twenty years ago. A Nicaraguan. Does anybody know who it was?"

I waited for someone to speak, but no one did. "Somoza," I said. The dictator overthrown by the Sandinistas.

"Somoza," Doug said, his eyes sweeping back to me. "An interesting man."

Doug stared. I stared back. "I liked to visit him," Doug said. "A very bad man, behind his machine guns." He smiled like he was going to laugh, but instead he moved his fork to his mouth. "And yet," he said, a bite poised at the tip of his tongue, "he had a heart for the poor." Doug stared. I stared back.

"Do you ever think about prayer?" he asked. But the question wasn't for me. It wasn't for anyone. Doug was preparing a parable.

There was a man he knew, he said, who didn't really believe in prayer. So Doug made him a bet. If this man would choose something and pray for it for forty-five days, every day, he wagered God would make it so. It didn't matter whether the man believed. It wouldn't have mattered whether he was a Christian. All that mattered was the fact of prayer. Every day. Forty-five days. He couldn't lose, Doug told the man. If Jesus didn't answer his prayers, Doug would pay him $500.

"What should I pray for?" the man asked.

"What do you think God would like you to pray for?" Doug asked him.

"I don't know," said the man. "How about Africa?"

"Good," said Doug. "Pick a country."

"Uganda," the man said, because it was the only one he could remember.

"Fine," Doug told him. "Every day, for forty-five days, pray for Uganda. God please help Uganda. God please help Uganda."

On the thirty-second day, Doug told us, this man met a woman from Uganda. She worked with orphans. Come visit, she told the man, and so he did, that very weekend. And when he came home, he raised a million dollars in donated medicine for the orphans. "So you see," Doug told him, "God answered your prayers. You owe me $500."

There was more. After the man had returned to the United States, the president of Uganda called the man at his home and said, "I am making a new government. Will you help me make some decisions?"

"So," Doug told us, "my friend said to the president, 'Why don't you come and pray with me in America? I have a good group of friends—senators, congressmen—who I like to pray with, and they'd like to pray with you.' And that president came to The Cedars, and he met Jesus. And his name is Yoweri Museveni, and he is now the president of all the presidents in Africa. And he is a good friend of the Family."

"That's awesome," Beau said.

"Yes," Doug said, "it's good to have friends. Do you know what a difference a friend can make? A friend you can agree with?" He smiled. "Two or three agree, and they pray? They can do anything. Agree. Agreeme[nt]. What's that mean?" Doug looked at [me]. "You're a writer. What does that mean?"

I remembered Paul's letter to the Philip[pi]ans, which we had begun to memorize. *Fulfill ye my joy, that ye be likeminded.*

"Unity," I said. "Agreement means unity."

Doug didn't smile. "Yes," he said. "*Total* u[nity]. Two, or three, become one. Do you know," he asked, "that there's another word for that?"

No one spoke.

"It's called a covenant. Two, or three, agree. They can do anything. A covenant is . . . po[wer]ful. Can you think of anyone who made a covenant with his friends?"

We all knew the answer to this, having heard his name invoked numerous times in this context. Andrew from Australia, sitting beside Doug, cleared his throat: "Hitler."

"Yes," Doug said. "Yes, Hitler made a covenant. The Mafia makes a covenant. It is such a very powerful thing. Two, or three agree." He took another bite from his plate, planted his fork on its tines. "Well, guys," he said, "I gotta go."

As Doug Coe left, my brothers' hearts were beating hard: for the poor, for a covenant.

"Awesome," Bengt said. We stood to clear our dishes.

On one of my last nights at Ivanwald, the neighborhood boys asked my brothers and me to play. There were roughly six boys, ranging in age from maybe seven to eleven, all junior members of the Family. They wanted to play flashlight tag. It was balmy, and the streetlight glittered against the blacktop, and hiding places beckoned from behind trees and in bushes. One of the boys began counting, and my brothers, big and small, scattered. I lay flat on a hillside. From there I could track movement in the shadows and smell the mint leaves planted in the garden. A figure approached and I sprang up and ran, down the sidewalk and up through the garden, over a wall that my pursuer, a small boy, had trouble climbing. But once he was over he kept charging, and just as I was about to vanish into the trees his flashlight caught me. "Jeff I see you you're It!" the boy cried. I stopped and turned, and he kept the beam on me. Blinded, I could hear only the slap of his sneakers as he ran across the driveway toward me. "Okay, dude," he whispered, and turned off the flashlight. I recognized him as little Stevie, whose drawing of a machine gun we had posted in our bunk room. He handed the flashlight to me, spun around, started to run, then stopped and looked over his shoulder. "You're It now," he whispered, and disappeared into the dark.

LAST TANGO IN WESTWOOD

On not sleeping with Marlon Brando

By Phyllis Raphael

Marlon Brando in a brown velvet jacket with a black broadtail collar has his arm draped casually over Rita Hayworth's shoulders, but his knuckles—light as a firefly's wings—are tracing the upper flank of my left arm. No one else seated in the semicircular leather banquette floating midfloor at Matteo's Italian restaurant in Westwood can see those knuckles—not Rita Hayworth, who appears to have difficulty seeing anything; not Bob, my young turk of a husband, who is seated at the opposite end of the banquette from Brando in a poor viewing position; not even the dapper Hollywood agent on my right, who was having dinner alone with Rita Hayworth until Bob and I, unwilling to wait thirty or forty minutes for a table, joined them. Of all of us, that agent might be the most amused at knowing the whereabouts of Marlon Brando's knuckles: "Phyllis," he said, when Brando materialized above us and lowered himself into our booth, "you're flicking your cigarette in your salad."

Although no one at our table knows that Marlon Brando is sending me a signal with his knuckles, his touch is heating up my skin like a sun reflector in the California desert. Heat is traveling up my arm, through my body, and into my head. I am being careful not to move, even when I breathe. Neither Brando nor I make any visible sign of what is transpiring between us. Since I became aware of his touch I haven't altered my expression, and Brando, even when looking directly at me, appears oblivious. His face, at once both tender and cruel, is not what it was over twenty years ago when I watched alongside my mother as he hulked across the stage as Stanley Kowalski in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, or even seven years later when he played the tragic small-time punk Terry Malloy in *On the Waterfront*. But now, in 1968, his body thicker but not yet shrouded in fat, he is still mesmerizing to me, never more so than at this moment as he bends the force of his charm on Rita Hayworth while beckoning me to him with his knuckles. He's looking directly at her with a gaze of such pitying commiseration, such concern, that it's difficult for me to watch them without feeling as if I'm seeing something I shouldn't. She in no way resembles the Rita Hayworth of memory, the beloved of the bad-boy genius Orson Welles and of



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the playboy Prince Aly Khan; no trace of the glamorous actress who looked out from the covers of the fan magazines I read in high school under the hair dryer in my Brooklyn beauty parlor. Her face is puffy, her hair is pulled back in a severe bun, and she's dressed in a strict, buttoned-up glen-plaid suit and laced-up oxfords. She doesn't look so much like a movie star as like a woman who, if she even had a film career, would have spent it playing the matron in British orphanages. But Brando is treating her as if she's still the luscious Gilda, her silken leg extended from the slit in a long, strapless black gown.

He'd crooned her name, looming above our table while the diners in the surrounding booths shifted to watch them. He told her how thrilled he was to see her again, how happy he'd been when he'd spotted her from across the room. His voice was whiny with a hint of brass. He took her hand, which she unfurled from a glass of scotch, and held it safely between the two of his like a small white bird. They went back some years together, he explained to us. They were old, old friends. She'd been there for him, saved him from himself, and they'd had some great times together. She shook her head and smiled like a woman who has just gotten a prize but isn't sure for what. Behind the surface recognition her eyes looked vacant, and I wondered if she knew who he was. He slipped into our booth and began talking softly to her—betraying nothing, his eyes fastened to hers—while his knuckles began their conquering march upon my skin and while Bob, the agent, and I conducted a parallel conversation, superficial and labored, about real-estate prices in the San Fernando Valley, how Angie Dickinson reshaped her body, Japanese gardeners we had known.

The restaurant was crowded that evening when Bob and I drove in from Pacific Palisades for dinner. We took one look at the packed bar and the crowd waiting for tables lined behind a velvet rope and did a quick turnaround. We thought we'd go to a natural-foods place we liked in Topanga Canyon, or maybe to one of the fish joints on the Pacific Coast Highway. But when I returned from the ladies' room, Bob pulled me to him and said, half laughing, "Brando's here. You'd never forgive me if we left." That's when we spotted the talent agent. We both knew him. We had met him at a party thrown by a New York actor friend of mine who had come to L.A. to shoot a TV series about a mild-mannered gas-station attendant who swallows a pill and becomes "Mr. Terrific." We waved and he beckoned us over. "Is your name really Rita Hayworth?" I asked as I slid into the booth alongside her, thinking her an impostor who had borrowed the name. "No," she said in a rhythmic Spanish lilt, "it's Margarita Carmen Cansino!" Which in fact, although not the answer I expected, it was.

Our booth was in the center of the floor and had a high back. Unless I climbed on my knees and peered over the top I had no way to see Brando. I went to the ladies' room again, this time from inside the restaurant out to the bar, passing in front of his table, looking but not looking as if I was looking, seeing but not acting as if I had seen. Another man sat across from him. There were espresso cups, glasses, crumpled napkins. I was wearing a clingy blue minidress, and I made it a point to walk as if I knew something, as if I had inside information, as if I were a person who never turned back, always moved straight ahead. The walk had paid off. Now here he was. What was I going to do about it?

There are those individuals, I'd learned by then from literature and from life, who pluck such a moment and others who let it sail by. I had always been in the sailing-by school myself, and this time my inclinations were in that direction. I had sent Brando a message, but the invitation was meaningless. I wanted attention but had no plan to follow through. I was not yet a person who took responsibility for her actions, did not believe that the laws of cause and effect had anything to do with me. When it came to flirtation there was no honor in me. I had married Bob while I was in college and he was in law school, and we had three children under the age of seven. Bob
I had our differences and I was
incapable of infidelity, but m
would be of the more clandestine
riety, and it wouldn't be with Mar
Brando. He wasn't real. I knew t
and so did Bob. That's why
stayed; to see the unreal made r
Seeing Marlon Brando at Matte
was like spotting JFK buying ties
Fifty-seventh Street or Marilyn M
roe in temple with Arthur Miller
Yom Kippur. You want to see th
but you don't want anything mo
One snowy night in New York, af
a meal and a bottle of wine, Bob a
I had passed The Carlyle hotel wh
JFK was in town. "Is he here?"
asked the doorman, a little loo
"Are you good?" he asked. Over
head he'd winked at Bob. "You
go upstairs if you're good." My fa
had heated up. I felt it burn in
cold air. Although I'd joked ab
the invitation all the way up Ma
son Avenue to our parking space,
ing solicited to pay a call on the pr
ident had made me uneasy. No
didn't want to go upstairs or ho
with celebrities, or bring them ho
with me, physically or emotional
not even the short distance do
Santa Monica Boulevard to the ma
sion on the Palisades where in o
intersection of fantasy with reality
as befits a young turk a
his wife—we were living.

His *due a due* with Haywor
concluded, Brando gathered up t
rest of us and launched a paean
her: what a sensitive actress she w
how much she'd taught him, t
Stanislavsky side of her, the degr
to which her insights had shaped h
performances. Hayworth leane
back, nesting under his shoulde
suddenly younger, even glowin
He'd moved her into the spotligh
and she was enjoying it. Waiters a
patrons craned their necks. Sh
laughed and shook her head. Fro
time to time she demurred, "No. N
really!" But Brando hushed her. Th
was his game. We murmured appr
ciatively, but none of us spoke.

I'd watched men commande
dinner tables before and understoo
that this was a courtship dance.
knew what he was doing and wher

was headed as he extolled Hay-
h, her beauty, her talent, her in-
on. They'd spent time together,
mplied. A distant past floated
r the table, impossible to nab, a
ation where their paths had
sed. No one—no one—was more
than Rita. They'd shared plenty
aughs, but there was more. He
ted us to know. In a business like
irs, a hotbed of lunatics with mas-
egos, a magnet for crazy people,
ful and betraying, she was a rare
y. A pure soul! A class act! He
ed his fingers in tribute. His eyes
ssed mine. I nodded to let him
ow I understood. And I did,
luding the subtext. The louder he
ised her, the better he got. Rita
yworth was the star of this story,
t Brando was the hero. Like all
ries men tell about women, this
e was really about the man who
s telling it.

A braver woman than I—and I
ew some existed—would do some-
ing other than simply sit there.
ob had told me about the young
ew York actress who had packed
r bags and flown out to L.A. after
ie night with an actor. The guy, a
ort, sweet-faced character actor,
as working on the film Bob was
oducing, and he told Bob how
ie'd just rung his doorbell and
oved in. I'd seen them together at
screening. His face gauzy with love,
e'd introduced her, a thin, shiny,
idwestern blonde, stylishly without
pstick, and said—looking foolish
hough I may not have thought so
ien)—that she'd changed his life.

Women did such things, I knew,
nd I began to wonder if I shouldn't
o the same. I saw myself breaking
nto Brando's tribute to Hayworth
nd pulling him out of the booth. I
nagined he was just waiting for me
o do it, to drag him with me across
ie floor of Matteo's, dodging waiters
ith trays of clams casino and fried
ggplant, past booths of men in body
irts and Gucci loafers and women
ith hair sprayed into bouffant tow-
rs. Just thinking about it my heart
egan to beat rapidly. I could see all
f it; the unsettling whiteness of Rita
layworth's powdered skin as I
anked Brando from her, the agent's
nowing smirk, the crimson tinge of

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rage that would erupt and color Bob's pale, freckled face. I could see myself with Brando outside in Matteo's parking lot, him leaning against a yellow Karmann-Ghia, doubled over with laughter, shaking his head, my cheek against the rich velvet jacket. I could hear him saying, "Oh Phyllis, you got it, honey. You did just right!"

Brando's voice, soft and metallic, began to wind down. Even the century's greatest actor could take this riff only so far. The thought entered my mind that he was preparing to leave us. I hadn't considered this possibility, and it pained me. I had believed somehow that he'd come into our lives and would stay for a while. The pressure on my arm subtly decreased. He'd finished. Now what?

"I'm an actress," I said. "I did the lead in a play at the Mark Taper." The words coming out of my mouth surprised me. Until that moment I'd had no plan to speak. Brando's eyebrows rose just enough to let me know that there was nothing he would like less than to hear about my starring role in a downtown L.A. showcase. This was not a man built for listening.

"I played Kitty Genovese," I told him. Like my walk across the floor of Matteo's, I was about to go someplace I had no map for, no way of knowing where I would end up. "I was killed in Queens," I said. "I lay in an alley while all the witnesses who watched my murder from their windows explained why they didn't lift a finger to save me. They all had real parts," I said. I could feel my autobiography surging up to meet his impassive face. "I was the star, but all I had to do was lie dead on the stage," I said. "They marched around my body during the whole second act—all of them telling why they hadn't come down to stop the killer. The afternoon of the final dress rehearsal there was a small earthquake. The stage trembled; I could feel it moving beneath my cheek. The audience began rustling programs and moving around. A few headed up the aisles for the exits. But [illegible] there. Careers could be made.

"I was dead—forty minutes of death—I couldn't get up unless the stage manager brought down the curtain, and this was theater-in-the-round. There was no curtain. Finally, at the end of the act, I stand up. Then Winston Moseley, the killer, stalks me. The stage goes dark. The audience sees only my silhouette." I showed Brando how I walked and Moseley stalked—hunched over the table in Matteo's, looking into my salad. "Backstage—when it was over—not one of those actors admitted there had been a tremor. 'Earthquake? What earthquake?' An agent who saw the show liked the way I lay dead on the stage and liked my silhouette, the way I was stalked. He called me afterward, and I went to see him. The meeting was the shortest in history. He said I looked much younger onstage than off, so he didn't think I'd be right for film!" At that, Brando's expressionless face slipped into laughter. He threw his head back and really laughed. I felt his touch change, his knuckles bolder and more insistent, moving in rhythm with his laughter, beating a rat-a-tat-tat on my skin.

I kept going. I told him how I played Eurydice, the tragic queen of Thebes, in *Antigone* at the Judson Theater in a Japanese Kabuki outfit, all of us white-faced, in masks. I was too young for the part, but under the makeup no one could tell. I told him how Warren Finnerty played Creon, drunk and high, late for every performance, how we struggled every night to get Finnerty made up, into his Kabuki costume and onto the stage. We never knew what he would say; he made the lines up as he went. The director wore granny glasses and spoke in a whisper. The worse Finnerty got, the lower the director's voice sank. The Kabuki concept was his idea, his artistic baby. He'd been planning this production for years. Miraculously, the show was a triumph. A friend in the audience said, "You've made theatrical history, adding improvisation to Kabuki and Greek drama." Geraldine Page and Rip Torn came twice. By closing night the director's voice was audible. I heard he went on to direct another Kabuki *Antigone* with a new (and presumably sober) cast.

I told Brando how I danced in a black slip to "That Old Black Mag[ic]" played on voodoo drums; how I r[an] out of the audience and leapt to [the] stage at Café La Mama; how I au[di]tioned for Valerie Solanas at a sle[az]y rehearsal hall in the East Village. (S[he] would go on to shoot Andy Warh[ol]. I told him how another actor an[d I] adapted a scene from a Philip R[oth] novel and got Philip Roth to co[me] watch us perform it. When it was o[ver] Roth said, "Thank you," and left. I told him how I improvised four nig[hts] a week for a year for no pay in a cl[ub] on West Ninth Street, "a toilet [on] Lower Death Street."

When I'd gone through nea[rly] everything, the odyssey of my ent[ire] career—from my early acting clas[ses] with Uta Hagen right up throu[gh] the Maxwell House Coffee comm[er]cial I auditioned for but didn't g[et] because my hands shook so badly I nearly dropped the cup—I stopp[ed]. The table was silent. No one h[ad] spoken for all the time I'd been tal[k]ing, and I had no idea how long th[at] had been—it could have been twe[n]ty minutes or two. I had been ski[m]ming along like an ice-skater, pir[ou]etting, doing figure eights. I lov[ed] being an actress, bad as I was, an[d] suppose I wanted to let Brando kn[ow] that I knew something about wh[at] he knew, that I'd put in my time [in] basements and churches and da[nk] bars where actors imitated and id[ol]ized him. Brando was sitting back [in] the booth, an indulgent, patern[al] amused look on his face—Sky M[as]terson in *Guys and Dolls*, betting [he] can make it with Sarah, the Salv[a]tion Army captain, played by Je[an] Simmons in a prim uniform. His ar[m] still encircled Hayworth. I had th[e] thought that he was probably laug[h]ing at me, that whatever set me [off] on my monologue had been ill a[d]vised. Several months earlier B[ob] had brought Lee Marvin back to o[ur] house. He'd stretched out on th[e] grass. While I poured him a drink I [had] warned me sternly never to tal[k] about acting. "Talk is for amateurs," he said. "An actor without a jo[b] should keep his trap shut!" I remem[-] bered that Uta Hagen once told ou[r] class that upon meeting those sh[e] idolized—like the Lunts—she w[as] stunned to silence. She though[t]

ndo was a genius. If she ever met
she doubted she'd be able to
ık. I should have listened.
consulted the rest of the table.
ı Hayworth oozed contentment.
hadn't been listening to me. She
ed around the banquette like a
ht bird and smiled as I imagined
Hayworth of old might have while
ing on Aly Khan's yacht sipping
ch. Bob had heard all these stories
ore and in any event took a dim
w of my acting career; he now wore
expression I knew well—the smile
man thanking his hostess for a din-
party that he hadn't wanted to go
and was now in a rush to leave.
ly the agent actually looked happy.
all three bystanders to this scene, he
med to have enjoyed it the most.
A waiter appeared with plates on
arm, steam rising from veal and
ppers. I couldn't remember order-
, but something red was put in front
me, something swimming in toma-
es. Brando mumbled fuzzily that he
d to go, he'd kept the friend at his
ole waiting too long. I felt his knuck-
lift off my arm, the skin naked and
eping. He whispered something in
ıyworth's ear and she laughed. "See
u, Mar," the agent said. Bob flapped
couple of fingers.

From above the table Brando
oked down. "Phyllis," he said in his
ft, buttery whine. "I live on Mulhol-
nd. Up at the top, honey. You can't
ıss it. Why don't you come over lat-
? I'm always up late." He added a
ne of numbers to his address. I felt
em dance up and down in my brain.
y mouth went very dry and the rims
my ears burned with heat. But I
niled as if nothing had happened.
And he walked off without
seeming to notice.

By the time we left the restau-
nt Brando was gone, his booth
eared of his espresso cup and wine
ass, his crumpled napkin and his
read crumbs. A blonde model or
ancer with skin as white as Wonder
read sat in his place across from a
an with a receding hairline who
oked vaguely Chinese. We drove
ack to Pacific Palisades, Bob teas-
ng. "Don't you want to go?" he
ked. "You're leaving the poor guy
one and rejected."

"Oh please," I said. "He has about four thousand numbers to call and all his old movies to watch."

"Don't be so sure," Bob said. "I think he expects you."

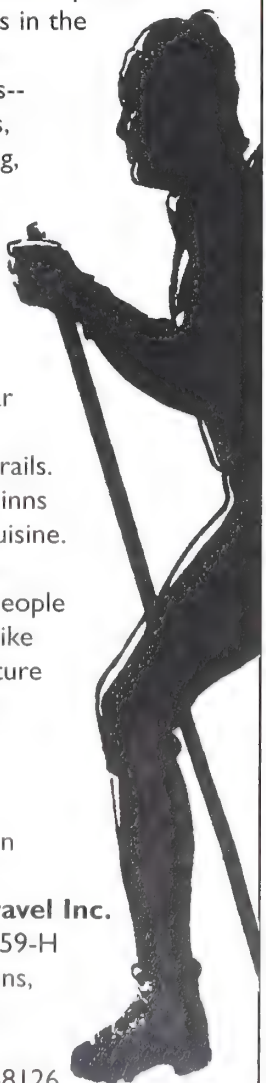
Bob was behind the wheel of the little two-seater sports car he had bought for me that was supposed to make California driving, which I hated, more fun. We drove with the top down out Santa Monica Boulevard to our house. After Bob and I divorced I would discover a car just like that one in a movie starring Audrey Hepburn and Albert Finney. It was a movie about an architect and the girl he fell in love with and married and the trips they took across France when they were young and carefree, before he was successful and she was unfaithful. There was a breeze from the Pacific hitting the open car and blowing over me, and I found myself secretly covering the spot on my arm where Brando had touched me, as if I could save what was left of him from blowing away. ■

March Index Sources

1 ACLU (N.Y.C.); **2** *Harper's* research; **3** PoliticalMoneyLine (Washington); **4** UNMOVIC (N.Y.C.); **5** Center for Defense Information (Washington); **6,7** U.S. Department of Energy/*Harper's* research; **8** U.S. Department of Defense; **9** Langley Air Force Base (Langley, Va.); **10** Mercer Human Resource Consulting (N.Y.C.); **11–13** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Atlanta); **14** Consumers Union (Yonkers, N.Y.); **15** Philadelphia Board of Education; **16** Neal Dolan, University of Toronto at Scarborough; **17** Hasbro (Pawtucket, R.I.); **18** General Mills (Minneapolis); **19** U.S. General Accounting Office; **20,21** Tomi-Ann Roberts, Colorado College (Colorado Springs); **22** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Atlanta); **23,24** U.S. Department of Labor; **25,26** CSX Corporation (Richmond, Va.); **27** *Fortune* (N.Y.C.)/*Time* (N.Y.C); **28** National Indian Gaming Commission (Washington)/Nevada Gaming Commission (Carson City); **29,30** U.S. Department of Defense/*Harper's* research; **31** Ke Chung Kim, Pennsylvania State University (State College); **32** *Aftenposten* (Oslo); **33** Office of the U.S. Attorney for the Central District of California (Los Angeles); **34** Flesh Public Library (Piqua, Ohio); **35,36** ACLU of Colorado (Denver); **37,38** *Harper's* research; **39** Zogby International (Utica, N.Y.); **40** The Luntz Research Companies (Arlington, Va.).

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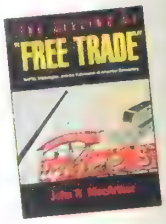


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MY KID'S DOG

By Ron Hansen



My kid's dog died.

Sparky.

I hated that dog.

The feeling was mutual. We got off on the wrong ɔot. Whining in his pen ıose first nights. My squirt un in his face and him linking from the water. ınd then the holes in the ard. The so-called acci- ents in the house. His nose nuffling into my Brooks 3rothers trousers. Him lurping my fine Pilsner beer ır sneaking bites of my Dag- vood sandwich when I fell ısleep on the sofa. Also his nability to fetch, to take a oke, to find the humor in sudden air horns. To be dandled, roughhoused, or teased. And then the growling, the skulking, the snapping at my ankles, the hiding from me under the house, and literally thousands of abject refusals to obey. Like, *Who the hell are you?*

You'd have thought he was a cat.

When pushed to the brink I shouted, "I'll cut your face off and show it to you," and the small-brained mammal just stared at me.

But with the kids or my wife little Foo-Foo was a changeling, conning them with the tail, the prance, the peppiness, the soft chocolate eyes, the sloppy expressions of love, the easy tricks that if I performed I'd get no credit for.

Oh, we understood each other all right. I was on to him.

And then, at age ten, and none too soon, he kicked the bucket. You'd think that would be it. End of story. But no, he had to get even.

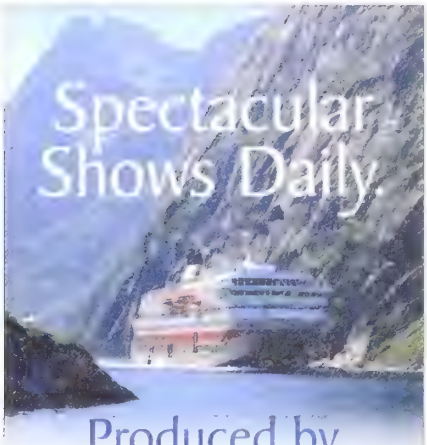
Those who have tears, prepare to shed them.

I was futzing with the hinges on the front-yard gate on a Saturday afternoon, my tattersall shirtsleeves rolled up and mind off in Oklahoma, when I noticed Fido in the California shade, snoozing, but for once a little wistful too, and far more serene than he usually was in my offensive presence. I tried to surprise him with my standard patriarchal shout, but it was no go, so I walked over and prodded the little guy with my wing tip. Nothing doing. And not so much as a flutter in his oddly abstracted face. Surely this was the big sleep, I thought.

She who must be obeyed was at the mall, provisioning, so I was safe from objection or inquiry on that account. I then made an inventory of my progeny: Buzz in the collegiate east, in the realm of heart-attack tuitions, Zack in the netherworld of the surf shop, Suze, my last kid, on

Ron Hansen's most recent novel is Isn't It Romantic? *(HarperCollins). His last story for* Harper's Magazine, *"My Communist," appeared in the November 2001 issue.*

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her bike and somewhere with her cousin. Were I to bury Rover with due haste and dispatch I could forestall the waterworks, even convince them that he'd signed up with the circus, run afoul of Cruella DeVille — anything but died.

I got a green tarpaulin from the garage and laid it out on the front lawn where I hesitated before using my shoe to roll Spot into his funeral shroud, then dragged him back into the victory garden where summer's dying zucchini plants were in riot. With trusty spade I dug his burial place, heaped earth atop him, tamped it down with satisfying *whumps*.

I was feeling good about myself, heroic, as if, miraculously, compassion and charity had invaded not only my bones but my soft-muscle tissues. I fixed myself a tall glass of gin and tonic and watched the first quarter of the USC football game. (I shall let pass without notice my unheralded career as a linebacker for the Trojans no more than thirty years ago.)

And then pangs of conscience assailed me. Hadn't my investigation of said demise of Precious been rather cursory? Wouldn't I, myself, closely cross-examine a suspect whose emotions were clouded, whose nefarious wishes were well established, whose veterinary skills were without credential? The innocence of my childhood had been spoiled with the tales of Edgar Allan Poe, so it was not difficult to conjure images of Scruffy clawing through tarpaulin and earth as he fought for one last gasp of air, air that others could more profitably use.

I marched out to the garden with aforementioned spade and with great lumbar strain exhumed our darling lapdog. Considering the circumstances, he seemed none the worse for wear, but I did detect a marked disinclination to respirate, which I took as a sign either of his inveterate stubbornness or of his having reached the Stygian shore. The latter seemed more likely. I heard in my fuddled head a line from *The Wild Bunch* when a critically injured gunman begs his outlaw gang to "Finish it." And in the healing spirit of Hippocrates I lifted high the shovel and whanged it down on Harvey's head.

To my relief, not a whimper iss from him. I was confident he defunct.

With care I shrouded and bu him again, committing earth to e and dust to dust and so on, and v spritelike step conveyed myself to kitchen where I made another gin tonic and, in semiprone position, tled into the game's third quarter, fabled Trojan running attack grind out, it would seem, anot win.

I was shocked awake by the pertinence of a ringing telepho which I, with due caution, answer It was my wife's friend Vicki inq ing about the pooch, for it was assertion that Snip had fancie taste of her son's upper calf a without invitation or permission do so had partaken of same wit the last twenty-four hours. Ev while I was wondering what toxic lurked in the child's leg and to wh extent the poison was culpably sponsible for our adored pet's acti able extinction, a loss we would for our lifetimes, Vicki insisted th have the dog checked out by a vet ascertain if he had rabies.

Cause of death: rabies? It seem unlikely. Notwithstanding his su ness, there'd been no Cujoesq frothing or lunging at car windo but my familiarity with torts of sorts has made me both careful a rather unctuous in confrontati with a plaintiff, and so I assured t complainant that I would accede her request.

Off to the back yard again, pace that of a woebegone trudg and with my implement of agricu ture I displaced the slack and loo ened earth. This was getting ol With an accusatory tone I sai "You're doing this on purpose, are you," and I took his silence as a pl of nolo contendere.

My plan, of course, was to empl the Oldsmobile 88 to transport burden to the canine's autopsy at Kathy's office just a half mile awa However, upon settling into its plus front seat, it came to my attention th Zack—he who is but a sojourner o this earth—had not thought to re plenish the fuel he'd used up on h

to the Hollywood Bowl on the ious night. The vehicle was not condition of plenitude. Would ferry us farther than a block. /ith Buster lying in the altogether he driveway, not yet unsightly but alendar page, I went into the house found an old leather suitcase in attic, then stuffed the mutt into larger flapped compartment before ing him on his final journey to those veterinary rooms he always shivered in.

am, as I may have implied, a n of depth, perspicacity, and rly Olympian strength, but I nd myself hauling my heavy and less cargo to Dr. Kathy's with a nounced lack of vigor and re- ve. The September afternoon was t, the Pasadena streets were va- nt, the entire world seemed to ve found entertainment and cease in ways that I had not. I s, in a word, in a sweaty snit, and er many panting and pain-filled ps, my spine in Quasimodo con- uration and my right arm gradual- inching longer than my left, it s all I could do not to heave the itcase containing Wonderdog into haulaway behind the Chinese staurant.

But during our joint ordeal I had veloped a grudging affection for r pet; he who'd been so quick to fend my kith and kin against the oise of passing trucks, who took ud notice of the squirrels outside, ho held fast in the foyer, hackles ised, fearlessly barking, whenever mpany arrived at the front door. /ith him I seemed calm, masterful, nd uneccentric, the Superior Man hat the *I Ching* talks so much bout. Without him, I thought, I ould be otherwise.

I put down the suitcase to shake he ache from my fingers and sub- ract affliction from my back, and it as then that my final indignity ame. An angel of mercy spied my light, braked his ancient Cadillac, nd got out, his facial piercings and attoos and shoot-the-marbles eyes elying the kindness and decency of is heart as he asked, "Can I help ou with that suitcase?"

"I can handle it."

"Are you sure?"

"I'm just two blocks away."

"What the heck's in it?" he asked.

And for some reason I said, "A family heirloom."

"Wow!" he said. "Why don't you put it in my trunk and I'll help you with it? I got nothin' better to do."

Well, I did not just fall off the turnip truck. I would have been, in other circumstances, suspicious. But I was all too aware of the weight and worthlessness of my cumbrance, and so I granted his specified offer, hoisting the deceased into the Seville and slamming down the trunk lid. And, in evidence of our fallen state, my Samaritan immediately took off without me, hooting and peeling rubber and speeding west toward Los Angeles.

I could only lift my hand in a languid wave. *So long, old sport.*

Our world being the location of penance and recrimination, it was only right that my last kid should pedal up to me on her bike just then and ask, "Daddy, what are you doing here?"

Waving to a guy, I thought, *who's apt to be rather surprised soon.*

And then I confessed. Spot's sudden death, the burial, not the exhumation and execution attempt, but the imputation of rabies and my arduous efforts to acquit his reputation with a pilgrimage to the vet's.

Suze took it in with sangfroid for a little while, but then the lip quivered and tears spilled from her gorgeous eyes, and as I held her close she begged me to get her another dog just like Sparky. And that was Sparky's final revenge, for I said, "Okay, honey. Another dog, just like him." ■

Answers to the February Quiz, "Love's Labor"

1 The vulva; **2** The left hand's third finger; **3** To convince them to end the Peloponnesian War; **4** Ovid; **5** The Crusades; **6** Cervantes's *Don Quixote*; **7** Victor Hugo; **8** Walt Disney; **9** His mother's nudity; **10** France; **11** Poland; **12** Alexander the Great; **13** Martin Luther; **14** He died.

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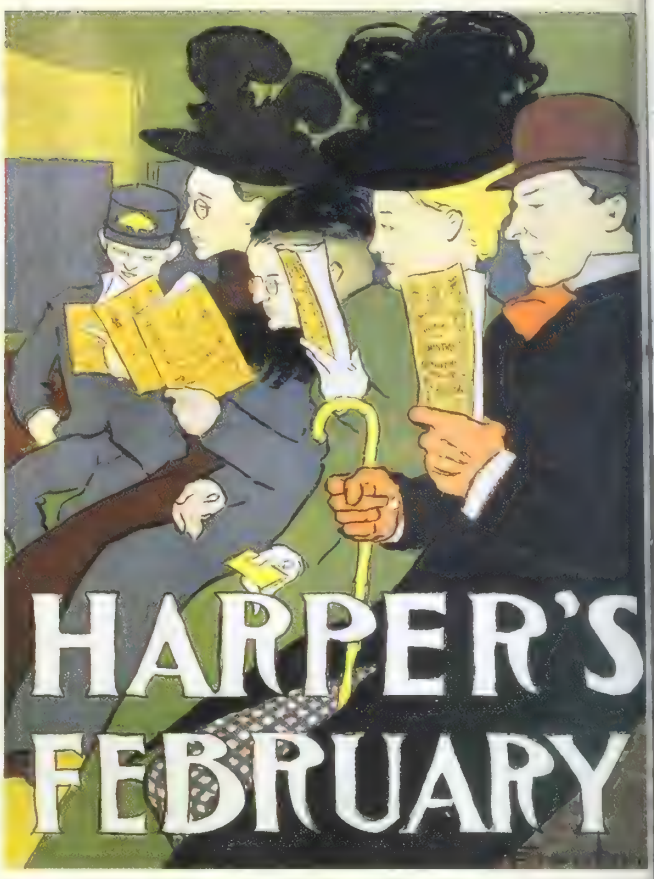
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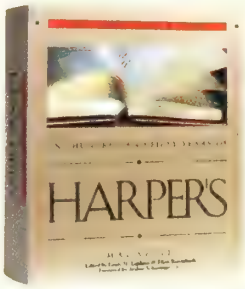
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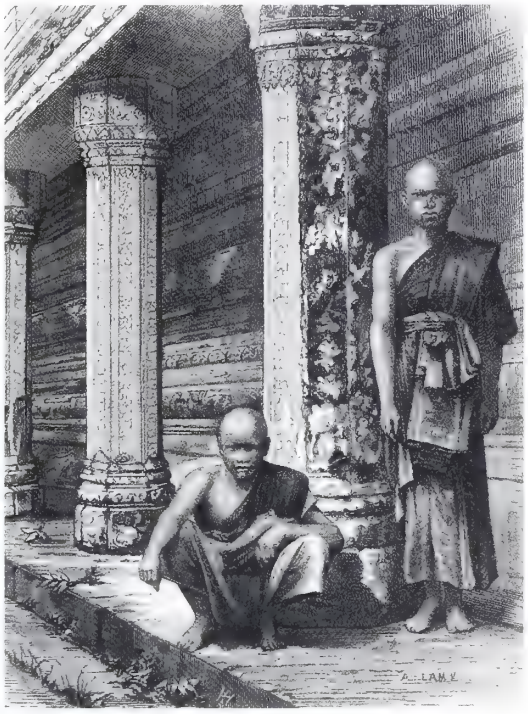
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t is possible to go to Cambodia and skip the killing fields—to fly directly from, say, Bangkok to Siem p, where there is a new airport, s that convey you to hotels, and les that ease you into the bewiling Angkor temple complex, a dstone model of the Hindu unise (with a gloss of golden Buddhas) prising 200 square miles of jungle l a thousand years of ruin. At night, en bats come out to feast on draglies, you might even see the shadof a French ethnologist speeding on motorbike from the Terrace of the phants to the Gate of the Dead, his ghter hanging on behind.

This would be François Bizot, a holar of Buddhism at Angkor, a ver of mendicant monks and goldfore dawns before he was arrested, tored, then mysteriously released by e Khmer Rouge in 1971; before he dured the surreal fall and forced



acuation of Phnom Penh in 1975; fore he became a Sorbonne profesr and wrote THE GATE (Knopf, 4), his angry, mournful memoir of narionettes sacrificed to wolves."

"Gate" refers here not to the entrance to a temple but to the French Embassy in Phnom Penh, where thousands of refugees camped out in April 1975, while the green caps and the black pajamas, stunned to have occupied the capital city without a fight, paused to decide whom to hurt next. Bizot, fluent in Khmer, was the liaison between the embassy and the cadres, and managed to scrounge some food, save some relics, and post his daughter off to Paris. Those in the compound with foreign passports were eventually trucked to Thailand. Those without—remember Saigon?—had to fend for themselves.

But there were two million others none of us saved. And theirs are the ghosts you meet if you stop in Phnom Penh on your way to Angkor. You'd rather sit on the restaurant roof of the Foreign Correspondents Club and admire the Tonle Sap, but someone will insist on taking you to Tuol Sleng, the grammar school that the Khmer Rouge turned into a torture chamber—stirrups, bits, manacles, electrical wires, and centipedes—and then on to the pagoda of skulls in the killing fields, where so many thousands of Tuol Sleng's prisoners were beaten to death to save on bullets.

There is a photo at Tuol Sleng of its warden: laughing eyes, bared teeth, big ears. This is the very man who for three months in 1970 interrogated François Bizot in a prison camp in the Omleang forest: Douch, a former teacher of math whose "passionate pursuit of moral rectitude" and "genuine belief in justice" led him, even as he beat his prisoners "until I'm out of breath," to gamble on Bizot's innocence. Although his release seems to have been ordered from the top, without Douch as an ally Bizot wouldn't have lasted long enough to come to Pol Pot's personal attention.

"My wretched friend," Bizot calls Douch here; but he won't forgive him, nor anyone else in Cambodia or the West who failed to stop the slaughter. Nor anyone who subscribes to "the notion of a new dawn in which *Homo sapiens* will live in harmony: the hope this utopian dream engenders has justified the bloodiest exterminations in history." Although I admire *The Gate*, this sentence is the same sort of rubbishy thinking that blames the Holocaust on the Enlightenment. It wasn't Verlaine's fault that Pol Pot admired his poetry.

Dreadful as it was, what Allied bombers did to German cities in World

graving of two priests at the Angkor temple complex, 1868, by A. Lamy, and
otograph of Takeo Temple, 1935 © Mary Evans Picture Library

War II wasn't as bad as what the Khmer Rouge did to Cambodia. Still, the numbers appall: 600,000 civilians dead, as W. G. Sebald tells us in his posthumous book of essays,

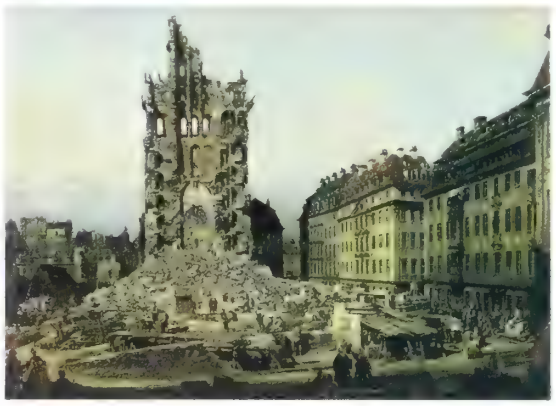
(Random House, $23.95), and seven and a half million homeless. Never mind why the British sought to destroy Nuremberg and Cologne instead of such strategic targets as ball-bearing factories and railway junctions. What preoccupies Sebald here, as in his eerie novels, is the career of guilt in history. Why do so few German writers face up to this "landscape of ruins," this psychic ground zero? Because, he suggests, they were so compromised by their behavior during the Third Reich that they've been busy ever since rewriting their own story, coming up with an alibi.

Max Frisch is an exception, and so is Hans Magnus Enzensberger, as well as, of course, Heinrich Böll, except that Böll's *Der Engel schweig*, although written in the late 1940s, wasn't published until 1992. I don't know why Sebald ignored Günter Grass. But this leaves him plenty of room to think about Arno Schmidt, Peter Weiss, and Alfred Andersch, as well as Peter de Mendelssohn, a writer new to me, who seems to have put Albert Speer into a trashy novel called *Die Kathedrale*.

Destruction is as scary on the firebombing of Hamburg as *Slaughterhouse-Five* is on the firebombing of Dresden: "Those who had fled from their air-raid shelters sank, with grotesque contortions, in the thick bubbles thrown up by the melting asphalt." But didn't such bombing get its start with the Germans at Guernica? Maybe we'd be better off reading the most recent U.N. report on "The Impact of Conflict on Children," according to which civilian fatalities in wartime have risen from 5 percent of the total death count in 1900 to 90 percent in the 1990s. There is nothing "natural" about it.

Ted Kaczynski, on the other hand, was very selective. He seems to have spent as much time in his Montana cabin picking his targets (electrical-engineering professors, computer-rental clerks) as he did making his bombs (smokeless powder, rigged barometer). Whether he was an ecoterrorist or just a serial killer with a spiel, he was extremely antisocial. Alston Chase tells us in

(Norton, $26.95) that Kaczynski



used to string up wire across the trails near his cabin "in hopes of garroting backcountry bikers."

Harvard and the Unabomber is the kind of book that tells you plenty but drives you nuts. Chase prefers to blame what happened to Ted, an upwardly mobile Polish-American scholarship boy, on "the culture of despair" at Harvard in the late fifties rather than on "the age of Aquarius" in the sixties. And so we have to read a lot of the author's undercooked lasagna about Aristotle, Faust, and Western science since the Renaissance, his furious digressions on Dostoevsky and Colin Wilson, his stand-up routines on Hitler and vegetarianism, Schopenhauer and vengeance, the CIA and LSD. He's all over the funny farm, with microfilm in every pumpkin. But he has also gotten access to notebooks, letters, transcripts, reading lists and shrinks, and inside stuff on a Cambridge psychological-testing program that seems to have abused Kaczynski's psyche for three years. There is more here, a prurient surfeit, than we actually need to know about the Unabomber, but at least he turns out to be more interesting than his manifesto was.

Still, I was an upwardly mob Irish-American scholarship boy Harvard about the same time Kaczynski and Chase, and full of c animus, too, and yet managed no kill people. What I'd really like know is why Chase, *and* Bizot, *and* bald, find the mystery of violence much more compelling than ana gous mysteries of heroic abnegation you feel rotten about the world, w not join the Peace Corps Doctors Without Borders Women in Black? For a tr refreshing change of pace, come a nun.

A couple of nonviole options do occur to s eral of the charact in SOMERSAULT (Grove Pr $29.95), Kenzaburo Oe's fi novel since his Nobel Prize, h it's clear that most of th characters would rather bu down the house. Ten years a in a televised press-conferen "somersault," Patron and Gu had to renounce their own bootlegg End-of-Time religion so as to d suade a militant faction of their f lowers from blowing up nucle power plants all over Japan. Sin then, Patron hasn't had a vision o trance for Guide to interpret. Som thing, though, has begun to stir. a remote island like the one where himself was born, a new apocalyp cult is welcoming not only t remnants of Patron's disgrac church—the Quiet Women and t Technicians—but the disaffect everywhere, including Young Fir flies and the Base Movement of Fo mer Brother Gii. Jonah and the wha are both important, Nostradamus ge a mention, and so do the Broth Karamazov. There is a surprisi amount of sex, much of it gay a some morose. Oe is obviously thin ing about the Aum Shinrikyo cu and sarin gas in the Tokyo subwa Nor has he ever stopped parsing H roshima—his own Dresden, his ow Hamburg.

The idea of the "somersault" is whole lot more appealing than Th Fall. But this novel does go on, f 570 blabby pages, and is more fun talk about than to read.

Dresden in Ruins After Prussia's Invasion of Saxony in 1756, by Bernardo Bellotto, 1720–1780. © Erich Lessing/Art Resource, New York City.

HE THING POET

n the life and rime of Karl Shapiro

John Updike

ssed in this essay:

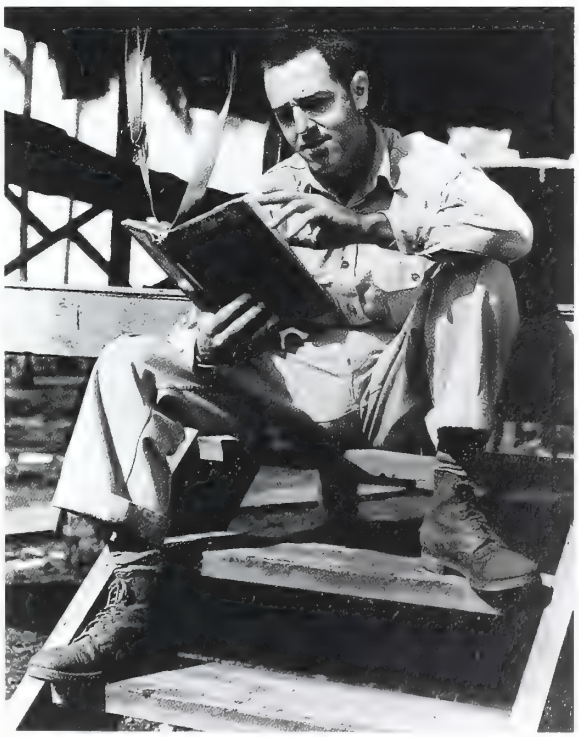
ted Poems, by Karl Shapiro. The Library of America, 2003. 240 pages. $20.
y on Rime with Trial of a Poet, by Karl Shapiro. The University of Michigan ress, 2003. 128 pages. $35.

Karl Jay Shapiro was born in Baltimore in 1913; when he was drafted into the peace- army, in March of 1941, he was teenage conscript but a twenty-n-year-old man whose poetic vo- on was already well developed. poems were appearing in *try* and *Partisan Review*, on the eve of his shipping to the South Pacific in 42 (on the *Queen Mary*, ich had been painted gray use as a troop ship), he l arranged with Reynal & chcock for his first com- rcially published collec- n, *Person, Place and Thing*. is was not his first appear- e between hard covers. In 35 his father and uncle had anged, through a medical- tbook company, for a vol- e, *Poems*, to be privately nted by the Waverly Press Shapiro's hometown of ltimore—an event sardon- lly recalled in the poem ecapitulations":

The best review was one I wrote
myself
Under the name of a then-dear-
est friend.
Two hundred volumes stood
upon my shelf
Saying my golden name from end to
end.

n Updike's most recent novel, Seek My *ce, was published last year by Knopf. His rt story "Spanish Prelude to a Second Mar- ge" appeared in the October 2002 issue of* rper's Magazine.

In 1941 twenty-one of his poems, under the laconic overall title "Noun," represented him in *Five Young American Poets*, the second of a New Directions series. *Person, Place and Thing* won warm reviews as well as *Poetry* magazine's Levinson Prize. When he was stationed in Australia, Shapiro became the friend and lover of Cecily Crozier, the editor of the avant-garde literary magazine *A Comment*; his brisk, revelatory memoir of his youth, *The Younger Son*, disguised her as "Bonamy Quorn." In Melbourne in 1942, she published for him a new collection, *The Place of Love*, which contained poems of his and fragments of the letters the two had exchanged when his military duties separated them. Shapiro was in the Medical Corps and saw most of his action in New Guinea. In his three years overseas, under what he called "the peculiarly enlivening circumstances of soldiering," he composed most of the content of *V-Letter and Other Poems* (1944) and all of the 2,070-line *Essay on Rime* (1945). *V-Letter*, edited and arranged by his agent and future first wife, Evalyn Katz, won the 1945 Pulitzer Prize for Poetry.



Shapiro had already achieved some celebrity back in the States as "a kind of phenomenon, a poet in the Battle Zone." Honors awaited him in postwar America. He served in 1946–47 as the consultant in poetry at the Library of Congress (a post now dignified by the title of poet laureate). In 1947 he was named an associate professor of writing at Johns Hopkins, though his own forays into higher education had never quite won him a college degree. For the rest of his working life he was in the poetry business. He left the job at Johns Hopkins in 1950 to edit *Poetry* in Chicago; then, in 1956, he became a professor of English at the University of Nebraska and the editor of *Prairie Schooner*. He taught from 1966 to 1968 at the Circle campus of the University of Illinois in Chicago, and from 1968 to 1985 at the University of California, Davis.

His reputation, to some extent, faded into the west with him; Robert Lowell and Elizabeth Bishop became the favored poets of his generation, and although Shapiro won the Bollingen Prize in 1968 the award was shared with John Berryman. Impolitically, he published criticism of his peers, beginning with *Essay on Rime*. "Nothing is more perilous to a poet's reputation than

otograph © AP/Wide World Photos

indulgence in criticism," he had written in *The Younger Son*, but "he" didn't see any point in keeping mum about anything so important as his opinion." His publication, in 1964, of *The Bourgeois Poet*, consisting entirely of untitled, aggressively personal, and frequently sardonic prose poems, seemed almost an abdication, alienating readers who had admired his mastery and variety of metrical form. In later verse he wryly noted that "My Fame's Not Feeling Well" and registered his irritation at such a slight as his being dropped from the 1976 edition of *The Oxford Book of American Verse*, having been amply represented in the 1950 edition.** With his third wife, the translator Sophie Wilkins, Shapiro returned to the eastern United States in 1994, and he lived on New York City's Upper West Side until his death in the year 2000.

Shapiro's habits of mind were restless and contrarian. The originality, charm, and power of his early poems lie in their eagerness to render aspects of American experience never before given the dignity of a high rhetoric. He came to poetry in the wake of his more academically gifted older brother, Irvin; he grew up overhearing Irvin's conversations with his intellectual friends and prowling through the large number of books that came into the house by way of overflow from his father's moving and storage business, which included appropriation of unclaimed lots. The younger son read Poe (Baltimore's own in his last years), and Whitman, and late Victorians like Coventry Patmore and Algernon Charles Swinburne, whose long lines haunted Karl Shapiro's verse into his maturity; he was perhaps the last modern poet with an appetite and a flair for anapestic meter. The poems in his first, privately published volume include quaintly crabbed love sonnets, Shakespearean rather than Petrarchan in form; a rondeau, a triolet, a villanelle; verses of an antiquarian quaintness ("Gladdith! thy flag aflaunt/Thou lusty Troynovaunt!"); and then, after this elaborate Georgian sickliness, spare free verse thin and clipped on the page, in imitation of E. E. Cummings and William Carlos Williams.

After a youthful stage of being "drunk on Eliot," he had taken Williams as his living exemplar; Shapiro sent the Rutherford doctor a copy of his first book, and Williams responded with "a long reply, a warm, friendly, encouraging greeting that said nothing about the quality of the poems." Shapiro, in *The Younger Son*, praises Williams as his favorite modern American poet, though he cannot be, he says, a Williams disciple. The doctor-poet, in his Rutherford domain, functioned as "an authority and a savior and a cop, a force in the little town," and his minimal, direct, joyful poems on "an apple on the porch rail or a cat putting his foot into the jam pot" required, Shapiro felt, "a sense of propriety": "Williams was an owner, and the young poet could never own Baltimore." Baltimore was owned by others—the rich old Catholic families and "the richer blue-eyed Protestants" and even the Sephardic and Germanic Jews. An offspring of Russian Jews living "on a modest car-lined street where the almost-rich Jews lived" would have to settle for being "a spy or at least a watcher."

Williams, with his direct embrace of American facts, gave Shapiro his attitude. Auden gave him his voice, "the natural modern diction and the use of words that had never appeared in poetry: textbook words, newspaper words, the convoluted syntax, the mixture of economics and love, the brilliance and the gloom." Baltimore, especially Jewish Baltim was a center of Communist acti Shapiro discovered Auden British magazine at a Commu bookstore and was inspired by "long Auden historical-proph sweep " to write the most ambit of his juvenile poems, a tortu meditation on Marxism cal "Irenicon," clotted with words "trepid," "connate," and "guerd It is rough chewing, but at le Shapiro had taken a bite of the city around him:

> It squirrels were rats, how ugly would be—
> And passing the dumps, these t seem rats enough,
> In fire-silt trudging the bitterne trash . . .

A frequent streetcar ride car the poet past an extensive cemet and, as he relates in *The Your Son*,

> he began to think of a poem ab this great city of the dead, wh when he wrote it would have a sli ly Marxist tone of indignation, tou ing on the class distinctions of cemetery world. . . . It would be his authentic poem, as he thought of i afteryears, and for the poetics could thank Auden, at least for diction of the epithets.

The poem was "Necropolis." It, gether with "University," "M night Show," and "Love Poe made up the first batch of his poe accepted by *Poetry*, in August 1940; he tells of how he read t blue note of acceptance at the tr ley stop, waved the trolley past, back to his apartment, phoned inform his employer (Sears R buck) that he would not be in t day, and "sat back and read holes the blue notice." "Auto Wreck" another early poem whose inspi tion his memoir recalls. After evening of lovemaking with a p fume salesgirl whose sexuality ceives his memoir's highest ratit he encountered, while walking t three miles back home through t summer night, a spectacular, sic ening auto wreck. For more than page he dwells upon the prosody the poem, its iambs and spondee and Donne's and Herbert's and M

Writing in the 1980s, Shapiro followed [illegible] and spoke of himself in the third person.

** *The 1950 edition was edited by F. O. Matthiessen, to whom Shapiro dedicated a collection and addressed a heroic poem [illegible] suicide; the 1976 edition was edited by the critic and Joyce biographer Richard Ellmann, who in the poem, "On Being Yanked from a Favorite Anthology," appears as an [illegible] pulpulistic Joycean cockroach," and a "whore."*

inventive metrics, and then
ins:

leave her in the peace of the night
d walk home in sleeping streets
ong sleepers, straight into this
ghtmare, was like the world just
w, seemingly quietly going about its
siness but walking straight into the
ghtmare that nobody could stop.

ne future soldier-poet was al-
y moving toward the coming
tmare, "for the world was now
nd to the utmost tightness in
of the last détente." His antici-
ry mood reached a climax in the
al, jangling "Scyros," which was
influenced by seventeenth-
ury diction, its stanza based on
of Milton's "Nativity Ode." It is
em Shapiro included in all his
anthologies, though it is untypi-
—Auden at his most uncon-
nably jaunty—and not easy to
e sense of, even when we know
Scyros is where Rupert Brooke
d and that the odd epigraph
ffle and sniff and handkerchief"
om a poem by him. Other poems
clarified by what Shapiro re-
mbers about them. The snide
e of "University" derived from a
b delivered to him on the cam-
of the University of Virginia
nequals blankly pass"), not by a
ntile but by two German Jews
o had been friendly acquain-
ices in Baltimore. Shapiro's
ther came from Virginia, his fam-
lived there for a time, and he
ought of himself as something of a
utherner; Emporia was the Vir-
nia town where his maternal
ndfather had a dry-goods store, a
odest "Emporium."

In general, Shapiro's poems are
cessible without private clues—
rhaps, for New Critical tastes, too
cessible. Randall Jarrell, in a de-
ription the subtle hostility of
hich did not prevent Shapiro from
oting it, described the poems as
esh and young and rash and live;
eir hard clear outlines, their flat
ld colors create a world like that
a knowing and skillful neoprimi-
ve painting, without any of the
nfusion or profundity of atmos-
here." Shapiro recalled of his
loved perfume salesgirl that "she
was, like him, one of those born with the happiness gene," and his models, Whitman and Williams and Auden, were happy poets, busily turning the world into words. Even amid "the necessary futility of war," the poet-soldier "would not go so far as to say he was happy, but he wasn't the opposite, either; his writing saw to that." His mind-set is opposed to that of Eliot and Lowell, for whom the world is invincibly tainted, and in some distasteful way alien. Of himself, Shapiro said, "To write poetry out of commonplaceness is to love or accept the common, and in fact he did." In such poems as "Auto Wreck," "Drug Store," "Buick," "Haircut," and "Honkytonk," an urban, commercialized, industrial environment is illumined and cherished in a prosody ranging from rolling, raucous anapests to packed iambic pentameter, a formal virtuosity learned from Auden and from autodidactic study of classic English poetry. The poet's tone is breezy, surly, rapturous as the mood rapidly shifts. The last lines often stub our toe and invite us to reread. The concreteness can seem defiant, in-your-face. The reader does not forget a line like the first of "The Fly": "O hideous little bat, the size of snot."

"No ideas but in things," William Carlos Williams had said. Shapiro followed the dictum but in a more ornate style than the fragmentary imagism and free-floating voices of those moderns influenced by Ezra Pound. A late poem, "Bill Williams," pays tribute to the

> Hard-working slum doc and fulltime poet
> Whose poems were prescriptions,
> Who tried to get the monkey Ezra off his back
> And never quite kicked the habit.

Shapiro thought a great deal about the politics of poetics and probably wrote more poems about other poets, living and dead, than any other poet of his stature. His book-length *Essay on Rime* is an earnest, methodical tour de force, an extended schoolbook exercise demonstrating



the severe seriousness with which poetry was taken by the generation of which this one member, without research materials but as company clerk in control of a typewriter, pounded out a *summa poetica* at the rate of thirty lines a day in the heat of embattled New Guinea.

The poems of *V-Letter* are somewhat looser than those of *Person, Place and Thing*, and less studious in avoiding clichés. Shapiro's tenderness and candor make them the foremost verse monument to that war's daily reality. This was American soldiering, from the receipt of V-mail on the first page ("Aside") to the sending of it on the last. In between, there were the fear of bombs falling under a full moon, an amputation, camp movies, a self-inflicted death whose commemoration accepts the perhaps inevitable rhyming of "in pain" with "not died in vain." His introduction stated, "I try to write freely, one day as a Christian, the next as a Jew, the next as a soldier who sees the gigantic slapstick of modern war." Shapiro knew he was fortunate that the army cast him—on no more basis, his memoir speculates, than his coming from the hospital town of Baltimore—as a healer rather than a killer; he wondered how well he would have done as an infantryman. As a medical corpsman, he won four bronze stars, achieved the rank of sergeant, survived air raids and landings under bombardment, witnessed much suffering, and did an impressive amount of writing and tomcatting.

His poems do not wave the flag, nor do they mock it. Like most young males of the time, he accepted the call to arms meekly: "The poet, for all his elbow-rubbing with Socialists, Communists, Trotskyites, believed in—Virginia." He recalled with distaste the phony medical discharge that a fellow student from Baltimore arranged for himself. Some stress overseas seems indicated by his flirtation, in New Guinea, with conversion to Catholicism; an attractive classmate at the Pratt library school had urged the religion on him but the chaplain brushed him off.

Traces of this Christian by-blow remain in his poems ("The Convert," "The Missal," the last of "Six Religious Lyrics"). His lowercase catholicity goes with his wish to contain, like Whitman, contradictions, to cover all bets—an anti-Communist who consorts with Communists, an atheist who says his prayers. Like Bellow and Mailer, he is interested in his Jewishness, and does not disown it, but is more interested in the general enterprise of being American.

Shapiro's first truly postwar collection was *Trial of a Poet and Other Poems* (1947); the book's long title poem was a magnanimous attempt to dramatize and understand the foremost literary scandal of the decade, Ezra Pound's trial for treason and the Solomonic decision to confine him not as a traitor but as a madman. The Pound drama involved Shapiro personally, since, after being initially seduced by Eliot's personal appeal, he ended up opposing the 1948 Bollingen Prize to Pound, in which he had a vote. Pound won anyway, but his strident anti-Semitism did not pass without editorial protest: in an article in the *Partisan Review*, Shapiro wrote, "I voted against Pound in the belief that the poet's political and moral philosophy ultimately vitiates his poetry." Characteristically, a few years later, in *Poetry*, he repeated this assertion but added, "Otherwise I can only say that the book the *Pisan Cantos* was the best book of verse of that year, and of many years."

Most of the poems in the collection *Poems of a Jew* (1958) had been published in earlier books; the volume served as a pledge of allegiance to Shapiro's Jewishness, complex and elusive yet insistent as it was:

> The Jewish Question, whatever that might be, is not my concern. Nor is Judaism. Nor is Jewry. Nor is Israel. . . . I am one of those who views with disgust and disappointment . . . the backsliding of artists and intellectuals toward religion. . . . These poems, in any case, are not religious poems but the poems of a Jew. No one has been able to define *Jew*, and in essence this defiance of definition is the central meaning of Jewish consciousness. . . . As a third generation American I grew p with the obsessive idea of persona erty which engrosses all Ameri except the oldest and richest fam As a Jew I grew up in an atmosp of mysterious pride and sensitivit atmosphere in which even the g est achievement was touched sense of the comic.

In spite of himself Shapiro w groundbreaker, in a country whos erature had been predominantly Pr tant since the Puritans. The American-Jewish poet he had rea a young man was the pseudo-bibli now forgotten James Oppenheime academic English departments, t were Lionel Trilling at Columbia Harry Levin at Harvard and preci few others. As Shapiro wrote to Bartlett, his assiduous bibliographe was the second Jew to be hired at Jo Hopkins, and a good friend of m was the first Jew to get a Ph.D. at H kins. This is recent history! But no course the Jews practically run place." He once thought of chang his name to the Waspish Karl C den, but settled for Karl Shapir more Germanic, and hence high class, spelling than the original C Without formal Jewish affiliatio Shapiro composed long poems Adam and Eve, David and Bathshe and Moses, and he responded to founding of Israel with the stirring rael," read at a mass meeting in Ba more. "Speak of the evil myth more," it concludes,

> Of one who harried Jesus on his wa
> Saying, *Go faster*. Speak no more
> Of the yellow badge, *secta nefaria*.
> Speak the name only of the living la

The title of Shapiro's 1964 c lection, *The Bourgeois Po* came from the mouth of other poet, Shapiro informed L Bartlett. After a reading in Seatt the drunken Theodore Roethke gre ed Shapiro's entry at a party wi "Well, here comes the bourge poet!" Thence Shapiro resolved, was going to accept the fact that I a a bourgeois poet. . . . I wanted to s 'Yeah, I do like living in split-lev houses, and so on.'" It seems odd th Shapiro would be thus singled o since postwar academic appointmer

oets and "creative" writers had
ated a large tribe of housebro-
enmen and, later, penwomen,
uated to steady wages, the ado-
n of students, and residence in
and pleasant college communi-
Nevertheless, he did feel a diffi-
in "being a poet and a bourgeois
rican at the same time," and his
nging among the Marxists of Bal-
re perhaps lent a special sting to
pithet.

hapiro became conservative, or
aps had always been. The antigov-
ment counterculture both fasci-
d and irked him; he composed a
a, "Sestina: Of the Militant Vo-
ulary," mocking its jargon. He
es in his last collection, *The Old
efly* (1992), of what has always
erned him most, poetry and po-
–Whitman and Williams, Ovid
Hopkins, Joyce and Stevens, and
t and Pound, who functioned not
as his *bêtes noires* but as his *points
épart*, the inescapable modernists.
h his untiring eye for American
s he writes about Kleenex, New
k City, the plague of Creative Writ-
"stronger than gonorrhea," and
cking," of which he disingenuous-
onfesses, "I never got the hang of
eally."

He aimed to be what the Germans
led a *Dinge Dichter*, a *thing* poet.
he substantive"—*Person, Place and
ing; Noun*—"fascinated him as
nething to fix upon and hold on
" His feet planted on the substan-
e, he could be modest and casual
t also bold, with the boldness of
th personally verified. Although
st remembered, still, as the poet in
aki, Shapiro's long peacetime life
s devoted to the modernist battle,
ight for the specific and honestly
t, a rescue of language from poetic
nventions, easy assumptions, us-
es worn smooth, polite palaver,
etoric:

That was the enemy, rhetoric, and al-
ways had been. Leave patriotic and
antipatriotic to John Philip Sousa. Po-
ets had tastier fish to fry—what sol-
diering was like, what it did to the
man, the soul, the poetry, and the ar-
tifacts everywhere, the Buicks, the
university, the grandmothers, the flies,
oh the flies, American flies in Peters-
burg, Virginia. ■

DISMAL BEAT

The march of personal-finance journalism

By Bill Wasik

Discussed in this essay:

The Best Business Stories of the Year, 2003 Edition, edited by Andrew Leckey and Allan Sloan. Vintage, 2003. 346 pages. $14.



"We propose to become a national institution, perhaps the greatest of all institutions which are concerned with criticism and interpretation," wrote Henry Luce in February 1929 to his Time Inc. board of directors, outlining a new business magazine to be called *Fortune*. The statement, grandiose when applied to any periodical, seems almost ludicrous in reference to a business magazine. But it is worth considering Luce's support for the claim:

> The field which lies open is as immense and as rich as was ever offered to journalistic enterprise. . . . Industry is a world in itself, for which we must be critics, historians, biographers and secretaries. And this World is more macrocosm than microcosm, is in fact the largest of the planets which make up our system.

In Luce's view, why could a publication about American business—more central to Americans' lives than are the arts, government, even religion—not come to serve as America's most important chronicler, as its best critic and interpreter?

Calvin Coolidge's famous dictum that "the chief business of the American people is business" has provoked much grumbling in the decades since it was spoken, but as an expression of fact it can hardly be questioned. Of the "planets which make up our system," business has always been a gaseous giant, and it occupies a demonstrably larger place in our society today than at the time of Luce's writing. More than 150 prisons and roughly twice that

Bill Wasik is an associate editor of Harper's Magazine. *His last piece, "The Dance of Debt," appeared in the November 2002 issue.*

istration by John Kleber

number of public schools have been placed in the custody of corporations. Life's most fundamental commodities—our electricity, our heating gas, our phone, radio, and television communications, and, increasingly, our water—have been eased into the open market. The regulatory legacy of the New Deal, which, eviscerated though it has been under two decades of laissez-faire government, still succeeds in restraining somewhat the excesses of American corporations at home, is more than offset by the gains of these corporations overseas, among peoples mired in states of varying desperation, whose varyingly lax environmental, labor, and tax strictures can be shopped among like brands of dish detergent.

These realities are, for some, unsettling; yet despite the recent financial turmoil, the nation's overall faith in markets seems unbowed. Indeed, the basic precepts of the free-market enthusiast, faddish but far from ubiquitous in 1929, would today be conceded by all but the tweediest or most radical among the American left: that the free market is the highest mode of resource allocation yet developed by man; that financial self-interest is the best means by which the aims of the individual can be aligned with those of society; and that capitalism, when exported to the developing world, advances the banners of freedom and democracy.

One's position on such matters notwithstanding, the sheer act of postindustrial work still manages to effect a visceral, near-constant transformation of our lives. A significantly greater percentage of Americans are employed as wage earners than were in 1929. The cultures and hierarchies of our office environments encroach more and more on our consciousness. Gorgeous and terrifying feats of production, logistics, and packaging—systems of nearly incomprehensible complexity—are employed to deliver products to our doorstep. Our physical reality is remade by every glassy corporate tower stabbed into the exurban soil.

Thus, for those few Americans who still concern themselves with "criticism and interpretation," whether they be inclined toward decrying capitalism's excesses or celebrating its accomplishments, the subject of business remains undeniably both "immense" and "rich." There is much to be said, much to be hailed or feared; there is much at stake.

How, then, to account for our business writing today? Presented with a subject matter as expansive as American business, our magazines and newspapers collectively fret over market indicators, minor transactions. They make lists: of the largest corporations, the wealthiest men, the best companies to work for, the best M.B.A. programs. They pass along platitudes from stock-market guru Warren Buffett. They are obsessed with "news," as the expression goes, "you can use." Insofar as they bring new phenomena to light, they single out those that might help to increase one's own wealth. Indeed, their "stories" are only one story, and it is the serialized fiscal bildungsroman of you, the reader: you invest your 401(k), you open an IRA, you buy stocks at bargain prices. Even in stories ostensibly about a company, or a CEO, or an industry, the reader-investor becomes, implicitly, the protagonist. This chief executive, by propelling his stock into a meteoric climb, will allow you to retire early. That crooked financier has absconded with *your* money.

Think of it: excepting the how-to-please-him women's magazine, there is no genre of "journalism" whose readership is assumed to be so thoroughly self-concerned. Try, for example, to imagine a column in *The New Republic* or *National Review* devoted to how to contact one's congressman, or how to lobby, or how best to be elected to public office. The absurdity of the exercise does not derive from the relative gravity of government as a subject matter: it is equally odd to imagine *Sports Illustrated* teaching you to throw the splitter, or *Rolling Stone* with fold-out bass tablature. In nearly every subject area apart from business, editors and readers seem intuitively to recognize a categorical distinction between understanding a field's knowledge and attempting personally to achieve success in it.

With respect to finance, however, in today's "shareholder society," the actor and the observer are held to one; we are all capitalists now. This sentiment has served, amid unprecedented levels of inequality in wealth and income, as a useful fiction, but does have a basis in fact. Since 19 the portion of U.S. households that own stock either directly or indirectly—through mutual funds, hedge funds, and the like—has risen from less than a third to more than half. Thus the stock market is said to be "democratized," a term that is inaccurate on its face (however many people take part in the market, an individual's influence varies wildly according to the size of his or her holdings) but on further reflection somewhat apt. In fact, during the 1990s, when Americans not only owned stocks in record numbers but chose them ardently and with much deliberation, the stock market was arguably more "democratized" than our political system has ever been.

Whether to preserve this rage for stocks or merely to profit while it lasts, the American business press has dedicated itself almost entirely to serving these idealized readers-investors, these shareholder-citizens. Its purview should not be termed "business journalism," for other than the reader's profit motive, our business periodicals disregard nearly every aspect of business and its effect on our lives. Instead, one might call it "personal-finance journalism": its reporting provides a resource for the reader to consult in his portfolio management, her career counseling. In other subject areas, such writing is sequestered under the rubric of "service journalism," but personal finance journalism is the dominant mode of business writing in America today, if not the only mode. From the grip the business press shows few signs of emerging.

The Best Business Stories of the Year, 2003 Edition, is a compilation of stories that saw print between July 1, 2001, and June 30, 2002, a year in business news that

l only be described as remark- Enron, at the year's beginning eventh most valuable company ıe United States, took a sudden illion write-off in October and months later was bankrupt; by , Arthur Andersen, among the largest accounting firms in the ɔn, had almost entirely dissolved ıe face of Enron-related criminal ges. In total more than forty illion-plus bankruptcies took e during that period, among n five of the twelve largest in his- . The sins of New York's invest- ıt banks during the boom began oat to the surface: Credit Suisse t Boston was fined $100 million its clubby misappropriations of stock, while fifty blocks south at rrill Lynch, emails surfaced in ich analyst Henry Blodget ıandedly dismissed as "crap" and ık" stocks that his own research orts were exhorting the public to y." On June 25, a week before the l of the twelve-month span, rldCom announced it had uncov- d $3.8 billion in what it delicately med accounting "irregularities": a rtling hint of further ills. By July 1, ıerican shareholders, who a year or had believed themselves to be during only a brief service-delay oard the bullet train to Dow ,000, found themselves mangled in derailment. They screamed for the iprits. It was, all agreed in retro- ect, the Year of Corporate Crime.

In their remonstrances the share- olders were led by the business ess, which—having spent the neties touting to its readership the a's unsinkable markets, its heroic ıtrepreneurs, and its revolutionary ısiness models—was forced very ıblicly to recant. Its newfound epticism has been amply docu- ented in *Best Business Stories*, hich touches on Enron and Ander- n, as well as the recent and cata- rophic bankruptcies at Chiquita, omdisco, and Reliance Insurance; ıe discredited telecom analyst, Jack rubman; and the fallacious résumé f "Chainsaw Al" Dunlap, who elped drive Sunbeam into Chapter 1. One of the book's sharper offer- ıgs is a jeremiad by Roger Lowen- ein that rails against the explosion in CEO compensation. The piece's final flourish seems almost calculated to jostle his editors at *SmartMoney*: "If a Marxist critic of capitalism were writing about executive compensation in the U.S., he'd say the bosses hire some consultant and director flunkies to justify whatever outrageous amount they want to pinch from the shareholders. And you know what? He'd be right."

Of course the business press had done little to alert shareholders to the dangers, but it was more important to locate the exceptions and to lavish praise on them. The book's inclusion of a news-analysis piece by the *Wall Street Journal*'s John Emshwiller and Rebecca Smith, the reporting team that broke a major facet of the Enron story (specifically the LJM partnerships and CFO Andrew Fastow's role in them), is presumably in recognition of such a rare early warning. Published too early for consideration in the volume was "Is Enron Overpriced?" a now famous March 2001 article by *Fortune*'s Bethany McLean, who raised questions about the opacity of the company's financial statements. Together the three reporters have been spoken of as muckrakers in the Enron scandal. McLean in particular was elevated to near-celebrity status, most notably in the *New York Times*, which last January ran a long, front-section profile complete with a sizable and quite flattering picture; in February, Maureen Dowd called her "adorable and intrepid" and predicted that in the Enron movie she would be portrayed by her "look-alike" Alicia Silverstone.

McLean is clearly a fine reporter, and "Is Enron Overpriced?" was indeed intrepid, but the piece offers little support for the notion that McLean had somehow exposed Enron ahead of time. She had merely informed her readers that she did not know herself how the company made money, and that, more important, neither did the analysts who covered it. Her reporting was far more absence than substance; and much of her substance, as it turns out, came from a source who stood to gain: a hedge-fund manager and Enron short-seller named James

Philip Glass' lush score heightens the film's emotional quotient and gives the story added grandeur, melancholy and uneasiness.
LA Times

Glass' surging minimalist score, with its air of cosmic abstraction, serves as ideal connective tissue for a film that breaks down temporal barriers.
NY Times

THE HOURS
MUSIC FROM THE MOTION PICTURE COMPOSED BY
PHILIP GLASS

NONESUCH



AVAILABLE AT MUSIC LOCATIONS
BARNES & NOBLE

Chanos, who had already profited [illegible] in January, and who likely profited far more in the deeper slide that occurred after McLean's piece appeared.

Unlike "Is Enron Overpriced?" Emshwiller and Smith's stories revealed details about the company that could not have been gleaned from its public disclosures, and it seems undeniable that in this regard their work was aided significantly by the stock's continuing decline. More than half of Enron's peak value had been erased by August, when Emshwiller and Smith reported the termination of Fastow's partnerships with the company (a common trope in corporate crime: companies disclose wrongdoing after it has been stopped). The move was described as a "bow to criticism"; but criticism remained muted until October, when the company announced a $618 million loss and a $1.2 billion charge to shareholders' equity, both resulting in part from the Fastow deals. As the stock spiraled further downward, a host of new facts emerged, as did a set of private, previously unmentioned partnership documents. Smith told the *Columbia Journalism Review* last March that it had been necessary for Enron's finances to unravel publicly before its corrupt accounting could be exposed: "I really believe that every story has its time. And what was required for the Enron story to break the way it did was for the company to be brought to its knees in a single quarter on its earnings."

That investigative reporting on Enron was carried out in inverse proportion to the company's stock price cannot be blamed merely on trend-focused journalists, or on bought-off editors or publishers. Rather, it is intrinsic to the culture of personal-finance journalism. When a company's fortunes seem poised to enlarge indefinitely, the interests of all potential sources—the company, the analysts, large investors—are aligned not only with one another but *with the interests of the reader*, who is assumed to be a shareholder or potential shareholder. The motivation of the sources in maintaining such a lockstep is vulgar but unsurprising: no one wants to knock a winner. One wouldn't want to get cut out of the upside, after all, and executives of large corporations, famously forgetful of their political allegiances as administrations in Washington change, have long memories about slights in the press.

But neither does the personal-finance journalist—whose mission, even at its most noble, is to increase the reader's wealth, and whose subject is a house of mirrors in which (a) any company's stock price is determined largely by what everyone says about it and (b) what everyone says is good—have any professional or even ethical inclination to oppose the consensus. The goal is, if anything, to reinforce the consensus, because readers who invest in accordance with it will prosper. Thus "every story has its time"—when a cloud of suspicion has already descended around a company, owing either to a declining stock or to governmental scrutiny. And only then do the sources begin to peel away, layer by layer: first the short-sellers (who, like Chanos, wait for a price fall to lock in some gains), then a few money managers (those proud of being right), then a few analysts (those embarrassed of being wrong), and finally some corporate insiders, who emerge squinting and angry, like reformed Scientologists, their positivity finally overcome by a traumatic glance into an emptying savings account.

In many respects, the Enron story is a useful microcosm of business crime. As the truth about the company's criminal behavior was revealed, partly by journalists but mostly by government investigators, the damage suffered by shareholders received the greatest attention, followed by the "culture of excess" at the company and among its top executives. The thousands left unemployed placed a distant third—for who, in the face of such lost wealth, could grieve for mere income?

And yet by far the most revealing development in the Enron case has been the incontrovertible evidence that the company (along with, it seems, a number of its still-solvent competitors) used illegal strategies to manipulate energy markets in western states, including those in California. The evidence confirmed what many critics had long suspected about the California energy cr[isis], and about the dangers generally [in]herent in energy spot markets. [Ex]actly how much money the com[pa]ny, in its manipulations, illeg[ally] extracted from California's taxpa[yers] during the crisis is still being [as]sessed, but the tally is sure to [run] into the billions of dollars, and [its] gain—reaped as much of it was [dur]ing the height of California's cr[isis] in the summer of 2000, when [En]ron's share price climbed 28 p[er]cent—accrued, indirectly, in [the] portfolios of the same shareholders who months later were said to h[ave] been "robbed."

As such, Enron, far from be[ing] simply the largest of the "account[ing] scandals," may in fact be plac[ed] solidly in the context of a less c[ele]brated but far more pervasive cate[go]ry of corporate crime, one in wh[ich] shareholders actually *benefit* at so[ci]ety's expense. To contemplate t[he] frequency and scope of su[ch] crimes—a task that generally re[qu]ires hunting through the ne[ws] or business-in-brief sections, [or] subscribing to some obscure, le[ft]leaning publication such as *Multi[na]tional Monitor* or the *Corporate Cri[me] Reporter*—is to understand the [re]cent "wave" of corporate crime [as] merely a breaker above a deep a[nd] boundless sea. Corrupt corporati[ons] collude, monopolize. They misle[ad] and strong-arm consumers. Th[ey] pollute the air, water, and land, a[nd] falsify data to obscure it. They bre[ak] union drives through illegal firin[gs]. They pad contracts with falsehoo[ds]. Overseas they retain the services [of] thugs, traffickers, dictators.

Consider the following stori[es] culled from the twelve-month peri[od] covered by *Best Business Stories* b[ut] ignored in its pages: In July, Co[ca]-Cola was sued in a Miami fede[ral] court for its tacit encouragement [of] human-rights abuses against uni[on] organizers at its Colombia bottli[ng] subsidiary. In September 2001, Ci[ti]group was forced to settle amid all[e]gations that a subsidiary, Associat[es] First, defrauded the largely poor cu[s]tomers of its "subprime"—general[ly] high-risk, high-interest—loans. Th[en] next month, TAP Pharmaceutica[ls]

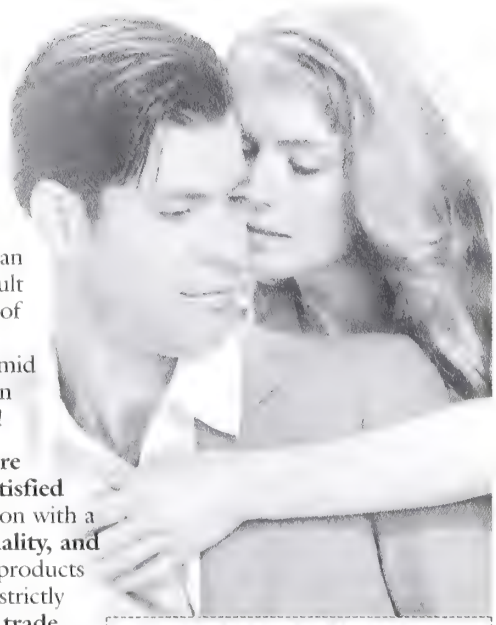
vh a is co-owned by Abbott Labo-
ar ies, one of the nation's ten
ar st drug companies, was fined
$8 million for a startling six-year
ci back scheme in which doctors
ve instructed to bill Medicare and
M icaid when they handed out free
sa ples of the company's drug. In
De ember twenty-nine states sued
Br ol-Myers Squibb for its efforts to
ke a generic version of its anti-
ar iety drug BuSpar off the market,
cl ning the company had made a
fa claim to the FDA regarding an
ac tional patent on the drug.

ach of these stories garnered at
le t some media attention, but to-
d , in the year after the year of
" porate crime," none of these sto-
ri is remembered, because none
w given marquee treatment by the
b iness press.* Newspaper business
p es did prominently feature the
C igroup and the TAP cases, in
w ich large, publicly held U.S. cor-
p ations were being assessed signifi-
ca nt fines, but only for a day, and
w hout prompting any of the soul-
s rching about "corporate crime"
th t inevitably attended each bank-
p tcy or accounting impropriety.

Did the lack of attention stem
fr m the sizes of the penalties as-
se sed? Seemingly not. In April 2002
th SEC's $10 million fine of Xerox
· its faulty accounting was front-
pa ge news, and indeed it was the

The recent book Best Business Crime
Writing of the Year *(Anchor) collects*
enty-seven articles that all concern ac-
unting or stock crimes. For some reason,
rporate crimes against society are often
t considered business stories at all. In Au-
st 2001, when General Electric was or-
red to pay nearly $500 million to clean
CBs out of the Hudson River, and in De-
mber of that year, when ExxonMobil
reed to pay $11.2 million to clean its own
xic waste in Staten Island, the New York
imes assigned the stories to its Metro desk.
his January its national desk published a
rceful three-part exposé of workplace-safety
iolations at McWane Inc., a privately
wned pipemaking conglomerate based in
Alabama. But in the front sections of news-
apers, corporate-crime stories must fight for
olumn space with war, politics, murder.
Why are they not the province of business
ections, whose reporters presumably under-
tand industry and have cultivated sources in
, and whose readers, more than anyone
lse, need to be apprised of the social costs
eflected in corporate dividends?

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SOLUTION TO THE FEBRUARY PUZZLE

S	C	O	T	C	H	S	H	A	V	E	R
P	L	A	Y	A	C	T	A	T	I	T	O
A	U	R	I	C	F	O	R	E	P	A	W
R	B	L	P	A	G	O	D	A	E	G	E
T	H	O	R	O	U	G	H	B	R	E	D
A	C	C	E	N	T	E	A	H	S	R	A
N	A	K	F	E	F	S	T	O	L	E	N
S	E	X	A	G	E	N	A	R	I	A	N
P	S	E	B	L	A	Z	E	S	M	D	E
O	U	R	S	E	L	F	R	E	M	I	X
I	R	O	N	C	T	R	I	R	E	M	E
L	A	X	I	T	Y	H	E	E	D	E	D

NOTES FOR "SIXES AND SEVENS":

Puzzle editing by Dan Asimov.

Anagrams are indicated with an asterisk (*).

ACROSS: 11. it(rev.)-to; 12. *; 16. tho(rough)b-Red; 24. *; 30. Re(mi)x; 31. I-(no-r.|rev.|).

DOWN: 2. pun; 4. ca.-ca.-O; 7. V.I.P.-ER; 9. homophone; 24. Sp.-oil; 25. X(ore|rev.|)X; 26. A-Erie; 28. E-mid (rev.).

SIX-LETTER WORDS: a. heeded, (homophone, he-did); b. stooge*; c. pre-Fab; d. scotch, two mngs.; e. (c)ab-hors(e); f. LAX-(c)ity; g. p(a-go)da; h. stolen*; i. shaver, two mngs.; j. a-C-cent; k. fealty*; l. b(usiness)-lazes.

SEVEN-LETTER WORDS: a. trireme*; b. annexed, (homophone, a-next); c. ha(rd)-ha-t.; d. ourself*; e. for-EPA-w(ith); f. sl(I-MM)ed; g. spar-tan; h. p(lay)act; i. et(age)re; j. C.A.-esur-a (rev.); k. neglect*; l. oarlock*, (OK cor[r]al).

for any reason. Yet weeks later, when cruise-line giant Carnival was fined $18 million for discharging oil at sea and then falsifying its records of the incident, the action was largely ignored, much as federal fines of $500 million against Schering-Plough in May and $55.8 million against Tenet Healthcare in June would later be. (In the last case, a noble exception was the *Fort Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*'s business section, whose front-page story focused on how the local woman who had blown the whistle on Tenet could expect a personal reward of $4 million. *It could happen to you!*)

We do, happily, know what genuine business writing might resemble, because in its earliest years Luce's *Fortune*, for all its imperfections, achieved it. Reading the Depression-era *Fortune* at seventy years' remove, one is struck not by the magazine's purported progressivism—scarcely an issue would pass without some sarcastic aside about union labor—but instead by its critical distance. Although aimed at the businessman, *Fortune* never pretended to serve his immediate self-interest. It held industry apart as an object of analysis; and insofar as it flattered the businessman, it never did so with advice on stock picking. Eric Hodgins, a writer and editor at *Fortune* who himself penned one of the era's most controversial pieces of journalism, a 1934 exposé of European munitions makers, put it thus:

> The American businessman remained under the genuine delusion that he, unaided, had built America and was entitled to his corresponding rewards . . . [*Fortune*] took the view that business was indeed entitled to understanding but that the businessman would have to pay a price for it, which was fuller disclosure and franker criticism than he had been accustomed to. And it was this insistence that gained for *Fortune* during the 1930's the reputation of being "anti-business."

Of course *Fortune* was not anti-business: to the contrary, it was incredibly enthusiastic about its subject, but not in the narrow sense that dominates today. *Fortune* found businesses interesting in their own right, not simply as repositories of shareholder value. Luce had famously declared it "easier to turn poets into business journalists than to turn bookkeepers into writers," and his dictum was followed quite literally: by 1933 the writing staff boasted James Agee, Russell Davenport, Schuyler B. Jackson, and Archibald MacLeish. Lyrical writing was the natural extension of *Fortune*'s interpretive, historical perspective on business.

The magazine's second issue, published in March 1930, featured the first offering from the thirty-eight-year-old MacLeish. The lead paragraph of his unsigned piece, which delved with great and exuberant detail into the "Industry of Pie," ran as follows:

> On a buttress of white tile stands a battery of nickeled cylinders with neat glass gauges where the coffee bobs. Above, a steel rack spiders down the wall. On the rack are rows of circles like a frieze of coins. Each coin is approximately ten inches across, two inches through, beveled on the under edge, brown as an antiqued painting. Each weighs a rough three pounds. A knife will cut it. Three divisions will reduce it to six approximate triangles. Each triangle will emit a faint warm smell of cinnamon and nutmeg. Subdivided with a four-pronged fork, and tasted, the mouth remembers apples. Cheese consorts with it. Coffee leaves it sweet.

There is no self-interested *angle* at which the day's reader could have approached MacLeish's piece, except perhaps as an aficionado of pie. There is no discussion of pie stocks, or of apple futures, or of opportunities in pie work. The Industry of Pie was, to MacLeish, an inherently worthy subject, and by the time one finishes reading the piece one is compelled to agree.

The sensibility of the Depression-era *Fortune*, inquisitive and trenchant and eloquent, has almost entirely evaporated from the American business press. (The only regular exception is the *Wall Street Journal*, whose fourth-column "A-hed" features occasionally amaze.) Even in the wider culture, one can find only glimmers—in the occasional bo such as *Fast Food Nation*, by E Schlosser, a contemporary muckr whom few today would think to a "business writer"; or in a docum tary such as Chris Hegedus and hane Noujaim's superb *Startup.co* perfectly realized film that by it almost obviates the need for furt documentation of the nineties' In net bubble. From time to time, business press does offer up sto about the economics of everyday l and the more engaging of the o ings in *Best Business Stories* tend fall into this category.

The strongest piece in the coll tion is "Smaller," a report by *New Yorker*'s Malcolm Gladwell of all things, the increasing compa ness of disposable diapers. If a contemporary writer could be c sidered an inheritor of the tradit of imaginative business writi forged by reporters like MacLeish would be Gladwell. He mines subject matter from dispar fields—all quadrants of business, s ence, and popular culture—yet t geometries of his arguments are c gruent. They delineate the Conc tual Breakthrough: It is possible read thoughts in faces. Mandat air-bag laws have caused seat-b use to decrease. Technology w help "sleeper" movies and books su ceed. Aspects of human behavi that appear chaotic are in fact me ly complex, and may yet—with t aid of the Conceptual Brea through—be predicted, rectifie harnessed.

At his best, Gladwell is content be an intellectual reporter, a task f which his background as a scien journalist suits him well. "Smalle examines how disposable diape steady decrease in size since the mi eighties (achieved through the r placement of paper-based fillin with a superabsorbent polymer) ha in turn, impacted the diapers' distr bution (trucks can carry twice many), their production (easier di tribution allows for fewer factorie and hence fewer workers), and, fina ly, their marketing (for which le retail shelf space is required).

But frequently Gladwell stra from reportage into a sort of conce

alesmanship. Consider, for le, the evolution of his best- 2000 book, *The Tipping Point*, had its beginnings in a 1996 zine piece of the same title. rticle applied concepts from niology, in particular the non- ity with which diseases spread bb, to New York City's steep ie in violent crime. The article to suggest only a handful of so- l problems—teen pregnancy, -city dropout rates—for which pping point" might be said to but by 2000, Gladwell's book ily applied the concept to just everything, with special focus roblems in sales, marketing, ad- sing, and brand loyalty. (The begins, "For Hush Puppies . . . Tipping Point"—note the capi- etters—"came somewhere be- n late 1994 and early 1995.") In book's official "author Q&A," ch remains available on Glad- 's website, he declares that his f purpose in writing the book is show people how to start 'posi- ' epidemics of their own. . . . [It omething of obvious and enor- is interest to everyone from edu- ors trying to reach students, to nesses trying to spread the word ut their product, or for that mat- to anyone who's trying to create hange with limited resources." eed, the book can, he contends, ve the reader an advantage—a v set of tools."

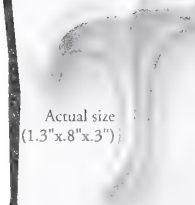
Readers can hardly be blamed for seeking out books and articles that purport to give advantage," nor writers for writ- them; yet it's worth pausing over e fluidity with which our business porters, even those with interests seemingly abstract and nonfinan- al as Gladwell's, can segue into ddling self-help. Certainly books d articles that implicitly or explic- y promise to enrich their readers nd, by the same token, to enrich eir writers, but this explanation— at the personal-finance journalist as simply "sold us out"—is inade- uate on two counts. First, far from lling his readers out, the business riter genuinely believes himself to e selling them *in*, offering insights heretofore unavailable or known only to the Wall Street elite. And second, the focus on self-help is so ingrained and so universal in our business publications that to blame it on a collection of individual venalities would be unfair and a bit preposterous. In fact, the explanation is far more frightening: that "business" as a journalistic beat has succeeded—partly because of a widening in stock ownership and partly because of meticulous P.R. by free-market partisans—in becoming almost entirely synonymous with "your business." As such, business writers base their work on what one could call the intentional fallacy: the idea that as the ultimate authors of business, as the presumptive owners of corporations, Americans need not be lectured about its plots, themes, and subtexts, but only about the size and frequency of the royalty checks.

This fallacy is so pervasive that even its greatest failure—nineties messianism—is being made to serve as a pretense for its extension. Publications that outdid even Henry Blodget in selling "crap" and "junk" to shareholders are today casting themselves, in line with the current market mood, as sober, risk-averse financial sages. Here is Andrew Leckey, the newspaper business-columnist and editor of the *Best Business Stories* series, in his foreword:

> Average individuals whose retirement savings dropped by one-third or more in value as companies confessed to "cooking the books" became wary of the financial system and *much of the information received about it* [my emphasis]. What once seemed an exciting game to them became a dangerous no-win proposition. This makes trustworthy financial journalism important in helping individuals intelligently chart their future.

In charting their future, however, readers might instead remember whence came the bulk of their untrustworthy "information" during the boom. They might wonder, moreover, why business journalists, even the most well intentioned among them, continue to proffer so much of this information, and so little else. ■

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Members of the Liguria parliament in Genoa, Italy, banned the use of the word "member" to describe one another because it also means "penis," which "is likely to cause a certain uneasiness among women"; henceforth, members will be known as "components" of parliament. Schoolchildren in India voted overwhelmingly to name a white tiger cub in the Lucknow Zoo Osama bin Laden; Hitler was another popular choice. Thousands of dead fish killed by industrial waste in a lake in Bangladesh were being collected and eaten by poor people. Pentagon officials were still trying to decide on a new color for food-aid packages; the current yellow color matches the one used for cluster bombs. Seven thousand virgins in Tanzania got together and promised not to have sex until marriage. Two hundred members of the Italian Association of Cuckolds gathered in Ruviano. China held its first conference on AIDS; an anonymous patient gave a brief speech from a dark stage lit only by green glow sticks.

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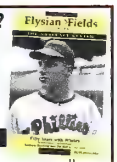
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LETTERS

Continued from page 6

We have neither a right nor an obligation nor the ability to save the world. Indeed, it may be too late to save ourselves.

William Fusfield
Pittsburgh

Fantasy Football

Eduardo Galeano's snippets on soccer ["Miracles and Anthems," January] include a highly suspect piece on centenarian Bertie Felstead's claims to have been the "sole survivor of an extraordinary soccer match on Christmas Day, 1915," between the Germans and the British. Almost certainly he was not only the sole survivor but the sole participant. The spontaneous Christmas Truce kickabouts occurred on Christmas Day, 1914, and the day after. All attempts at repeating the truce the next year failed, because the enemy commands prevented any truces. Felstead apparently learned of the remarkable kickabouts when he arrived in Flanders in January 1915, and dined out on the memories of his buddies for decades afterward. I investigated accounts of soccer in no-man's-land for my book *Silent Night: The Story of the World War I Christmas Truce*, and I found no documentation of Felstead's claim.

Stanley Weintraub
Boalsburg, Pa.

The Third Degree

It seems that Christopher Brown can now add *Harper's Magazine* to the list of those taken in by his act, since the short description of his "Disacknowledgments" ["Bricks in the Wall," Readings, January] contains many inaccuracies. Don't worry, you're in good company—we're on the list, too. As the members of Brown's master's-thesis committee at the University of California at Santa Barbara, we each signed off on his work in May 1999.

Under UCSB rules, committee members are jointly responsible for the contents of a thesis. We trusted

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Brown to submit what we had approved to the UCSB library for publication in its archive. Instead, he inserted the "Disacknowledgments" on the page after our signatures and submitted the altered thesis as if we had approved it. The original "Disacknowledgments," which contained quite a bit of profanity, was not the one you published; Brown produced a "cleaned up" version only after he'd been caught. We declined to approve Brown's alteration, because we didn't want to be associated with it and because we felt that it did not meet the university's criteria: the thesis must meet professional publication standards. Brown, for his part, refused to submit the approved thesis to the library as required to receive a degree.

Galen Stucky
Daniel E. Morse
Frederick F. Lange
Santa Barbara, Calif.

Fundamentally Misunderstood

The December 2002 Annotation, "The Almighty Hedge," by Daniel Brook, although informative, incorrectly asserts that the Dow Jones Islamic Index Fund is a marriage between two disparate ideologies: capitalism and "fundamentalist Islam." I don't know what the author means by the term "fundamentalist Islam," but I know that the progressive element of capitalism is already embedded in the religion of Islam. Brook should have realized this, since he himself notes that Muhammad was "a merchant, who presided over a golden age of not merely spiritual but material plenty." The Dow Jones Islamic Index Fund is simply a manifestation of that progressive capitalism encapsulated in Islam.

When I greeted Brook with, "*Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatullahi Wa Barakatuhu,*" I was not inviting him to "fundamentalist Islam" but was invoking a prayer of peace in the most profound spiritual sense, the same peace that we as Americans hold dear. "Fundamentalist" is not an accurate term because of the negative connotations that it has taken on. The "fundamentalist" label tends to evoke associations of narrow-mindedness, rigidity, radical political dissent, and often violence. The mutual fund investors, and its managers have association with any of those cha teristics. There are socially respons funds that cater to environmental Christians, Jews, and peace activ as well as to Muslims. Labeling M lims "fundamentalist" just beca they want to harmonize their inv ments with their principles is as ab as so labeling these other groups.

It is unfortunate that in orde grab readers' attention Brook re to the term "fundamentalist." He informed readers about the rudim of Islamic investing, for which should be commended, but he sh have at least made an attempt to c ify the confusion that the term " damentalist Islam" creates.

Youshaa Patel
Director of Business Developmen Dow Jones Islamic Index Fund
Burr Ridge, Ill.

Editor's Note

Conrad Hall, one of the subj of "Guys Who Worked on Movie," by John Gregory Du [Reviews, February], died of ca after the issue went to press. He seventy-six. Shortly after his de he received the Career Achieven Award from the National Boar Review of Motion Pictures.

Corrections

The December 2002 *Harper's In* stated that President Bush had used Osama bin Laden's name "in p lic" since July 8. According to Wh House records at the time that is went to press in October, the pr dent had not used Bin Laden's nam a public speech or a press conferen since July. The president had spo Bin Laden's name, however, in an terview on September 11, 2002, in sponse to a direct question about h

In the November 2002 *Harp* Index, our statistic on the "aver number of tons of manure produ by U.S. cattle, pig, and chicken fe lots each minute" was based on erroneous Sierra Club report. T average amount of manure s feedlots produce each minute is 2 not 100,000, tons.

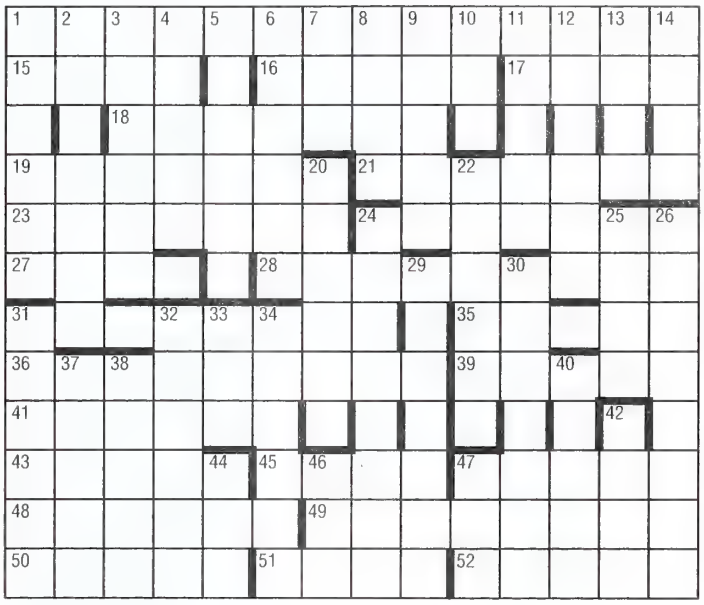
Samurai LP's and Pumas' Lairs

By Richard E. Maltby Jr.

Nullifies humans
Japanese sporting shoots
Area of a scientific vessel
Catch fish
Holly-wood?
Ribbon in your cap
The sweater's fine!

These seven phrases define Across entries at 1, 19, 21, 36, 39, 48, and 49. These entries are in fact seven related members of a group, appearing in the puzzle in exactly the manner that the name defining the group appears elsewhere. In order to complete the puzzle, these correct terms are to be entered in the spaces provided at the clue number, and the name of the group is to be entered in the spaces below the diagram.

Clued answers include seven proper names and three common foreign words; 17A is a variant. The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 85.



_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

ACROSS

1. _____ _____ (9-5)
15. Instrumentalist does, making comeback (4)
16. In kind of milk train, a contrite comeback (5)
17. Submarine comes back disheartened—no-no! (4)
18. Tip back during ceremony, making a comeback (7)
19. _____ (7)
21. _____ (7)
23. Lionise sinful omission (7)
24. Place to work late, possibly a room in a hospital (7)
27. Balanced across poles: a net (4)
28. Fake and phony, I'm blessed (9)
31. She dates weirdo; they keep hands free, talking (8)
35. Polished, gets upset, gets upset (5)
36. _____ (9)
39. _____ (5)
41. Got smoother ride on convertible (6)
43. Unfinished ocean drink—you get it by the shot (5)
45. Country that sounds like a cry from a hippie? (4)
47. Getting around to fun in bed (5)
48. _____ (6)
49. _____ (8)
50. Some pigeons, returning, start tiny screams (5)
51. Soaks in liquids to soften the wrong way (4)
52. Fixes dead hair stylers wrapped around (5)

DOWN

1. One grows up with flowers (6)
2. Gas swirls over England, unable to be developed (7)
3. Pests, partly—never mind (6)
4. As I do, waving goodbye (5)
5. Like fat? Cover over pounded taro root (6)
6. Woodlouse, e.g., is nothing on a space vehicle (6)
7. Actions required for operating system? (3)
8. Pretentious person—don't get me started! (4)
9. Pay for candy (5)
10. The power of discernment, I heard (3)
11. Block includes everything under street (5)
12. I'm bald after tearing apart part of a word game (3-3)
13. Singers who get you coming and going? (4)
14. Unfeeling digit when more than this! (4)
20. Poles have restless desire to sing (6)
22. Showing no strength in *Audio Magazine* (6)
24. Sounding alike, like *scion* and *queen* (8)
25. Girl in cellar (4)
26. Ken Rusk's maneuvering holds the opponents to zero again (8)
29. Railroad bypasses housefronts (7)
30. Survey gives me a "yes" (7)
31. Party-givers holding one's uplifting events (6)
32. Bend a U-shaped European flower (6)
33. German you helped make easier (3)
34. Snowed in, transferring funds (6)
37. Interrupt, stop speaking (5)
38. He sang at Metro inauspiciously! (5)
40. Concoct aluminum pieces of eight (5)
42. Humor coming from reading sentence backward (4)
44. Mix up zinger (3)
46. Bit of maroon, amber, orange, chinese red (3)
47. Film of upsetting gravity (3)

Contest Rules: Send completed diagram with name and address to "Samurai LP's and Pumas' Lairs," *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Entries must be received by March 11. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive one-year subscriptions to *Harper's Magazine*. Winners' names will be printed in the May issue. Winners of the January puzzle, "De-construction," are Jeffrey Harrison, Maplewood, Minnesota; Marc Maximov, Brooklyn; and Rudy Simons, Southfield, Michigan.



FIGHT THE POWER

1. Citing political reasons, the Beatles refused a request to perform in what country in 1966?

2. On what date in 1968 did one million U.S. college students boycott classes in protest of the Vietnam War?

3. In front of what buildings, respectively, did students Norman Morrison and Roger LaPorte immolate themselves in protest of the war?

4. What country abandoned atmospheric nuclear-bomb tests at the Moruroa Atoll after being sued for its soldiers' brutal beating of Greenpeace activists there?

5. An Iroquois blockade saved what New York State river from destruction by the state's Power Authority in 1958?

6. How many years did French peasant farmers wage a campaign of nonviolent activism before succeeding in saving their land from expropriation for an expanded military base?

7. What concession from the Nazis did non-Jewish protesters receive after demonstrating for months in a Berlin square in 1943?

8. For what successful eight-month act of resistance did Lithuania's director of national defense recruit thousands of civilian volunteers in 1991?

9. Who did AIDS activists burn in effigy in front of the Food and Drug Administration in October 1988?

10. What African country's independence movement organized an eleven-day national strike in 1950 that caused an economic standstill?

11. For what act of protest against slavery and the Mexican-American War did Henry David Thoreau spend a night in jail?

12. What term, now used to identify those eschewing new technologies, was coined in 1811 to describe disgruntled British textile workers who broke their machines?

13. What five-letter word did Gandhi identify as his "sovereign principle" and include in the subtitle of his autobiography?

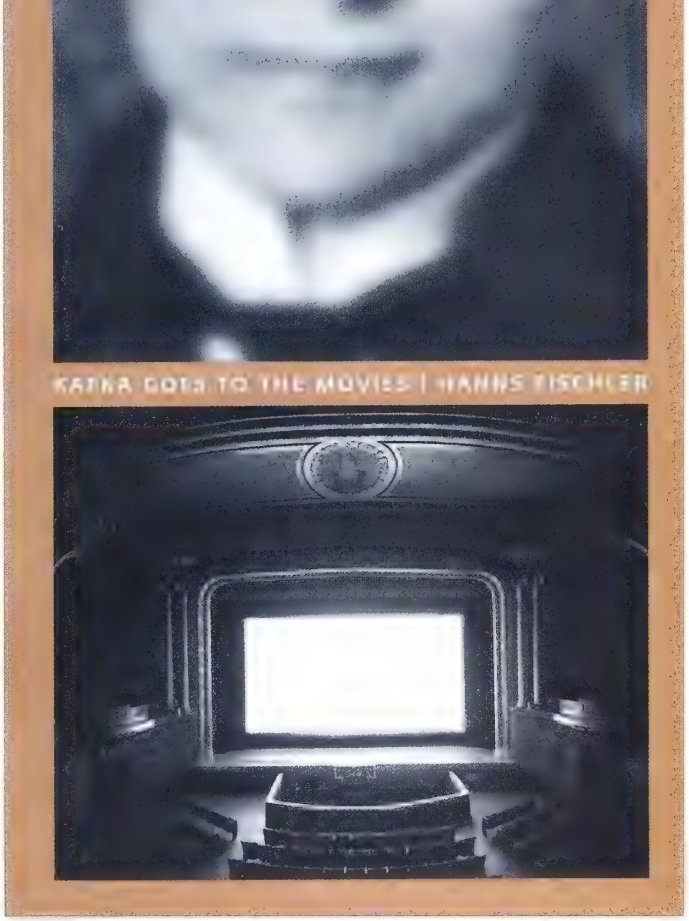
14. What principle did Martin Luther King describe as "a sword that heals"?

Contest Rules: Send numbered answers with name and address to "Quiz," Harper's Magazine, *666 Broadway, New York, NY 10012. If you already subscribe to* Harper's, *please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Entries must be received by March 14. The sender of the first correct set of answers opened at random will receive a one-year subscription to* Harper's Magazine. *The winner's name will be printed in the May issue and be available at www.harpers.org in April. All subscription winners are eligible to compete in an annual quiz whose first prize is a complete set of the* Oxford English Dictionary. *The answers to last month's quiz, "Love's Labor," appear on page 73.*

Illustration by Ralph Kellar

KAFKA GOES TO THE MOVIES

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MAGAZINE

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APRIL 2003

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Cover: On January 27, 2003, a tapestry of Pablo Picasso's Guernica *that hangs at the entrance of the Security Council of the United Nations in New York City was deemed an inappropriate background for press briefings about the possibility of a war in Iraq. It was therefore draped.*
Guernica (detail), by Pablo Picasso © estate of Pablo Picasso/Artists' Rights Society (ARS), New York City, and John Bigelow Taylor/Art Resource, New York City. Photomontage by Penny Gentieu

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LETTERS

Humanist Beings?

Thomas de Zengotita's essay ["Common Ground," January] was much needed medicine for intellectuals who delude themselves into believing that the solution to the world's problems is to be found in Foucault, Bataille, Habermas, or Derrida. But Zengotita ends his essay with the worst possible prescription for his readers: "What radicals need most right now isn't action but theory." The intellectuals that the essay counsels, instead, should get over the need for any such thing, as well as their taste for implausible, obscurantist gibberish. To quote Richard Rorty, "These futile attempts to philosophize one's way into political relevance are a symptom of what happens when a Left retreats from activism and adopts a spectatorial approach to the problems of its country. Disengagement from practice produces theoretical hallucinations."

David E. McClean
West Hempstead, N.Y.

Harper's Magazine welcomes reader response. Please address mail to Letters, Harper's Magazine, *666 Broadway, New York, NY 10012, or email us at letters@harpers.org. Short letters are more likely to be published, and all letters are subject to editing. Volume precludes individual acknowledgment.*

The "hermeneutic of suspicio
that arose in the wake of Fouca
presumes that the only universal h
man characteristic is a veiled lust
power, thus reducing human capa
ty to that of an ant colony. T
paranoia it encourages results in cy
icism and mistrust, the foundatio
of archconservatism. Furthermore,
discourages deep convictions a
passion. And we wonder what mak
Rush Limbaugh so popular.

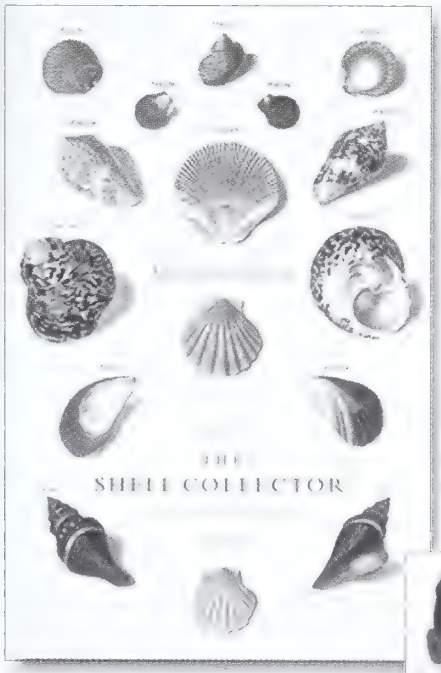
Matt Hutton
Cambridge, Mass.

I am among the few who feel ju
as Thomas de Zengotita's "Mr. I"
does: Like him, I hold "the Unit
States' support for corrupt and t
rorizing regimes historically respo
sible for the conditions that pr
duced the terrorists" of Septemb
11. And like him, I believe th
"every human life is as valuable
every other human life, that eve
mother's loss, every brother's loss,
as terrible as any other." "Ms. S"
however, quite right that our po
tion is essentially "unnatural"
Here's the thing (to borrow th
style of Zengotita's essay): the fa
that the vast majority of America
base their views about Iraq o
what's under their own noses, ar

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Fiction



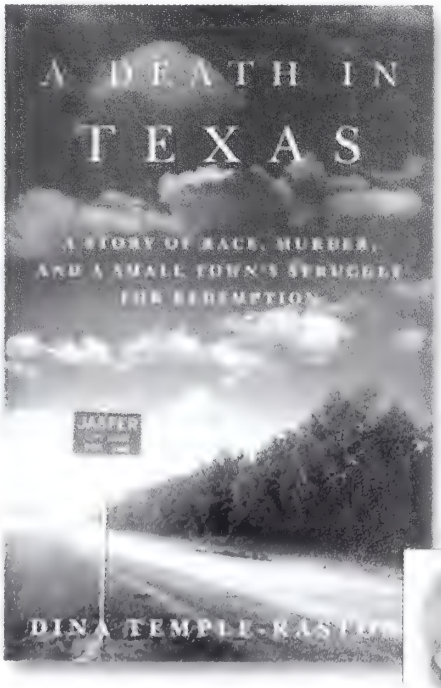


Anthony Doerr

"A show-stopping debut."
–The Los Angeles Times

he stories in this collection are polished jewels."
–The Cleveland Plain Dealer

Nonfiction





Dina Temple-Raston

"...an intense and beautifully crafted narrative that achieves something rare..."
–The Philadelphia Inquirer

"The story of Jasper is the story of America."
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not on universal moral principles, has almost no relation to what postmodern thinkers have done to the credibility of universal humanism. Academics need to begin to admit that their gum-flapping is little more than a sideshow. The simple truth is that we are still five parts animal to three parts philosopher. We are hairless apes, and we are wired for tribalism. Progressive thinking has never found a place for this truth. The American right has. It's as simple as that.

Thomas A. Glass
Baltimore

Thomas de Zengotita should trace his Enlightenment human-rights principles to their real origins—not to the eighteenth century but to religious feeling. More than a century ago, Nietzsche pointed out that in building their ethical systems, Enlightenment philosophers were simply (and disingenuously) trying to undergird with logic what they had inherited from religion.

Christopher Lee
Via email

Thomas de Zengotita reduces modern liberalism to religion with the statement, "You don't need a philosophical argument to 'prove' that humanist principles are real if they are actually at work in you." This is the essential argument for religious belief by people all over the world. It doesn't matter if you can argue your position, just as long as you have that warm, fuzzy feeling assuring you that you're right and everyone who disagrees with you is wrong. It is impossible, for me at least, to believe in a principle—the universality of principles, for instance—without inquiring into its ontological origin, and this inquiry leads quite necessarily to certain ideas that cannot be ignored, the existence of God in the case of universal principles.

Mark S. Fink
Via email

"That fundamental identification of each of us with all of us" needs to be expanded to include identifi tion not only with all humanity a each human being but with all l ings. I would add the following it to Thomas de Zengotita's list of r evant questions for our time: W do humans desire to separate o selves from the web of life, to im ine ourselves superior, differe alone?

Io Podium
Puerto Real, Puerto Rico

We must guard against presu ing a badge of Western exceptic alism. The perennial principles universal humanist principles w voiced earlier than the Europe Enlightenment and elsewhere, su as in the Islamic and Chine worlds on which Zengotita co ments. They have been unever aspired to, as Zengotita right points out, but recognizing that h manist principles of equity ori nate in us all will create a glob common ground.

Charles Rice
Tucson, Ariz.

Mirror, Mirror

Lewis H. Lapham ["When Rome," Notebook, January] giv an elegant rendering of what Americans know in their hear that democracy is all but dead, th our rulers have inherited a politic system that, fueled by cash fro corporations, is carefully co trolled. Uncharacteristicall Lapham ends his essay by offeri as a remedy the lame suggesti that "we might learn to elect poli cians who speak to our courage a intelligence rather than our wea ness and fear."

Our national politicians a brought to us by corporate sponso already groomed and purchas many times over. Of course, the have been notable recent exce tions—Wellstone (deceased); Ve tura (court jester); even Ralph Na er (last gasp)—yet, sadly, they' been ineffectual against the deafe ing roar of corporate money. W can all screw up our courage a cast our votes intelligently, but i

same old wine recycled in new
ainers.

es Linscott
ingham, Wash.

ewis H. Lapham on occasion
es material from the Roman his-
an Suetonius. Recently, he did
explicitly. Next time Lapham
ches for his Suetonius, he may
it to take into account that more
n a few classics professors consid-
Suetonius as dubious as super-
cket tabloids. Lapham should di-
t the same skepticism toward his
irces that he does toward the
h Administration.

hard Castanon
lington, Va.

A notable feature of past empires
s the leadership provided in battle
the heads of state. Julius Caesar,
nnibal, Alexander the Great, King
nry ("for Harry and for England"),
me to mind. They were in the front
es against their foes, a shining ex-
mple for the new imperialists.

nold J. Issenman
ontreal

I wish to quarrel with the gentle-
an who has failed to comprehend
e office of an editor [Dan Sullivan,
tters, January]. Echo chamber, in-
ed. Every day the same decadent
tter of complaint is written by dif-
rent dechauchees in every city, to
very editor, with the pompous and
ceitful pose of the innocent citizen
the pious, empty medicine bottle
at some stupid or neglectful editor
iled to fill to the brim with the
ures for everything that is wrong.

I would like to invite Citizen Sul-
van and the rest to ponder this:
erhaps writers of essays are not
neant to fulfill the office of the
harmacist. Consider that a good
riter is like a good mirror. You do
ot argue with your mirror for telling
ou ten thousand times that you still
ave that wart on your nose. It is
erverse to curse Lewis H. Lapham
r being such a fine looking-glass.

nnifer Elizabeth Siu
alos Verdes Estates, Calif.

Come Hither

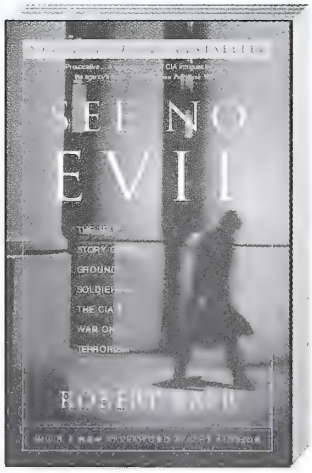
I enjoyed Edward Hoagland's essay ["Sex and the River Styx," January]. When I first saw the title, I thought that it might be a silly story about the decline of an older guy's sex drive and sex appeal. Instead, I was moved. Hoagland's ability to write perceptively and fluently is a wonder as sweeping as those he took up in his essay. Judging by my own esteem for Hoagland, and if esteem is a foundation for affection, as I think it is, I am sure that he will have no difficulty finding a partner for that unfinished business he wrote about.

Ann Canadeo
De Pere, Wisc.

Pass the Dahlberg

It was 1969 or thereabouts. My friends and I had stayed up all night on some exquisite mescaline, then staggered out into the icy

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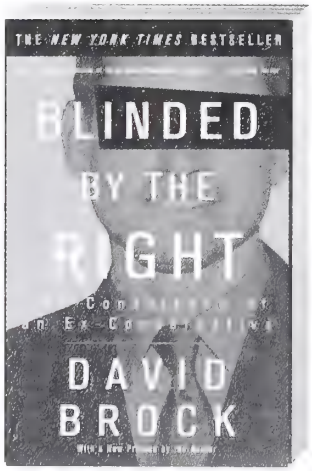


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dawn of New Haven, Connecticut, to fetch a useful palliative, the Sunday newspaper. A quotation from Edward Dahlberg, whom we did not know, instantly engaged us: "At nineteen I was a stranger to myself. At forty I asked: who am I? At fifty I concluded I would never know."

We smelled, even from a fragment, the whiff of vinegar that is in all of Dahlberg's writings and that Jonathan Lethem examined brilliantly ["The Disappointment Artist," February]. We were nineteen and we laughed, mainly because the quote broke enormous tension: the very concept of reaching forty was soothing to us, since our main objective in life right then was making it through the next few years without dying in Vietnam or being forced to kill Vietnamese. Now the empire has rolled on in its relentless search for new enemies. I offer the same fragment of Dahlberg to the current generation of American nineteen-year-olds, who are facing the same grim prospects of killing and being killed, for the same ambiguous reasons.

John Cloud
Ithaca, N.Y.

The Suburbs of Discontent

Wayne Biddle's shrill diatribe against the "apartheid city" Washington, D.C. ["Anxiety, Anonymity, Amnesia," February] seems a bit excessive. Biddle claims that in the affluent neighborhoods of Cleveland Park and Chevy Chase there is an "unspoken notion . . . that the Third World is held at bay here." As with many large cities, Washington struggles with housing segregation and appalling levels of educational attainment. There is, however, something to be said for these suburbs. Chevy Chase houses a wonderful bookstore called Politics and Prose, where, in front of an appreciative audience, *Harper's* editor Lewis H. Lapham recently spoke about his courageous opposition to the war on terrorism. As a quick perusal of its advertising attests, *Harper's* subscribers tend to reside in such well-to-do communities, and so Wayne Biddle should not judge these peo too harshly; they are his readers.

Marcia Banks
Washington, D.C.

I was amused by Wayne Bidd view of the horrors of life in town. Like the citizens of apartheid city, I have seen house's value appreciate consid ably (almost to "Palo Alto levels, Biddle puts it). My house is n however, in the white zone that describes. Indeed, we're right in middle of what he calls the "Th World." The appreciation of real tate might have to do with the s ple fact that D.C. is a desirable pl to live.

Perhaps the best clue to und standing Biddle's essay comes fr his identity as a Washingt D.C.–area writer. No doubt he frustrated D.C. house hunter for to live in the suburbs.

Richard Aboulafia
Washington, D.C.

Homeland Insecurity

Harper's Magazine is like a pa noid friend whose company I ke when it offers articles such as t harrowing stories, collected Madeleine Mukamabano, of th caught up in the Rwandan genoc ["We were Calling to Death," Re ings, February]. Because I view *H per's* as unbalanced, however, I tribute to base motives its choice genocide literature from France stead of the similar stories that ha been collected by many Americ writers and agencies, most notal the 807-page book *Leave None Tell the Story* (1999), put out by t American organization Hum Rights Watch and written by histo an Alison Des Forges. I may be s for suggesting that *Harper's* is del erately ignoring American contri tions in favor of French ones, but many articles are dedicated to ba America or diss-Bush sentimer that frankly I have become wit drawn and suspicious.

Saral Waldorf
Washington, D.C.

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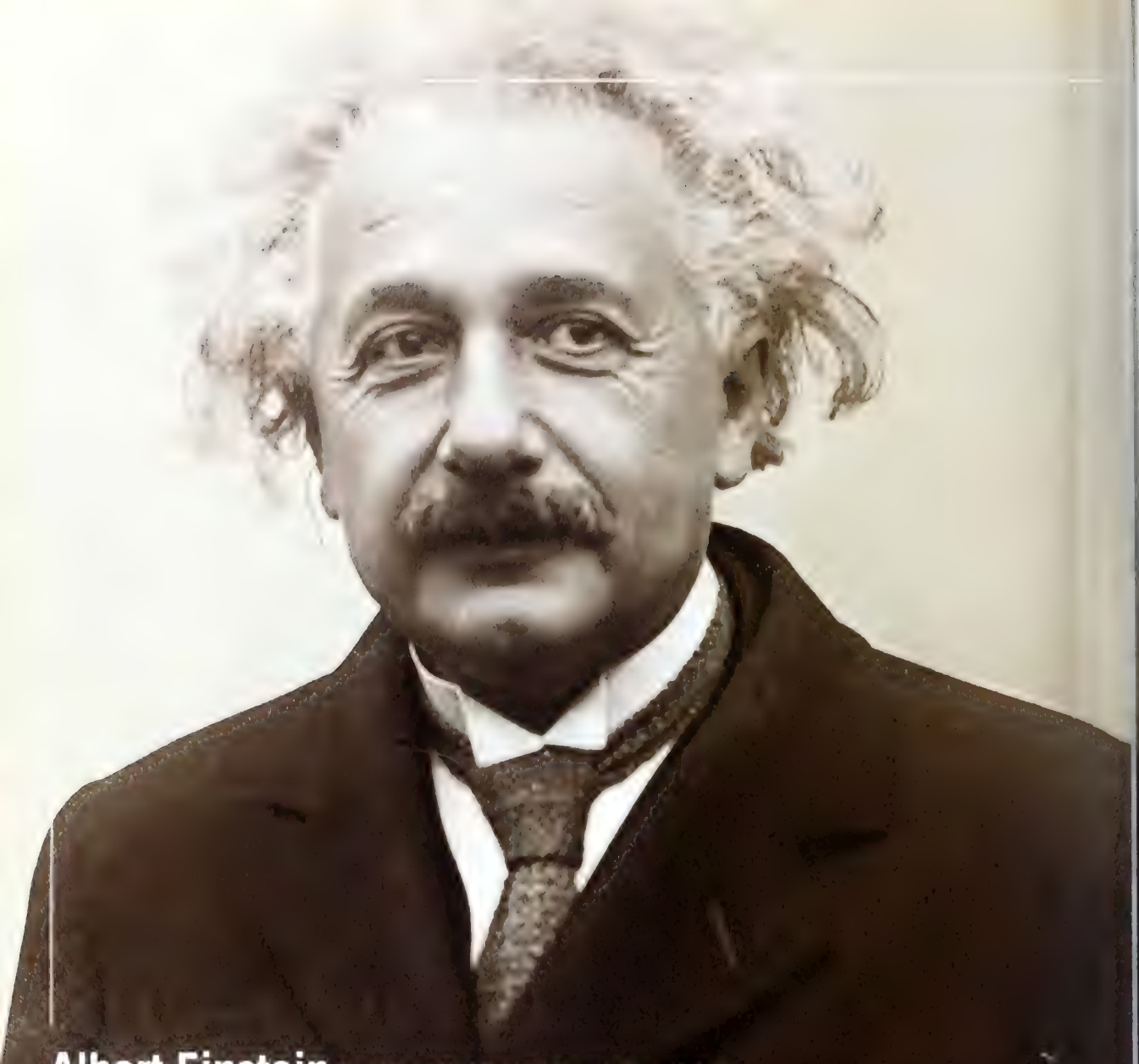
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HARPER'S INDEX

Chance that the United States bombed Iraq on any given day last year : 1 in 6

ank of Kim Jong Il and the Saudi royal family among the world's worst dictators, according to *Parade* magazine : 1, 2

nths after the fall of the Taliban that the United States began on-site assessment of Afghanistan's natural resources : 8

Percentage of Americans who say that other countries' interests are considered in making U.S. foreign policy : 75

Average percentage of the 30 other surveyed nationalities who say this : 35

Number of current and former national leaders slated for war-crimes prosecution by Belgium's high court : 21

Number of current officeholders left on the list after the court granted Israel's Ariel Sharon immunity in January : 15

Chance that a delegate to Pakistan's National Assembly is a member of an Islamist party : 1 in 6

Chance in 1997 : 1 in 54

Fine levied on three Norwegians in 2001 for throwing paper airplanes at the U.S. embassy : $350

Total fines U.S. investment banks will pay to end investigations into their stock recommendations : $985,000,000

iance that a member of a U.S. firm's executive-compensation committee has financial or familial ties to its CEO : 1 in 5

Percentage change since 1998 in the total promotional spending of U.S. pharmaceutical companies : +47

Percentage change since then in such companies' average profit per dollar spent on promotion : –24

mount for which Dow Chemical is suing Indian protesters over a two-hour demonstration held in Bhopal last year : $10,000

Amount of import-tax revenue that Israel is withholding from the Palestinian Authority : $400,000,000

ount the U.S. withheld from the U.N. Population Fund last year, citing links to forced abortions in China : $34,000,000

nths after the State Department had cleared the U.N. of such connections that the funds were withheld nonetheless : 2

Percentage of Chinese who say they have never heard of AIDS : 17

Minimum number of U.S. college students who developed scurvy from poor eating habits last year : 1

nds of grits and other grains to be donated to fill this year's food-budget gap at the South Carolina governor's mansion : 1,000

centage in import duties on Vietnamese catfish sought from the Commerce Department last year by U.S. catfish farmers : 190

Percentage of California's economy that is accounted for by agriculture : 7

Percentage of the state's water that is used for agriculture : 43

Estimated percentage change since 2000 in acres of Texas recognized as wetlands by the Army Corps of Engineers : –40

Amount budgeted last year for the EPA's Leaking Underground Storage Tank Program : $72,000,000

Ratio of the annual budget of the EPA to that of NASA : 1:2

Minimum number of open-source software applications now in use at the Pentagon : 115

Number of the 158 used hard drives purchased for an MIT study this year that contained recoverable data : 129

Minimum number of credit-card numbers the hard drives contained : 6,650

Decibels of sound pressure employed by a new "thermoacoustic" refrigerator : 190

Decibels of sound pressure sufficient to ignite a person's hair : 165

Chance that a student at Indiana University reports having used a tanning lamp in the past year : 1 in 2

Percentage of applications from alumni's children accepted by Middlebury College in 1990 and 2002 : 70, 45

Percentage of applications from non-alumni African Americans accepted in those years : 57, 57

Chances that a Democrat believes that "most" Republicans are prejudiced against African Americans : 2 in 5

Number of Democratic supporters that qualifies a congressional vote as "bipartisan," according to Ari Fleischer : 1

Ratio of the U.S. median income in 2001 to what Dick Cheney would have saved that year with the new dividend-tax cut : 2:5

Ratio of the number of words in the U.S. income-tax code today to the number in 1955 : 6:1

Number of pharmaceutical drugs approved by the FDA since 1998 whose names begin with V, W, X, Y, or Z : 93

Figures cited are the latest available as of February 2003. Sources are listed on page 92.
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THE AUTHOR



THE EDITO

For more than 200 years, the Bill of Rights has stood as a wall between governmental abuse and the rights of a free peo
But John Ashcroft, driven by a radical ideology and shamelessly using the events of September 11, 2001 as a subterfu
has systematically been dismantling that v

Today, the government can get a secret warrant to search your home without telling you until long afterwa
Today, the government can monitor your Internet use, read your emails, examine your online purcha
with minimal judicial oversight. Today, you can be detained without access to a lawyer, without being charged with a cri
Today, John Ashcroft has authorized the FBI to monitor your political activities, to send agents into your house of wors
We can only guess what tomorrow will br

The American Civil Liberties Union is leading the fight to protect your rights, and to stop the Ashcroft assault on our civil libert
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READINGS

[Essay]

THE POSTHUMAN CONDITION

From Enough: Staying Human in an Engineered Age, *by Bill McKibben, to be published in April by Henry Holt and Company.*

Right now, all around the world, ten thousand scientists are assembling ten thousand different pieces of the human genetic puzzle. Most of this work leads in exciting directions—toward new and better cancer drugs, a vaccine for AIDS—but such research may also lead to something much darker: to attempts at genetically engineering human beings in the womb, designing our children to make them smarter, prettier, "better." We've already done such work with a long list of other mammals, and scientists right up to James Watson, the co-discoverer of the DNA double helix, now urge us to try the same trick with our kids, arguing that it is both inevitable and desirable. "Going for perfection," Watson calls it. But in fact such genetic tampering threatens to destroy the very things that give meaning to human life. From a certain vantage point, meaning has been in decline for a very long time, almost since the beginning of civilization. Our hunter-gatherer ancestors inhabited a very different world from ours, a meaning-saturated world where every plant and animal was an actor the way people are actors, where even rocks and mountains and canyons and rivers could speak. We look at that same world and see either silent landscape or pile of resources; either it has gone mute or our hearing is nowhere near as sharp.

But the context of our lives began to shrink much more quickly in the last five hundred years. As science offered first new explanations and then new technologies, we have traded in the old contexts that informed human lives, bargaining them away in return for freedom, for liberation. The medieval church, which ordered Western civilization, gave way to more individualized religion; we read the Bible for ourselves, or not. Static peasant life, and guild life, in which a carpenter was the great-great-grandson of one carpenter and the great-great-grandfather of another, gave way to the enormous dynamism of technology-driven capitalism: now 2 percent of Americans work as farmers, and our typical countryman changes jobs eight times in his life. Conservatives whimpered about the threat to order almost from the start—they knew Galileo was trouble, could sense the trajectory from him and his telescope to Nietzsche and the death of God. But radicals saw it just as clearly. Marx and Engels, of course, offered the single greatest description of this phenomenon when they wrote in 1848 that "all fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air . . ."

What's really amazing about what Max Weber called the "disenchantment" of the world was how long it took. "After every announcement of the technological conflagration, much tradition-

al and natural reality has remained to be consumed," writes the philosopher Albert Borgmann. So, in the last century, the invention of the car offered the freedom of mobility, at the cost of the small, coherent physical universes most people had inhabited. The invention of radio and television allowed the unlimited choices of a national or a global culture but undermined the local life that had long persisted; the old people in my small rural town can still recall when "visiting" was the evening pastime, and how swiftly it disappeared in the 1950s, when CBS and NBC arrived. The 1960s seemed to mark the final rounds of this endless liberation: the invention of divorce as a mass phenomenon made clear that family no longer carried the meaning we'd long assumed, that it could be discarded as the village had been discarded; the pill and the sexual revolution freed us from the formerly inherent burdens of sex, but also often reduced it to the merely "casual."

Whether all this was "good" or "bad" is an impossible question, and a pointless one. These changes came upon us like the weather; "we" "chose" them only in the broadest sense of the words. They were upon us before we could do anything about them. You may keep the TV in the closet, but you still live in a TV society. The possibility of divorce now hovers over every marriage, leaving it subtly different from what it would have been before. What's important is that all these changes went in the same direction: they traded context for individual freedom. Maybe it's been a worthwhile bargain; without it, we wouldn't have the prosperity that marks life in the West, and all the things that prosperity implies. Longer life span, for instance; endless choice. But the costs have clearly been real, too: we've tried hard to fill the hole left when community disappeared with "traditional values" and evangelical churches, with back-to-the-land communes and New Age rituals. But those frantic stirrings serve mostly to highlight our radical loneliness. Even the surrounding natural world no longer serves as a ground, a context; we've reshaped it so thoroughly, now changing even its climate, that it reflects our habits and appetites and economies instead of offering us a doorway into a deeper world.

The past five hundred years have elevated us to the status of individuals, and reduced us to the status of individuals. At the end of the process, that's what we are—empowered, enabled, isolated, disconnected individuals. Call it blessing or call it curse or call it both, that's where we find ourselves. Our greatest cultural artifact is probably *Seinfeld*, a television program devoted to exploring what it means to live a life that has no context, that has no meaning. The great danger, in other words, of the world that we have built is that it leaves us vulnerable to meaninglessness—to a world where consumption is all that happens, because there's nothing else left that means anything. In a way that once was unthinkable, we now have to ask ourselves, "Is my life amounting to something? Does it have weight and substance, or is it just running away into nothing, into something insubstantial?" And the only real resource that many of us have against that meaninglessness, now that the church and the village and the family and even the natural world can't provide us with as much context as before, is our individual selves. We have to, somehow, produce all that context for ourselves; that's what a modern life is about. There's no use moaning about it; it may well be better than what came before. In any event, it's who we are, where we are, how we are, what we are, why we are. We've got to answer those questions pretty much on our own.

But now *we stand on the edge of disappearing even as individuals*. Most of the backdrops have long since been dragged off the stage, and most of the other actors have mostly vanished; each of us is giving our existential monologue, trying to make it count for something. But in the wings the genetic engineers stand poised to slip us off the stage as well, and in so doing to ring down the curtain on the entire show.

It doesn't seem so at first; if anything, just the opposite. The engineers promise to complete the process of liberation, to free us or, rather, our offspring from the limitations of our DNA, just as their predecessors freed us from the confines of the medieval worldview, or the local village, or the family. They can, they promise confidently, remove the ties that bind us—the genes that allow us to fall into ill health, or that keep us from being more intelligent, or more muscular, or more handsome, or happier. It seems as if, with their splicing and snipping, they want only to remove one more of the stones that weigh us down; that without it we will bound even higher, be more truly liberated.

In fact, though, whatever you think of the last five hundred years, this is one liberation too many. We are snipping the very last weight holding us to the ground, and when it's gone we will float silently away into the vacuum of meaninglessness.

What will you have done to your newborn when you have installed into the nucleus of every one of her billions of cells a purchased code that will pump out proteins designed to change her? You will have robbed her of the last possible chance of understanding her life. Say she finds herself, at the age of sixteen, unaccountably happy. Is it her being happy—finding, perhaps, the boy she will first love—or is it the corporate product inserted within her when she was a small nest of cells, an artificial chromosome now causing her body to produce more serotonin? Don't



wo untitled paintings, by Ann Gale. Gale's work will be on exhibit in September at Hackett-Freedman Gallery, in San Francisco.

think she won't wonder: at sixteen a sensitive soul questions everything. But perhaps you've "increased her intelligence"—and perhaps that's why she is questioning so hard. She won't even be sure whether the questions are hers.

Here's Gregory Stock, the UCLA professor and outspoken proponent of such genetic engineering, explaining how it will work: "People will be inclined to give their children those skills and traits that align with their own temperaments and lifestyles. An optimist may feel so good about his optimism and energy that he wants more of it for his child. A concert pianist may see music as so integral to life that she wants to give her daughter greater talent than her own. A devout individual may want his child to be even more religious and resistant to temptation." In other words, having managed, in many ways against the odds, to create a context (optimism, artistry, devotion) for their lives, parents will be able to pass it on. But what a poisoned gift. Scientists—"neurotheologians," someone has called them—have pinpointed the regions of the parietal lobe that quiet down when Catholic nuns and Buddhist monks pray. Perhaps before long we will be able to amplify the reaction. As a result, the minister's son may be even more pious than he is, but if he has any brain left to himself he will question that piety at the deepest level, wonder constantly whether it means anything or if it's so much brainwashing. And if he doesn't question it, if the gene transplant takes so deeply that he turns into an anchorite monk living deep in the desert, then his faith is utterly meaningless, far more meaningless than the one his medieval ancestor inherited by birthright. It would be a faith literally beyond questioning and hence no faith at all. He would be, for all intents and purposes, a robot.

And the piano player's daughter? A player piano as much as a human, doomed to create a particular context for herself, ever uncertain whether it is her skill and devotion or her catalogue proteins that move her fingers so nimbly, her music soured before it is made. Because the point was never the music itself; the inclination and then the effort were what created the meaning for her mother. If the mother injects all that into her daughter's cells, she robs her daughter forever of the chance to make music her own authentic context—or to choose something else (dance, art, cooking) as the act that brings her life to life.

Running is one of the contexts I've created for myself, one of the things that orders my life, that fills it with metaphor and meaning. If my

parents had somehow altered my body so that I could run more quickly, that fact would have robbed running of precisely the meaning I draw from it. The point of running, for me, is not to cover ground more quickly; for that, I could use a motorcycle. The point has to do with seeking out my limits, centering my attention: finding out who I am. But that's very difficult if my body has been altered, if the "I" and the Sweatworks2010 GenePack are entwined in the twists of the double helix. And if my mind has been engineered to make me want to push through the pain of running, or not notice it at all, then the point has truly vanished. My effort to carve out some context for myself is in vain; I might as well be Seinfeld, sitting on a couch and cracking wise about the pointlessness of it all.

And when it comes time for me to visit the clinic and program my own offspring how will I know why I choose what I choose? Most likely, to quote Stock once more, "enhancements of this sort by parents [will] engender mind-sets disinclined to attenuate the traits in their own children," and so "such traits may reinforce themselves from generation to generation and push the limits of genetic possibility and technical know-how." Because, that is, one late twentieth-century woman found solace and meaning in playing the piano, her descendants yea unto the generations are condemned to an ever deepening spiral of musicality, one that they did not choose and that may haunt them, depending on how much consciousness remains, with the question of why exactly they feel so compelled to compose.

We flirt, of course, with these possibilities already. When taken by people who are not in obvious medical need, drugs such as Prozac may smooth out identity, stunt emotional growth; at the very least, as many have noted, they raise the question of how you tell who you really are. But Prozac and its soma sisters remain, for the moment, pills. They are designed to help people through bad patches. You can refuse to take them, you can stop taking them; they are not you in the sense that they would be if municipal officials loaded them into the water supply. And certainly not in the way they would be you if your optimistic father had determined he wanted double-grande optimism in his son and so worked the extra serotonin into your very wiring, syringed it in as an ineradicable tattoo.

Some of these changes may well make us more comfortable. Stock again: "If we had the power to protect our future child, we might be very reluctant to leave him or her with a predisposition for recurring bouts of dark depression." Not even "the knowledge that our child might use these distressing periods to good purpose" would "make our decision to forgo germinal interventions any easier." Most parents, he predicts, "would make the safe choices and avoid the ragged uncertainties at the edges of human possibility," a caution that would grow ever more likely with each new generation, as the fear of a passage they had never known would make parents-to-be doubly wary. But in that increasing suburbanization of our being, the chance for emotional growth, for becoming "real" in some deep sense, would dwindle ever further.

We may be among the last generations able even to undertake the exercise of questioning

[Queries]

YES I AM

From the Whois database of registered domain names.

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COURTESY YOSSI MILO GALLERY, NEW YORK CITY

"Untitled #90, 2000," by Simen Johan, from his book Room to Play, *published by Twin Palms in February.*

this new world. In the words of Richard Hayes, one of the leading crusaders against germline manipulation: "Suppose you've been genetically engineered by your parents to have what they consider enhanced reasoning ability and other cognitive skills. How could you evaluate whether or not what was done to you was a good thing? How could you think about what it would be like not to have genetically engineered thoughts?"

If you genetically alter your child and the programming works, then you will have turned your child into an automaton to one degree or another; and if it only sort of works, you will have seeded the ground for a harvest of neurosis and self-doubt we can barely begin to imagine. If "Who am I?" is the quintessential modern question, you will have guaranteed that your children will never be able to fashion a workable answer.

[Qualifications]

WHAT A GIRL WANTS

From a November casting call for a Christina Aguilera music video.

CASTING: Christina Aguilera music video "Beautiful"
PIX AND RESUMES IMMEDIATELY
HURRY, HURRY, HURRY:

This song is a ballad . . . the scenes that accompany Christina's performance footage will all be beautiful vignettes . . . All different types of COMPELLING people in many different situations, going from feeling their own personal sadness to realizing that they, and their life, are truly "Beautiful."

Actors will be asked to lip-synch a little bit of the song at their audition . . . some actors will also be asked to cry on cue.

ROLES

CHRISTINA AGUILERA "STAND-IN": 18–29 . . . Looking for a very close visual match . . . will get her exact measurements ASAP . . . but check out one of the thousands of photos of her online if you don't know what she looks like . . . she's very petite!!!

TEENAGE GIRL WITH BRACES: ALL ETHNICITIES . . . She is beautiful, compelling, and interesting. MUST BE A STRONG ACTOR and MUST HAVE BRACES!!

MOM OF TEEN GIRL: All ethnicities, 33–45 . . . She is beautiful, compelling, and interesting . . . Must be a strong actor!!

ANOREXIC GIRL/WOMAN: All ethnicities, 16–35 . . . Must be extraordinarily skinny . . . must look anorexic . . . Must be a strong actor!!!

MEXICAN MAN: 42–55 . . . He is expressive and compelling . . . Must be a strong actor!

HIP-EDGY-SEXY GAY MALE COUPLE: 18–30, ALL ETHNICITIES . . . Don't have to be a real couple . . . DO HAVE TO BE hip, edgy, sexy, beautiful, and completely comfortable passionately kissing a person of the SAME sex in the video. Must be a strong actor!!!

30-SOMETHING GUY: 30s, ALL ETHNICITIES . . . He is very handsome, hip, and cool . . . the guy who loves to go out and have a great time on a Saturday night . . . but parties a little too hard. Must be a strong actor!

OLDER WOMAN: 50–85 . . . She is beautiful with an incredibly interesting face. She has seen many years and many things . . . Extremely expressive and excellent actor here is mandatory!!

THIN TEENAGE BOY: 13–18 . . . He is slightly awkward but still really adorable and kind of cool in his own way . . . He works out, "pumps iron" trying to build his physique . . . Must be a strong actor!!

STREET HOOKER: 27–40, all ethnicities . . . She has fallen on hard times (duh, she's a hooker) . . . Once very beautiful, her looks have become somewhat worn and faded.

WHITE-TRASH [illegible]: 40–55, Caucasian, FEMALE . . . not a caricature, not comedy . . . think *Gummo* or *Bully* . . . works at a truck stop . . . from the "armpit" of Florida, so to speak.

WHITE-TRASH DAD: 40–55, Caucasian . . . not a caricature, not comedy . . . Must be a strong actor . . . from the "armpit" part of Florida, so to speak.

HIP-HOP GUYS: 18–25, male, all ethnicities . . . They are urban, young, hip, with total hip-hop style . . . must be strong actors!

PUNK ROCKER: Male or female, early 20s . . . Hard-core . . . spiked hair or something equally Punk Rock . . . no fakers no fauxhawks . . . want the "real deal" . . . good actor hugely helpful!

LESBIAN WOMEN: 40s, all ethnicities . . . should appear instantly "feminist" . . . I know not all feminists are Lesbian, TRULY I DO . . . but do you get what we're going for here? Thanks! Strong actors a must!!

[Procedures]

IT'S WHAT'S FOR DINNER

From a memo distributed last May to meat inspectors by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

GENERAL INFORMATION AND CONDUCT

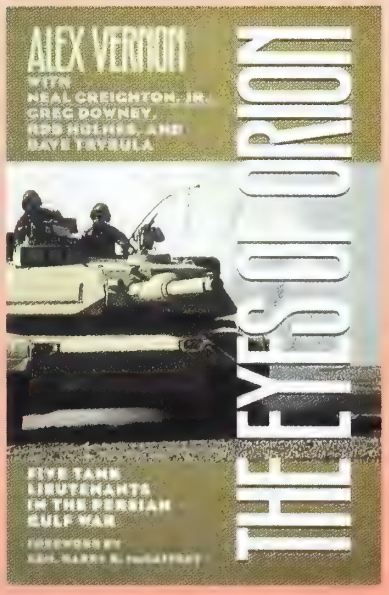
There are many serious responsibilities you have assumed in your role as a Consumer Safety Inspector. You need to learn your role and work within the guidelines. We are anxious to help you know your role well.

You must understand the responsibility you accept when you stop the company's production processes by stopping the line. If a product that is going into the food supply has been directly contaminated and you can justify the production loss that will prevent its entrance into the food supply, then you will be supported, because that is in your scope of work.

Stopping production for "possible" cross contamination is unjustifiable unless you can verify that there is direct product contamination. Verification is OBSERVATION of gross contaminate, not SUSPECTED contaminate. This is the only criteria for justifying halting production.

You are justified to stop production if it is physically impossible for you to properly examine the product presented to you. That means, for example, that the tongue is on the hook backward, or the paunches are upside down. That does not mean a paunch that is right side up but twisted only slightly, or the weasand [esophagus] and bung [anus] up underneath the paunch or intestine. That is going to happen occasionally, and we can pull most of those organs out for proper examination without stopping production. You may be accountable for the time the company has lost if that lost production is not verifiable and the action not justifiable.

The Soldier's Perspective



The Eyes of Orion: Five Tank Lieutenants in the Persian Gulf War

Alex Vernon et al.

Winner of the 1999 Army Historical Foundation Distinguished Book Award

"Relatively little attention has been given to the tactical level of war. One exception is *The Eyes of Orion,* a collection of personal day-to-day remembrances by five former armour lieutenants who led their platoons into battle for the first time. . . . One gets a close view of the dedication, responsibility and stamina that are required in the conduct of high-intensity operations. . . . It is essentially an attempt to come to grips with the physical, personal, moral, mental and leadership challenges of young men facing combat for the first time." —*War in History*

ISBN 0-87338-633-7 $35.00 (cl) ISBN 0-87338-715-5 $20.00 (p)

And the Wind Blew Cold: The Story of an American POW in North Korea

Richard M. Bassett

"The author was captured by the Chinese People's Volunteer Army while fighting in the Korean War. He spent twenty-two months as a prisoner. . . . Bassett recalls almost every day of his captivity in Camp 5. . . . He describes the shock of being captured and the lengthy march during which many soldiers died of hunger, cold, wounds, and cruel treatment. . . . More than 3,700 POWs died in what has been called the Forgotten War. This vivid, clear-sighted account will help keep it from being forgotten altogether."—*ForeWord Magazine*

ISBN 0-87338-750-3 $21.00 (cl)



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INSPECTION

You need to know about tolerable limits of dust, hair, hide, grubs, etc. Any amount of oil on the hocks is a minor defect. An oil spot on the rounds or other parts of the carcass less than two inches in diameter is also minor and can be trimmed on the moving line. The line should NOT be shut off for an oil problem.

You must learn the difference between active and healed pleural adhesions and pleuritis. Pleura may contain a layer of fat that gives them a thickened appearance, and they may even have blood clinging to them that, if you run your finger over them, will scrape away and does NOT need to be peeled out.

"Bunk bruises" are NOT bruises at all but degenerated fat in the brisket and of no pathological significance. They are sterile and do not involve surrounding tissue. They are not unwholesome. The company can trim those very nicely after chilling, and they do not get into the food supply.

There is ZERO TOLERANCE of contamination from ingesta, feces, and milk on the carcass at final presentation. We will allow the company a chance to trim it off on the moving line unless it is so excessive that it must be corrected with the line stopped. You are responsible for the time the line is off. Turning off the line must be justifiable and verifiable if we are to support your action. Remember, YOU are accountable for this very serious responsibility of stopping the company's production. Be sure that supervisors can support your decision. Identifiable and verifiable ingesta or feces is as follows: a material of yellow, green, brown, or dark color that has a fibrous nature. Milk is a cream-colored to white fluid, not a clear fluid.

If you have unidentifiable material on the carcass and you are unsure what to do, you are instructed to apply a RETAIN/REJECT tag on the leading side of the carcass. It is unnecessary to cause significant loss of production. You don't have to decide what the unidentified material is, where it came from, or any remedy. That is outside your scope of work.

VISCERA TABLE

A contaminated liver needs one stamp for pet-food salvage if it is otherwise healthy. If there is a single isolated abscess that can be removed, stamp the salvageable end and make a slice for the company to know how much of the liver they can have for pet food. If there are NO hepatic lymph nodes presented and NO OTHER PATHOLOGY, DO NOT stamp out the liver. It is still acceptable for human food.

Contamination with small amounts of ingesta on the paunch and small intestine which are salvaged by the company to be further processed to become edible does not always require condemnation.

Ingesta INSIDE the trachea is not contamination sufficient to condemn the heart. When an inspector upstream from you has made that determination and not stamped it, that inspector's judgment should not be overridden. That should be the rule: INSPECT YOUR OWN PRODUCT. Stay within your own scope of work.

Intact bladders still attached to the bung that are full of urine but not leaking are not contaminating anything, and nothing needs to

[Diagnosis]

TRAGICALLY HIP

From a letter by Malvinder S. Parmar, medical director of Timmins & District Hospital in Timmins, Ontario, published last January in the Canadian Medical Association Journal.

I recently saw three mildly obese young women between the ages of twenty-two and thirty-five who had worn tight "low rise" trousers (also called hiphuggers) over the previous six to eight months. All presented with symptoms of a tingling or burning sensation on the lateral aspect of the thigh (bilateral in one case). The results of a physical examination were unremarkable, except for mild local tenderness at the anterior superior iliac spine in two patients.

The lateral femoral cutaneous nerve can be compressed as it passes under the inguinal ligament, which results in pain and paresthesia in the lateral aspect of the thigh, a condition commonly known as meralgia paresthetica. Meralgia paresthetica has been described in association with various garments and accessories, such as wallets and tight jeans.

One of the women was concerned about multiple sclerosis and requested an MRI but was reassured by my explanation of the origin of her symptoms. In all three patients, the symptoms resolved after four to six weeks of avoiding hiphuggers and wearing loose-fitting dresses.

Simple observation of the patient's mode of dress may give a clue to the diagnosis and prevent unnecessary investigations. Now that hiphuggers are back in fashion, physicians can expect to see more patients with tingly thighs.

be condemned. Leaking bladders are different, because either you see the urine leaking out or you don't. Did that urine contaminate something? How much was it? The whole carcass? Other edible viscera? Use good judgment.

HEAD CHAIN

Condemn product affected by abscess and ingesta contamination on head and/or tongue and only ONE product in front and behind. DO NOT STOP LINE AND DO NOT WASH OUT HEAD CABINET.

Clumps of hair on head and/or tongue are NOT a major source of bacteria. If you must, you can put a spot of ink on the area. Someone down the line will trim it. DO NOT STOP THE LINE. This includes other trimmable lesions of head or tongue.

If pathology on head and/or tongue is sufficient to remove the carcass, you may stop the line, but only long enough to be sure you have proper identity of the carcass. Be reasonable about the time; it should only take a few seconds, not minutes.

If heads and tongues are not identified together properly and there is NO pathology, condemn the tongue. If the head has no ID and no pathology, condemn the head too. IF THERE IS SUFFICIENT PATHOLOGY OF EITHER HEAD OR TONGUE AND NO ID, SHUT OFF THE LINE UNTIL THE COMPANY HAS FOUND THE RIGHT CARCASS. (When they do and you are satisfied it is right, immediately start the line again.)

[Testimony]

WE TOOK DOWN TWO TODAY

From testimony by Yoshio Shinozuka concerning atrocities committed by the Japanese army in China during World War II. Shinozuka was a member of Unit 731, which conducted human experiments on more than 250,000 Chinese civilians and prisoners of war. Shinozuka testified on behalf of a group of victims' families who sued the Japanese government, which has refused to issue an apology or to provide any compensation. In August a Tokyo district court dismissed the lawsuit and said that it had no legal basis. Translated from the Japanese by Mihoko Tokoro.

Please state how you joined Unit 731, the so-called Ishii Unit.
It was March 1939. Recruiters came to junior high schools, vocational schools, and agricultural schools, and I volunteered to join the unit. We were ordered to report to the Epidemic Prevention Laboratory of the Imperial Japanese Army's School of Military Medicine in Tokyo. When I arrived I was told, "You are a member of the Junior Youth Corps of the Ishii Unit. You will soon be transferred to Harbin, China. It is a wonderful place."

When were you transferred to Harbin?
We arrived on May 12, 1939, and I was sent to Ping Fan. The first thing I noticed in Ping Fan was that there were moats and barbed wire around the buildings. At the time, I wondered why the security was so tight, since the head of the unit and many others there were just army doctors. The next day we were told that this area was

[Entreaty]

KISS YOUR ASS GOODBYE

From a February 3 letter from Ingrid Newkirk, president of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), to Yasir Arafat, president of the Palestinian National Authority.

Your Excellency:

We have received many calls and letters from people shocked at the bombing in Jerusalem on January 26 in which a donkey, laden with explosives, was intentionally blown up.

All nations behave abominably when they are fighting their enemies, and animals are always caught in the crossfire. The U.S. Army abandoned thousands of loyal service dogs in Vietnam. We watched on television as stray cats in your own compound fled as best they could from the Israeli bulldozers.

Animals claim no nation. They are in perpetual involuntary servitude to all humankind, and although they pose no threat and own no weapons, human beings always win in the undeclared war against them. For animals, there is no Geneva Convention and no peace treaty—just our mercy.

If you have the opportunity, will you please add to your burdens my request that you appeal to all those who listen to you to leave the animals out of this conflict?

Very truly yours,
Ingrid Newkirk



"Untitled (light on water)," by Ralph Eugene Meatyard. Meatyard's work is on display this month at Pace/MacGill Gallery, in New York City.

designated as a special military area, and that even Japanese military planes were forbidden to fly over. Also, we were bound by a strict law to see nothing, hear nothing, and say nothing. We were told that if we ran away, we would be punished as runaway soldiers from the front lines.

After you arrived in Ping Fan, what were you told about the duties of Unit 731?
We were told to accompany frontline units and supply them with purified water. But in reality, starting in 1940, the division that provided purified water was located outside of Harbin.

Would you please explain the structure of Unit 731?
Each division was named after its chief. I was sent to the Yamaguchi division, which manufactured and tested germ bombs.

What else did you do as a Junior Youth Corps member?
We were sent wherever help was needed. That was our duty. There was mass production of germs for the Nomonhan Incident [border clashes with Soviet troops] and again in 1940, and also flea breeding in 1940.

What was the state of Unit 731 at the time of the Nomonhan Incident?
Many of the Unit 731 members went to Nomonhan. I figured their duty was to purify water. But those who were left behind started making germs. My assignment was to prepare culturing cans for germ growth. I was also in charge of transporting the microbes we called "stumps." Other members of the Junior Youth Corps who knew how to drive participated in the incident directly.

What did they do?
They said they flung the germs into the Horustein River.

What types of germs were thrown into the river?
I think they were typhoid, paratyphoid, and dysentery bacilli.

Did you ever participate in the breeding of fleas?
Yes. We were ordered to report to a dark room on the third floor. There were oil drums lined up on a platform. There were grains of wheat in them, and rats in small cages were placed in the wheat. Our assignment was to check them once a day and if we found the rats dead to replace them with live ones. The room was humid and hot. There was a Western-style white porcelain bathtub placed on the platform. The wheat chaff and fleas were mixed in it, and as we used a hair dryer and stirred them we noticed that the fleas were multiplying. Then the fleas were collected in glass containers.

What were those fleas used for?
Rats and humans are the most sensitive to the plague bacillus. Fleas are carriers. If you release fleas from an airplane, the fleas scatter everywhere. They settle on rats, and as the rats die the fleas settle on humans. Before a plague epidemic breaks out, you see many dead rats around. We learned this in plague class.

The Junior Youth Corps was disbanded. Was that around July 1941?
Yes, and then I was assigned to the Karasawa Unit and ordered to handle chemical warfare.

What was the function of the Karasawa Unit?
Mass production of pathogenic germs.

What kinds of pathogenic germs did you produce?
We cultured dysentery, typhoid, paratyphoid, cholera, plague, and anthrax. Especially after 1941, anthrax, plague, and cholera were produced in quantity. We were never told what kinds of germs we were producing. We just figured it out by the smells and shapes. Dysentery bacillus smelled like cucumber. Typhoid bacillus was rather beautiful: a colony of the bacilli reminded me of a group of pearls. Anthrax bacillus was muddy, and cholera bacillus was rough in texture. Plague bacillus was rather stringy, like if you stir up fermented soybeans and pull off the stringy material.

In the Karasawa Unit where you worked, did you ever participate in live human dissections?
Yes. It started in December 1942. Before that, we used mice. But in 1942 the experiments I attended were on Chinese people. There were special-unit members who wore lab coats and carried guns in the treatment room. They had boots and field caps on. They brought the human specimens to the treatment room, and I drew their blood. We would draw blood and then test for antibodies. Then we would inject the plague vaccine that had been developed by Unit 731. After that, blood would be drawn and tested again. The live plague bacteria would be injected. Then, after they got critically sick, the doctors would start a dissection.

The people who were brought in by the special-unit staff looked sick and black. I was ordered to wash these people with a deck brush. I was somehow hesitant to use a deck brush on their faces. I remember now that I closed my eyes and washed the faces with the deck brush. My legs were

[Ingredients]

WELCOME TO FLAVOR COUNTRY

From a list of cigarette additives compiled from tobacco-industry documents by the Indiana Prevention Resource Center at Indiana University.

Alfalfa Extract
Ammonia
Apple Skins
Bay Leaf
Beeswax
Caffeine
Carbon Dioxide
Cellulose Fiber
Chamomile Flower Extract
Chocolate
Cocoa
Corn Silk
Dandelion Root Solid Extract
Dill Seed Extract
Fenugreek
Fig Juice Concentrate
Food Starch Modified
Geranium Rose Oil
Grape Juice Concentrate
Honey
Hops Oil
Hydrolyzed Milk Solids
Immortelle Absolute and Extract
Jasmine Absolute
Kola Nut Extract
Lactic Acid
Licorice Root
Lime Oil
Mace Powder
Magnesium Carbonate
Malt
Maple Syrup
Molasses Tincture
Mountain Maple Solid Extract
Myrrh Oil
Nutmeg Powder
Oak Moss Absolute
Orange Blossom Water
Patchouli Oil
Peruvian Oil
Phosphoric Acid
Pineapple Juice Concentrate
Prune Juice
Rum
Rye Extract
Smoke Flavor
Sugar Alcohols
Tannic Acid
Thyme Oil
Urea
Valerian Root
Vanilla Extract
Vinegar
Walnut Hull Extract
Wheat Flour
Wine and Sherry
Xanthan Gum
Yeast

[illegible] as the medic locked the specimen [illegible] the microscope, the chief pathologist started to dissect him. I put the pieces of organs in the culturing medium, which was placed in the culture dish. This was done, we were told, to verify the toxicity of the pathogenic germs we had produced, as well as to check the efficacy of vaccinations. Also it enabled us to obtain stumps for future germ production.

How many times did you participate in such vivisections?
I remember participating four times.

How were those people's cadavers disposed of?
There was a tall chimney in the building; it was a very big chimney. The special security squad burned the cadavers in there.

Did you ever talk about the human vivisections among yourselves at night?
We would go back to our quarters later than usual when we performed such atrocities. During our baths, other members who had similar duties would join us. Our usual conversations went like this: "How many logs did you take down today?" "We took down two today," or, "We didn't take down any logs today."

You left the Karasawa Unit in June 1943. Please explain briefly what you did after that.
I worked in a physics research lab. Then I became a technical worker in the neurology department of the Manchuria Medical School and spent a few months there before I got drafted and served as an infantryman in a division of Shen Wu Tun, near the Russian border. In 1944, I was transferred to the hygiene department and then to the medical department of Division 125 in Tong Hua, Liaoning Province. The war ended when I was there. When I was called to headquarters for the disarmament, I ran away. A year later, on February 3, 1946, I was arrested for starting a riot. When I was released in June 1946, the local police asked us if we wanted to join the Chinese army. They said there was probably no other way to stay alive. So I joined the People's Liberation Army. In the army, I was treated as one of the members. There was no discrimination. Then I started to think about what I had done before, and it made me feel very bad. In [illegible] sent to Fushun War Criminal Penitentiary. [illegible] member of Unit 731.

Please [illegible] you were treated in Fushun War Criminal Penitentiary and how your beliefs changed.
In the penitentiary, we were fed three times a day. In the [illegible] Liberation Army, I had started to feel bad. Now, given the free time, I was able to rid my mind of the rationalizations with which I had been brainwashed ever since I was a primary-school student. With my own acts of atrocity dawning on me, I started to regret what I had done as something that no human should do. I started to wonder how I would feel if I got sick from germs dispensed without my consent. I wondered how not only the people who were experimented on but also their families must have felt about their being killed in experiments or vivisections. When I put myself in the victim's place, the atrocities I committed were unforgivable. I should face execution.

The Japanese government has consistently denied and concealed the existence of the germ warfare mentioned in this lawsuit. What is your opinion about the country's attitude?
All the war crimes I committed were performed under orders I received. They were carried out under the direction of my superiors. As for the head of the unit and other staff members, they also acted because they were part of a system. I still believe that Japan should be held responsible as a country. I hope that the nation will consider the feelings of the victims and consider their needs. The victims will never forget.

I sometimes think the atrocities I committed were so inhumane that I am unsure if I am human or inhuman. Because of what I did, sometimes I feel I am in between.

[Parade]

STOP SPREADING THE NEWS

From a column by Fletcher Vredenburgh posted to fightlikeapes.com in the summer of 2001. At the time, Vredenburgh was director of the New York City Mayor's Action Center. He was fired in December 2002 after the New York Post *discovered the piece and alerted City Hall.*

Recently I took a new position. I was promoted to director of the Mayor's Action Center. That means I am responsible for overseeing practically any call, letter, fax, or email made by griping, often whining, often stupid New Yorkers, and that they get to the right person/agency, whatever, to be addressed.

If you look up the mayor's phone number in the telephone book you get mine.

If you get cut off by a city truck that has a sticker blaring HOW'S MY DRIVING? the number it shows is mine.



A Sucking System (Fourteen), by Brad Brown. His work was on display in January at the San Francisco International Art Exposition.

Yesterday I personally took several calls from people with enough time to call up and pitch a fit at the mayor for honoring the Bronx Little League team before anyone knew the pitcher was a ringer. One dumb fuck called to let me know all of Seattle (that's right, the whole city) was mad at the mayor.

All that valuable writing time has been taken up with dealing with dumb fucks from the public or dumber fucks that work for the city. I've had two cases where cops took in cars that had been stolen and then were at a loss to even give a hint to their owners about where they might be. Every day someone gets thrown off welfare improperly because an imbecilic caseworker can't tell her ass from a hole in the wall.

I wish I was still a drinking man, I mean a hard-drinking man. But I'm not, so I just go home and go to bed.

Also I'm falling apart at the seams. In March, I did something awful to my neck, possibly while weight lifting. I've had a CAT scan, taken bottles of naproxen, ibuprofen, now baclofen, and all to no avail. Some days it feels as if molten bronze has been poured along the ligaments in my neck and the joint where my skull meets my neck is being jabbed with needles. If it's particularly uncomfortable I also think little gnomes are hammering at the insides of my eyeballs with jagged little mountain-climbing picks.

Then there's my old sciatica. For several years I've been plagued with a regular shooting pain traveling up and down my leg from my pelvis to my ankle.

Finally, there's a mysterious pain/cramp/discomfort in my side. I got an ultrasound yesterday, and now I've got to wait seven days for any answers.

So I take painkillers, sleep a lot, and think about killing every citizen and employee of New York City every minute I'm awake.

[Talk]

YOU TALKIN' TO ME?

The following is a list of responses collected by Bill Wetzel and Liz Barry, a couple who have spent the last eight months camping out on the streets of New York City with a three-foot sign that reads "Talk to Me." For more information about the project, see www.nyctalktome.com.

"That's never a good opening."
"Me? I just want to kick that sign over and beat the hell out of you, but you're lucky I'm drunk."
"I have obeyed your hortatory subjunctive."
"Are you psychics? Do you do tarot cards? Can you read my palm anyways?"
"What, do you think that by miraculously putting this sign out you'll make people more friendly?"
"You givin' away money?"
"The last time I talked to a stranger I married him."
"I bet you've never seen an Indian guy hit a fat white guy in the butt with an umbrella."
"I thought you were a Columbia student and this was your day job. Look dirtier."
"Your sign should say 'fuck with me' not 'talk to me.'"
"This is my store. This is my sidewalk. Move before I take that sign."
"You got on purple panties. Now change that to a thong, and maybe we can get into sumpthin' with all four of us, some gangsta shit."
"Can you help me find a husband?"
"I can't talk much, but can I listen?"
"If you get on TV, say hello to my Aunt May."
"USA! USA! USA!"
"Have a nice vacation."
"The market's down. Not many people will be talking today."
"I don't have time, but I'm going to send my girlfriend from Trinidad over."
"It would behoove you, as they say in the military, to move from this block."
"That is so bourgeois. Go forth and be with the people."
"Get a job. Are you homeless?"
"You want a Fudgsicle?"
"I already resolved all my issues this morning."
"Would 'blah-blah-blah' do or would you like an actual sentence?"
"If you see your parents, tell them a woman named Jeanne is praying for them, not for you."
"White people don't belong in Harlem."
"Have you let the Lord Jesus Christ into your life?"
"So what's for sale?"
"I don't need advice. I just need to know where the Winter Gardens are."
"There's not much to say around here. I'm angry."
"You ain't got no love at home?"
"Got some smokes, got some smokes . . ."
"I need a T-shirt with that on it. Nobody talks to me either."
"Don't you know that people are rotten and not worth talking to?"
"Don't talk, they the po-lice."
"Talk, talk, talk, babble, banter, brouhaha, it's only talk."
"Habla conmigo? Habla conmigo?"
"Is this about Iraq?"

[Entries]

ALL THE LONELY PEOPLE

From applications submitted in response to an ad in The Stage *for a hermit-in-residence at Shugborough, an eighteenth-century English manor. The managers of the estate launched the contest to revive the tradition of having a hermit live in a cave on the estate grounds. The applicants were asked to explain "what original personal contribution [they] would make in the performance of this role."*

My several years of service with her majesty's armed forces have instilled in me a passion for the great outdoors as well as invaluable survival training and physical fitness. Since leaving the army, sick to death of the constant presence of so much flatulent humanity, I have been living alone in my hermitage (okay, it's a flat) and working alone in blissful solitude, driving the length and breadth of England's lonely roads in my lorry.

I would honestly try to share my love of silence, encouraging people to seek quiet in their lives. I would share stories from the Desert Fathers and other Western traditions of seeking God in solitude. Yet I would also guard the idea of solitude and avoid frivolous speech. At times I'd run away from people or hide in the bushes, maybe pretend not to be the hermit. Given the opportunity, I'd scoff at would-be disciples and give them nearly impossible tasks to test their commitment.

In my various ways of earning a crust I have the honour of playing Santa. This involves listening to people as they tell you their wishes, and these are somewhat varied. Through the course of the

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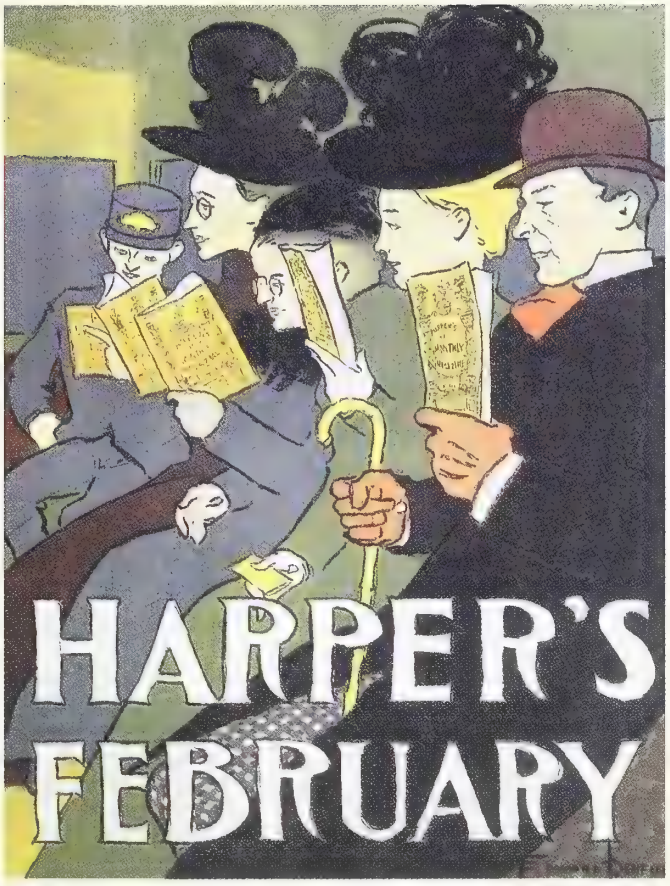
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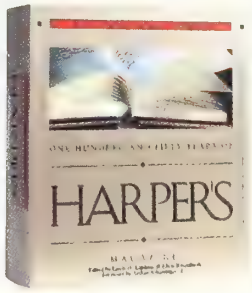
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Edward Penfield's "February" poster, created to promote the February 1895 issue of Harper's Magazine. ***Penfield (1866-1925) was one of America's most highly influential illustrators and poster artists, widely credited with bringing abstraction to commercial art through boldly simplified shapes. An eight-page full color portfolio of his promotional posters for*** Harper's ***is featured in An American Album.***

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long days when I dispense well-meaning platitudes, someone will ask me a question such as "all I want is my family to like each other." I then feel very real and reply with an answer that is appropriate and true. I sometimes work as a support artist in films—there is a great deal of hanging about. I do not find this at all tedious but relaxing.

In the past I have explored the quantum physics paradox of "Schrödinger's Cat" by living in a lightproof soundproof box in the middle of an art gallery for ten days with only drinking water and a mat to sleep on. In another piece I sat in a gallery for five days connected to an ECG monitor. I used changes in my physiological state to modulate a video image of myself projected onto the wall in front of me. A piece I am currently working on deals with radio telescopy and the search for extraterrestrial intelligence from the perspective of the mendicant. Twelve bowls will be placed in a circle of 4,000 mile radius centered on Challenger Deep, the deepest point on the planet.

I have humour and insights into the nature of things. I possess a Buddhist nature, if you will, insofar as I can think of nothing lovelier than sitting in the woods, listening to the wind in the trees, which gives me a sip of peace. I would like this opportunity to express my feelings to life and listen as ever with sensitivity and respond from my heart.

P.S. Do I have to use a twig for a toothbrush?

To be a hermit is to risk learning who you really are. I do not wish to *reflect* but to *flect*. In company we reflect; we derive our identity from the people around us, and we bounce it back to them. We reveal only pale images of each other. I intend to bring much skill to being a hermit. To engage with the solitude and to communicate its impact without disturbing the essence. I will happily leave all my books at home to see where the mind goes when free to roam, and I long to sit quietly amid the gentle weight of ancient nature.

[Correspondence]

SIGNED, SEALED, DELIVERANCE

The following letter, written in summer 2002 by Wasatch County Jail inmate Kent Coulson, was intended for Coulson's girlfriend but was accidentally sent to David Sam, his sentencing judge. Coulson was sentenced to seventy months in federal prison for manufacturing methamphetamines.

Hey Baby,

How is my little thing? I have been sweating my ass off. It is a hot one in here. As you know, I have not been sentenced yet, but that is coming up soon. But I do have some good news concerning that subject. Can you believe my father plays golf with Sam, the crusty old judge who happens to be mine, not by choice? Ha!

Not only that, but the old dumbfucker lives up here in Heber somewhere and the church people who come every Sunday morning just happen to know him. So it all looks good for me. Ha! Ha!

I just thought I would send a quick note to you and let you know what's up. I have to write a suck-up letter to the Honorable Asshole and it should all be great for me.

Your big guy,
Kent

[Poem]

CONCENTRICITIES

By Tony Whedon. This poem appeared, in a slightly different version, as "Transcendentalism" in the Fall 2002 issue of The Iowa Review.

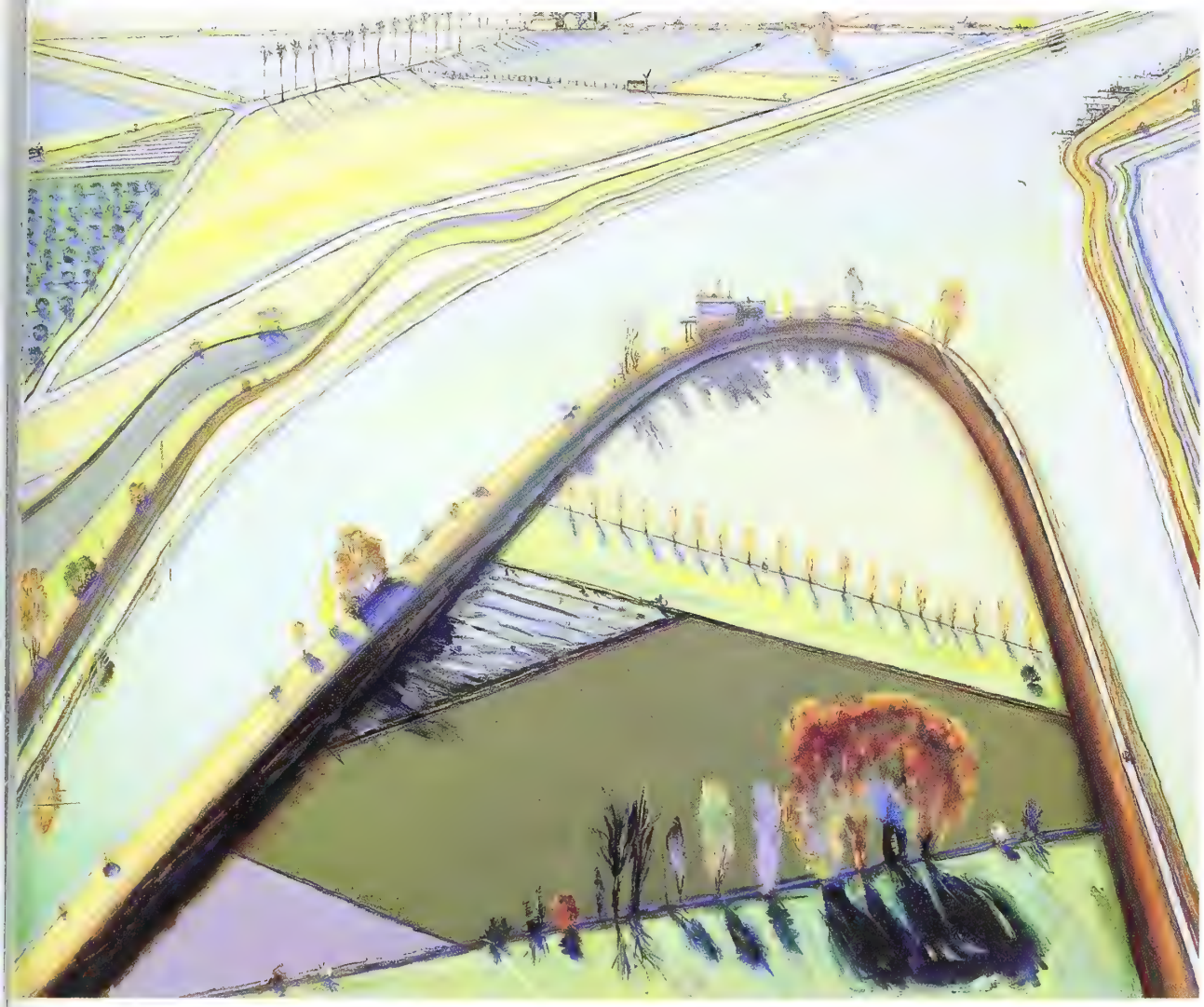
1.

After church, my dad's Dart leapt onto
Soundside Road, followed the curve of beach
past the yachtsman's bars, the Negro ponds, the
drunken eelmen (dignified as herons); and my

heart quivered at a luminous lobster sign, its
neon pincers snapping at starlight, at the moon
fallen like a clam into those ethereal waves.
That Sunday—a church evening in May—I

believed in universal goodness, in the absence
of any kind of sin. In bed, I'd recall Reverend
Weary's voice intoning Thoreau's maniacal
theme: "We can't get enough of Nature," he'd

say, and I saw the church steeple tumble,
its columns rising—Doric and barnacled—into
some marvellously ruined future. That
was the word, "marvellous," a word rhyming



Green River Divide, *by Wayne Thiebaud, was on display last winter at Allan Stone Gallery, in New York City.*

with marble—a cold astonished word I kissed
to sleep; the world—the church, the gentle
island air—everything I touched in it, was
"marvellous." Alone in my pew, I prayed while

I dreamed Laura, a gawky Unitarian girl, into
life. The night before when I'd touched her
cheek I'd felt beyond the church lay a lighter
world—beyond Weary's benediction

there was Laura's henna-colored hair;
three years later we'd sail across the Sound,
breasting a sou'wester, sipping pink gin, our
spinnaker puffed out, Laura figureheaded

on the bow, and Lizzie, Laura's willowy twin, at
our Lightning's helm: I can't tell you how much
I wanted both of them; how the mainsail

trembled, or how we drank till that white

-capped world dissolved: We lay at anchor off
Half-Moon Cove and as the wind dropped
images—raw, mysterious—of two girls who,
as Thoreau had said, wouldn't—couldn't—

"get enough of Nature"—floated in gold bilge.
I remember Liz and Laura nude on
my sloop's teaked deck, sun off the Sound
baking their sleek bodies into porcelain.

* * *

Eliza Cook, in her "Diary," defines the Oversoul
as the outer skin of a Cosmic Onion—
concentricities, slicked together by mutual love,
breathe (like Laura, like Liz) through their skin,

[Translations]

HONG KONG PHOOEY

From a list of subtitles from Hong Kong films, posted on flubtitles.com.

Why have you moistened my head?
I am turned on! How to fix it now?
She hurts my vital part.
Not for you, baddie. It's for you, goodie.
I want to stool now.
Still peeping? Go into and molest her now!
Brother, he starts at my private parts!
Do remember, you disturb me making love, your dick pocket will be barbecued after your death.
I'm devastating, looking for some refreshment!
The wet nurse wants rock candy to decoct papayas.
Long hung love will hurt.
She said you're Stupid with all the fats in your body.
Turkey is a stink asshole!
Old man. I've pierced in completely; every part of the body is a sword.
Even my foreign lady superior is probing you.
Look, long stick on, go. Wanna be the Monkey?
She is playing with a knife. This is waterproof and strange.
This play of shitting is practical. If the enemy's bottom is attacked, it is painful.
What's so horrible with a frog?
Alternatively, you must follow my advice whenever I say "maltose."
Mighty? It's designed to neutralize your flying cards attack.
We'll lose at last if talking in this way.
Look at my mouth, I am not smart now.
A poor band player I was, but now I am crocodile king.
All ill-fated jinxes have come.
Mind your saliva.
Look at his pair of eyes. They are so sex appealing and they make you naturally convinced.
All fanciness are posted outside.
If you nag on, I'll strangle you with chewing gum. Get your neck near me.
How maddish!
People of Aquarius is passionated in the inside.
You culprit of the society! I nearly opened a champagne for you.
Don't push me! Or I'll piss now.
My boyfriend dated me for tea. Isn't it?
She won't listen to me but just want to chop me.
Now I feel flatulent, and you did it.

which means, to my regret, we can't help loving
who we love. I heard Miss Thorne our Biology
teacher explain it one November afternoon, and
I swear the classroom filled with a scent of

lotion and perfume. "Osmosis," she called how
capillaries absorb—that is, how bodies breathe—
"marvellous" is the way she explained it;
and I lit on that word—as I would

decades later on a hilltop in eastern China,
the Yangzte's lotus ponds and slow canals
lacing beneath me and a Chinese girl.
The wind blew through the pagoda bells;

and as I lit a joss stick on the altar of Kw'an
Yin, I watched the past swirl up in Li Wen's
abundant hair. I held her on the bus at sundown, believing our belief fed the same blue

flame, that souls rise from the living as they do
from the dead, abundant and forgiving; but
what I felt—its shape was lost in the dust and
chickens; the bus bumped along a rutted track

into a town that smelled—with its urine-filled
vats, its filthy cabbage stands—past saving.

2.

Li Wen, neither lover nor daughter, lived in a
waterside village a few li from that pitiful town.
At midnight, under a lantern-jawed moon, we
ate juicy melons, drank pots of stinging tea.

I played mah-jong with Li's dad while her
grandma chanted "The Heart Sutra." And I
wanted to be a part of this, to let that Yangzte
dialect wash over me in the slow oozing, hour

after hour, of sweet river time. I thought the
whole thing quite marvellous. In Shanghai, Li
wrote poem after poem in a blank verse
that called forth (in English) the voice

of her sutra-chanting grandmother—these were
written not with calligraphic brevity, but in
loping stanzas of repetend on repetend that
descended into the swarming fish pond muck

of eastern China, poems kindled by Li Wen's
tattered *Walden* which she read and reread till
Thoreau's thawing railroad bank revealed,
molten and delirious, the scrape of crickets,

the click of her grandma's thongs across damp
tile. In Li's poems—the rapture of whose lines
were layered like sleep, like necklaces—each
syllable measured against a raw spaciousness;

in these Buddhist poems—inspired by Emerson
and Thoreau—I heard a language of optimism
and innocence, bathed in passionate agnostic
disbelief. Outside Li's dorm window, students

rehearsed "We shall overcome," their harsh
tetrameter repeated hours later on Shanghai's
bund, Li's wren-like voice among them. I
thought of Thoreau's night in jail, of Martin

Luther King's reading of Thoreau, and how that
message was transposed into bell-like Chinese.
On the student barricades, Li said, Thoreau's
voice rattled around her head; my disobedience

will be civil, she cried, her bloodred commie
flag fluttering while a hymn-like Internationale
rose from the student crowd. And I thought
of my easy piety, my radical posing—and I felt

ashamed. In Beijing, tanks crushed the Lady of
Liberty, and Li's winged sentences, her
hypnotic syllabics, seemed to her sad and
wretched. Then the panic set in. The streets

went a grayer gray—a sulfuric mist pattered
down for days. Rumors caught fire, burned in
wild patches, then guttered out. That fall
the students returned brainwashed to their

classrooms—in China, Li said, there's no place,
no hope for change. We sat in a noodle dive off
Nanjing Lu watching a monsoon blow in from
Japan. Rain droplets pearled in the sleeves

of Li's blue slicker; behind us two young cops
smoked in smoggy twilight, and I heard the
monotonous shuffle, the splatter of rain black as
Li Wen's hair: heard the lap of junks and barges

on the Wangpu, and a foghorn drawing its
anapests across the harbor. Next day, the
anniversary of Liberation, forty years since
Mao's ragtag troops seized Shanghai, the mood

was anti-climactic, kids on the quay, a poof
of pyrotechnics after dark—I try to bring it
back; I'm there but not there, on Shanghai's
exquisite edge as time loops by—frame to

smoldering frame—and my students drag
through fall term into a season drabbled by sleet
and rain. The fanatic turn to religion; others slip
into a recalcitrant Marxism.

Who is this female Buddha they worship, this
Lady I dream one drizzly afternoon? Our Lady
of the Springs, a soapstone Madonna from
whom the barren and the brainwashed ask

a benediction. For the first time in my life,
I really pray: I'm on my knees at
the Jade Buddha temple, soliciting relief
for my student's suffering, but my prayer

has more to do with ecstacy than pain. When
the bells and conches bong, the stone arhats
grin in recognition; and when we leave the
temple, Li says if she had to do over

she'd never leave her village.

3.

Now my beard's gone gray from black.
I heard from Li a year ago, tried to write back
—and twice the letter returned from Hongjou
where she's teaching at the university,

a lake city of gazebos floating on silk water, of
lovers loitering on Ming bridges. China's no
way out, she wrote (in veiled paragraphs). She's
dropped Emerson and Thoreau for a night

course in Economics. Meanwhile (it's
late-April) I watch snow spit against the cabin
window. I'd give anything to see the past
flashed before me in quick segues, for a

moment of sun and sails, a sloop's prow slicing
the Sound's green crest, a Heineken bottle
balanced on my breast. But it's a cold April.
And China's a dimpled dream, a ripple on the

cosmic waters. When the river ice went out last
night I heard the hillside tremble. Thoreau spent
two years at Walden, but I've been here fifteen
winters, watching the snow linger into Easter.

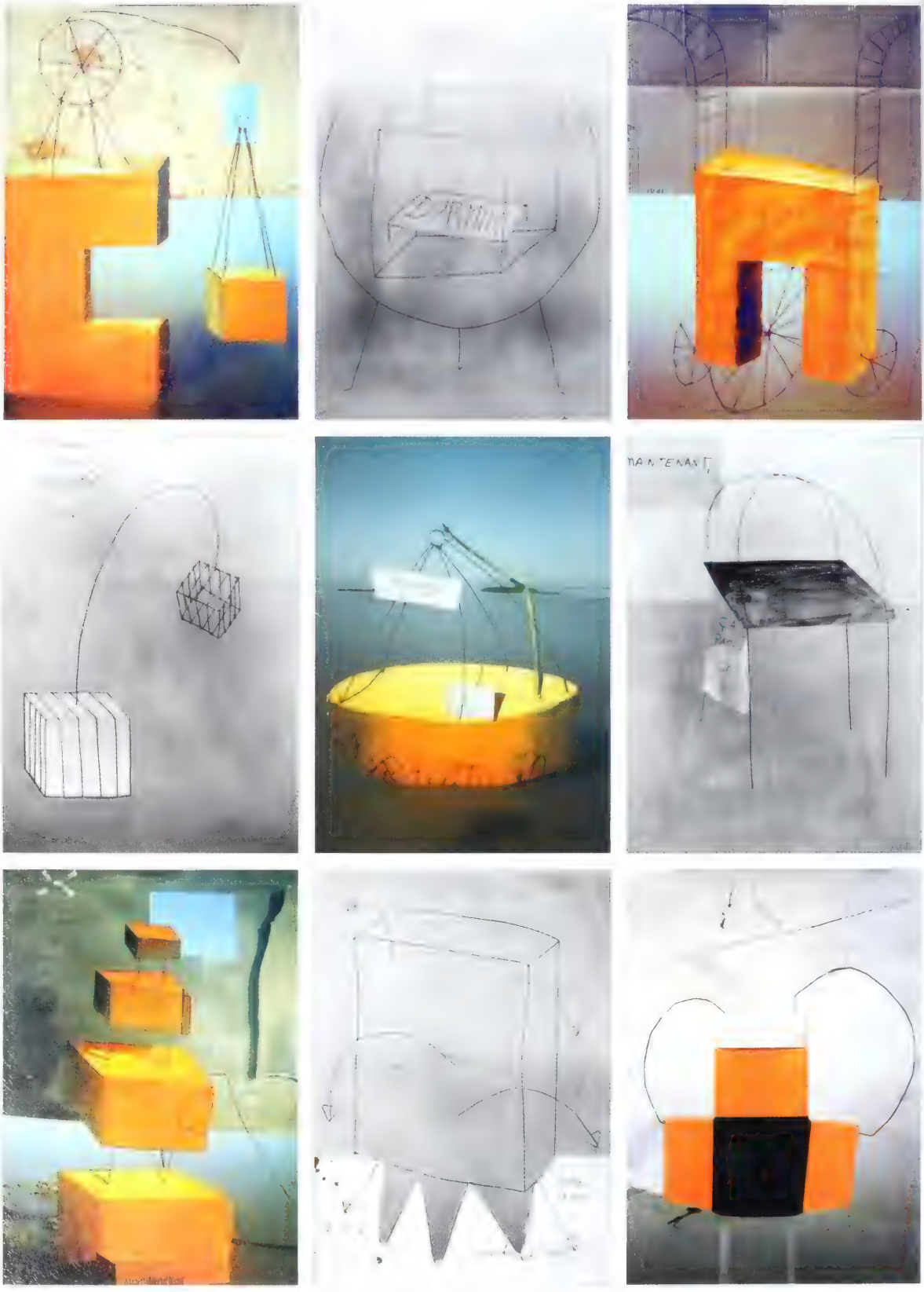
* * *

Yesterday, I skied to a meadow I rarely go to—
and I came on a freshly killed yearling,
still warm, rib-cage plucked clean by coyotes:
an assemblage of bone and gristle around which

new snow tumbled, a snow so fresh that of the
scurried tracks only crosshatchings, delicate
crow-prints, remained: and, somehow, I
summoned courage to see past the hints

of blood, the tattered spoor, a lesson: not of
mortality, but of the brute force behind that
hunger—the scattered bird droppings . . . the
yearling a cleaned carcass—things I didn't learn

Sundays, those Unitarian Sundays, when we
sang "Trees" and the Reverend's voice rose
above our bowed, dreaming heads.



Nine images from "La Méthode," a series of photographs by Laurent Millet. The series was on display last fall at Robert Mann Gallery,

Courtesy Robert Mann Gallery
New York City © 2003 Laurent Mil

CAUSE FOR DISSENT

Ten questions for the Bush regime

By Lewis H. Lapham

The dissenter is every human being at those moments of his life when he resigns momentarily from the herd and thinks for himself.

—Archibald MacLeish

As a director of the government's ministry of propaganda during World War II, Archibald MacLeish knew that dissent seldom walks on stage to the sound of warm and welcoming applause. As a poet and later the librarian of Congress, he also knew that liberty has ambitious enemies, and that the survival of the American democracy depends less on the size of its armies than on the capacity of its individual citizens to rely, if only momentarily, on the strength of their own thought. We can't know what we're about, or whether we're telling ourselves too many lies, unless we can see or hear one another think out loud. Tyranny never has much trouble drumming up the smiles of prompt agreement, but a democracy stands in need of as many questions as its citizens can ask of their own stupidity and fear. Voiced in the first-person singular and synonymous with the courage of a mind that a former editor of this magazine once described as "unorganized, unrecognized, unorthodox and unterrified," dissent is what rescues the democracy from a slow death behind closed doors.

Unpopular during even the happiest of stock-market booms, in time of war dissent attracts the attention of the police. The parade marshals regard any wandering away from the line of march as unpatriotic and disloyal; the unlicensed forms of speech come to be confused with treason and registered as crimes, and in the skyboxes of the news media august personages reaffirm America's long-standing alliance with God and the Statue of Liberty. Counting through the list of the country's exemplary virtues—a just cause, an invincible air force, a noble truth—they find no reasons for dissent. On the threshold of a war in Iraq, I can think of ten:

1 Agitprop

I don't know how else to characterize the Bush Administration's effort

TYRANNY NEVER HAS MUCH TROUBLE DRUMMING UP PROMPT AGREEMENT. DEMOCRACY STANDS IN NEED OF AS MANY QUESTIONS AS ITS CITIZENS CAN ASK

to convince the public of the need for an immediate American ass on the land of Mordor. Whether expressed in the language of religio exorcism by President Bush in his annual message to Congress chopped into nourishing sound bites by National Security Adviser C doleezza Rice for the fans of CNN's *Larry King Live*, the governmen relentless ad campaign rests on the principle announced nearly a ye ago by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld at a press conference Brussels. Asked by a crowd of European journalists for proof of the ass tion that weapons of mass destruction confronted the United Stat with a clear and present danger, Rumsfeld said, "The absence of ev dence is not evidence of absence."

Secretary of State Colin Powell didn't come up with a substantially d ferent explanation in early February when he presented the United N tions Security Council with a slide show meant to serve as a trailer for t forthcoming action movie soon to be filmed in the deserts Mesopotamia. The surveillance photographs of Iraqi trucks demanded t kind of arcane exposition that New York art critics attach to exhibitio of abstract painting. By way of adding drama to the performance, Pow held up a vial of white powder (meant to be seen as anthrax but probab closer in its chemistry to granulated sugar) and rolled tape of two satelli telephone intercepts of Iraqi military officers screaming at one another Arabic, but he didn't provide an answer to the question, Why does Ame ica attack Iraq when Iraq hasn't attacked America? In lieu of demonstr ble provocations Mr. Powell offered disturbing signs and evil portents, a when the voice of Osama bin Laden turned up a week later on an audi tape broadcast from Qatar, the secretary seized upon the occasion to di cover a "partnership" between Al Qaeda and the government of Iraq. N such conclusion could be drawn from even a careless reading of the tra script, but to Mr. Powell the sending of a message (any message) prove that Osama bin Laden and Saddam Hussein somehow had morphed int the same enemy.

The secretary's power points didn't add to the sum of a convincing arg ment, but then neither did the advertising copy for the Spanish-America War or the sales promotions for the war in Vietnam, and if the agitprop faile to persuade the French, Russian, or Chinese representatives to the Secur ty Council, it was more than good enough for the emissaries from the ma jor American news media. Our television networks and large-circulation new papers trade in the same commodity. They identify themselves as instrument of the American government rather than as witnesses beholden to th American people, and they bring to their work the talents and the haircut of expensive corporate lobbyists. All but unanimous in their infatuatio with President Bush (a Churchillian figure, sometimes Lincolnesque), they'v been packing their safari hats ever since the navy sent the carriers to the Per sian Gulf. In Secretary Powell's remarks to the U.N. the editors of the *Wa Street Journal* discovered echoes of Talleyrand and Metternich.

2 *The Korean Exception*

The Bush Administration makes a boast of its "moral clarity" and prin cipled resolve, also of its willingness to "exercise power without conquest and "sacrifice for the liberty of strangers." Why then no imbecile invasio of North Korea?

Although cold in the winter, the country abounds in unfortunate strangers and unlike the reports being brought back to New York in February by Han Blix and International Atomic Energy Agency director general Mohame ElBaradei the news from Pyongyang that month amounted to something mor than a threatening hypothesis. A Communist despotism controlled by a heartless dictator easily the peer of Saddam Hussein had resumed its man ufacture of enriched uranium and expelled the U.N. inspectors assigned t monitor its Yongbyon nuclear reactor complex. Three bombs were thought to exist, several others were said to be within a few months of production;

th ivilian population had been reduced to near starvation, and the army, be ved to number a million soldiers, heavily armed and fanatic in its de- vo n to "the Dear Leader," was stationed within artillery range of the 30 00 American troops just south of the demilitarized zone. The North Ko- re threat was both plainly visible and alarmingly present, but it was not or against which the United States cared to launch the wrath of eagles. Con- fr ced with Kim Jong Il's blunt demand for ransom money (payment ac- ce able in trade agreements, bank credit, or bags of rice), the Bush Ad- m istration referred the unpleasantness to the United Nations—the same U ted Nations that Secretary Rumsfeld had deemed "irresponsible" and on "a ath of ridicule" because of its reluctance to endorse an American expe- di n to Baghdad. The referral dimmed the lamp of moral clarity, and the ca ious retreat to the policy of containment that President Bush had declared o' lete clarified the distinction between threats both real and apparent and th se cleverly hidden by illusory enemies who also happen to command st ll armies and govern countries rich with oil.

3 *We refuse to live in fear."*

President Bush presented the statement to an audience in Cincinnati on October 7, and of all lies told by the government's faith healers and gun sales- m n, I know of none as cow- a ly. Where else does the B sh Administration ask the A erican people to live ex- ct in fear? On what other f und does it justify its de- st uction of the nation's ci il liberties?



Ever since the September attacks on New York and Washington, no week has passed in which the government has failed to issue warnings of a sequel. Sometimes it's the director of the FBI, sometimes the attorney general or an unnamed source in the CIA or the Department of Homeland Security, but always it's the same message: Suspect your neighbor and watch the sky; buy duct tape, avoid the Washington Monument, hide the children.

Let too many citizens begin to ask impertinent questions about the shambles of the federal budget or the disappearance of a forest in Montana and the government sends another law-enforcement officer to a microphone with a story about a missing tube of aluminum or a newly discovered nerve gas.

4 *Somnambulism*

Washington these days suffers no shortage of visionary geopoliticians touting the wonders of an American empire imposing, by act of conscience and force of arms, peace on earth and good will toward men. The prophets enjoy the patronage of power, some of them White House privy counselors, others advisers to the Pentagon, all of them utopian anarchists. They envision a slum-clearance project for the whole of the Islamic Middle East, Iraq the first in a series of model democracies soon to be erected in Syria, Iran, Libya, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia, and when reading their articles in the policy journals, I remember a remark I once came across in a novelist's description of four Marxist assassins seated at a café table in Paris in the 1920s: "They believe everything they can prove, and they can prove everything they believe."

LET TOO MANY CITIZENS ASK IMPERTINENT QUESTIONS AND THE GOVERNMENT SENDS OUT ANOTHER WARNING ABOUT A MISSING TUBE OF ALUMINUM

Illustrations by Ray Bartkus

DEMOCRACY RELIES ON ACTS OF GOVERNMENT BY NO MEANS EASY TO PERFORM, AND FOR THE LAST TWENTY YEARS WE HAVE BEEN UNWILLING TO DO THE WORK

The Bush Administration employs a good many ideologues afflicte with a similarly messianic turn of mind and who take for granted the stup faction of an electorate too lazy to open its mail. Assuming a general sta of political somnambulism not much different from their own, the autho of the government's press releases count on an audience that thinks of po itics as trivial entertainment. The supposition isn't entirely wrong.

The successful operation of a democracy relies on acts of governmer by no means easy to perform, and for the last twenty years we have bee unwilling to do the work. Choosing to believe that the public good com to us at the discretion of private wealth, all politicians therefore as inte changeable as hotel bartenders, we don't bother to vote, don't rea through the list of budget appropriations, content ourselves with th opinions advertised on prime-time television by talk-show guests holdi up little vials of important news—sometimes anthrax, usually sugar. O prosperity finances the habits of indolence. We leave the small print f the lawyers to clean and maybe press, and in place of an energetic politi we get by with nostalgic sentiment and the public-spirited postcards se by PBS—elections a cascade of balloons, liberty a trust fund, and Ameri the land in which the money never dies.

5 The Insolence of Office

In a recent and best-selling book, *Bush at War*, Bob Woodward presen a portrait of the president so flattering that had it been rendered in oil c canvas, the curator of the White House art collection might wish to ha it in the Blue Room. One of the bons mots that Woodward attributes his subject could as eas have been attributed Louis XIV: "That's the i teresting thing about bei the President. Maybe som body needs to explain to m why they say something, b I don't feel like I owe an body an explanation."



The administration's s nior ministers share the vie Often petulant and oper contemptuous of opinio not their own, they listen opposing argument with i patience and disdain. At t United Nations last wint when the French and Ge man statesmen raised poi ed questions about both t necessity and the timing of a police raid on Iraq, Mr. Rumsfeld received t skepticism as an insult. France and Germany, he said, spoke for an "old E rope" long ago reduced to a harmless tourist attraction, France a country mous for its vanity and pride; Germany stubborn and wrongheaded.

At the higher altitudes of Washington officialdom, the tone of conc scension is traditional. Dean Acheson, secretary of state in the Trum Administration, understood as long ago as 1947 that if America wished do as it pleased in the world, it would be necessary to come up with a s gan that could serve as both a reason and an explanation for high-hand unilateral decision. Knowing that the American people might balk at t prospect of the Cold War if they thought the strategy open to discussi Acheson explained to his associates in the State Department that t country's foreign policy must be presented as "nonpartisan," that any a all political argument "stops at the water's edge."

"If we can make them believe that," Acheson said, "we're off to the race

Over the next two generations the word "nonpartisan" proved invalu-
e to a succession of presidents bent on waging declared and unde-
red wars in Korea, Vietnam, Guatemala, Grenada, Panama, Cambo-
, Lebanon, Nicaragua, Angola, and the Persian Gulf. Replace the
ce magic word "nonpartisan" with the phrase "never-ending war on
rorism," and we arrive at the policy of Rumsfeld the Implacable and
e wisdom of Cheney the Unseen.

Negligence

The destruction of the World Trade Center evoked an immense surge
pro-American feeling everywhere in the world—in Cairo and Amman
well as in London and Paris. Within the brief span of nineteen months
r government has managed to squander almost the whole of the asset.
ocked by its failure to find Osama bin Laden, the Bush Administration
s bullied our allies, scorned the United Nations, subverted the principle
international law, recruited an angry host of new enemies, and ex-
anged the hard currency of our inherent idealism for the counterfeit
in of a hair-brained cynicism.

In return for what? A "regime change" in Afghanistan. The horse-
awn and all but helpless Taliban put to rout at a cost of more than $15
llion, Kabul remanded to the custody of a freedom-loving warlord, and
anquillity along the border of Pakistan achieved with a $1 billion bribe
id to the military dictatorship of General Pervez Musharraf.

Our Staunchest Ally

When I look at the handsomely detailed maps with which the Penta-
n marks out the road to glory in Iraq, I'm sure that I miss a good many
the military fine points, but I never doubt that the maps must gladden
e heart of Osama bin Laden. Who but Osama stands to pluck so rich a
ize from the fires of holy crusade? Fresh recruits for Al Qaeda, the West-
n democracies at odds with one another (and their intelligence agencies
herefore less cooperative), the scourge of civil war conceivably spread
cross the whole of the Middle East, the Saudi Arabian monarchy maybe
verthrown, and Israel possibly forced onto the reefs of destruction.

As utopian an anarchist as the Washington apostles of American em-
ire, Osama preaches a parallel vision of a world transformed, justice re-
ored, and the desert cleansed of its impurities. President Bush knows that
e work of pious destruction is blessed by the God of Abraham and that
berty is the gift of heaven and not the work of men. Allah the all-merci-
l sends Osama an American army bringing the torches and the mops.

Barbed Wire

Unable to erect a secure perimeter around the whole life and landscape
f a free society, the government bureaus of public safety solve the techni-
al problems by seeing to it that the society becomes less free. The USA
Patriot Act has been reinforced so many times since it was first passed by
Congress in October 2001 that by now the country's law-enforcement
gencies have been equipped with as many powers as they choose to exer-
ise—random search, unwarranted seizure, arbitrary arrest.

Every month brings with it some new proof of the frightened and puni-
ive states of mind that inform the imposition of additional rules, more ef-
icient procedures, further restrictions. My notes from the last week in
January through the second week in February mention the dropping of a
blue curtain over a tapestry of Pablo Picasso's *Guernica* outside the Securi-
ty Council chambers (to preserve Secretary Powell from the embarrass-
ment of having to pose for photographs in front of a work of art depicting
the horrors of war), Laura Bush canceling a poetry symposium at the
White House when told that one or more of the poets might read an anti-
war poem, the New York Police Department forbidding an antiwar march
in front of the United Nations, a consortium of scientific journals (among

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE WORLD TRADE CENTER EVOKED PRO-AMERICAN FEELING ALL OVER THE WORLD. OUR GOVERNMENT HAS SQUANDERED THE ASSET

WAR IS EASIER THAN PEACE

FAR EASIER THAN MAKING A SOCIETY NOT SO DEFACED BY HUNGRY CHILDREN, CROWDED PRISONS, CORPORATE THIEVES

them *Nature* and *The New England Journal of Medicine*) agreeing to censo any articles that might compromise national security, and then, most ur equivocally, in January the Department of Transportation proposing to e tablish a system of records classifying any and all commercial airline pa sengers as suspected terrorists and thus subject to backgroun investigations that might otherwise require a court order.

9 Sloth

The question most often asked of the American mission to Iraq can be re duced to two words: "Why now?" I've listened to numerous explanations– the weather, America's credibility at stake, Saddam about to poison Israel reservoirs—but I suspect that the best answer is the simplest. War is easi than peace. The government elects to punish an enemy it perceives as wea because it's easier to send the aircraft carriers to the Persian Gulf than to a tempt the harder task of making an American society not so wretchedly de faced by its hungry children, its crowded prisons, and its corporate thieve

The Bush Administration owes its existence to our apathy and sloth; if w have allowed the American political argument to degenerate into mindle catchphrase and the fifteen-second sound bite, how can we not expect ou government to think in the same language, to depend for its authority on th easy and patriotic lie, and whenever it doesn't know what else to do, to a rest mysterious strangers and bomb Iraq.

10 Candor

The energy of our democracy springs from the willingness of its citizen to speak and think in their own voices, and among all the American poli ical virtues, candor is probably the one most necessary to the health of ou mutual estate. Not meant to be either popular or fun, the dissenting view o first hearing usually strikes the audience as impolite, treasonable, or plai wrong. Prior to the public demonstrations that took place on February 15 i more than 600 cities in all twenty-four of the world's time zones (at lea 200,000 people in New York, 750,000 in London, 1.3 million in Barcelona the major American news media were busy discounting objections to the in vasion of Iraq as words of no worth and little consequence—the work of ag ing flower children, overly liberal college professors, and B-list celebritie Three days after the crowds showed up in the streets, President Bush com pared the event to the assembling of an ad agency's hired focus group, th expression of nonserious and uninformed opinion and certainly not on that he would allow to affect his judgment, alter his course of action, or i any way violate the temple of his own enlightenment.

Every society can always count on the parties of reaction crying up the wis to make time stand still, seeking to protect themselves against the storm o the world with impregnable bureaucracies and choruses of adoring praise Democracy proceeds from a more adventurous premise, its structure akin t a suspension bridge rather than to an Egyptian pyramid, its strength depen dent upon the complicity of its citizens in a shared work of the political imag ination. The enterprise collapses into either anarchy or tyranny unless th countervailing stresses oppose one another with equal weight, unless enough people possess enough courage to sustain the dialectic between the govern ment and the governed, between city and town, capital and labor, men an women, matter and mind.

Defined as a ceaseless process of change, democracy assumes the pain o contradiction and new discovery not only as the normal but also as the nec essary condition of existence. As has been said, a hard act to perform, and one that failed and was abandoned by nearly every country in Europe in the generation between the First and Second World Wars. In place of truthfu and therefore possibly unpleasant argument, the Bush Administration offer warm and welcome lies, advising us to lay aside the tool of thought and res safely on the pillows of glorious and world-encircling empire. We accept the invitation at our peril.

NO MORE UNTO THE BREACH

PART TWO

The unconquerable world

By Jonathan Schell

In the first half of the twentieth century—which experienced the death of millions in Stalin's camps, the modern reinvention of genocide (including Hitler's holocaust of European Jews), and the two world wars—violence was employed beyond all historical precedent. In the century's second half, which witnessed the construction of the nuclear arsenals of the Cold War, the instruments of violence became more powerful by several orders of magnitude, threatening the very survival of the human species; and yet, in part for that reason, the actual use of violence abated. The superpowers were paralyzed by their power. In the meantime, as if to fill the vacuum created by this paradoxical powerlessness of the powerful, another, nonviolent, "cooperative" form of power—the Czech activist Václav Havel, until recently the president of his country, called it the "power of the powerless"—was born, flourished, and accomplished great things, including the collapse of the Soviet empire as well as of many other dictatorial regimes around the world.



In 1919, President Woodrow Wilson had sought to secure the peace by founding the League of Nations. It would, he vowed, accomplish "the destruction of every arbitrary power anywhere that can separately, secretly and of its single choice disturb the peace of the world; or, if it cannot be presently destroyed, at the least its reduction to virtual impotence." His attempt was a grand failure, yet many of the principles on which it was based have steadily won support. He dreamed that the world would be made safe for democracy. Following the revival of liberal democracy in the last decades of the twentieth century, we can begin to imagine that democracy can help to make the world safe. Wilson hated the great empires of his time. Today they are on history's scrap heap. He wanted a world of popular self-determination. His vision is, in the wake of the global movement for national self-determination, our reality (to a fault, as the recent ethnic wars in the

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Illustrations by Raymond Verdaguer

territories of the collapsed empires demonstrate).

There have also been hopeful developments [illegible] have foreseen. The Wilsonian peace was aborted in part by the rise of totalitarianism. Now totalitarianism, too, lies in the dust. In Wilson's day, revolution was widely thought to be in its nature violent. We have witnessed the power of nonviolent revolution, which was instrumental to the ejection of England from India and to the downfall of the Soviet Union and its empire.

NEVER HAVE THE POSSIBILITIES BOTH FOR HORROR AND FOR HOPE BEEN MORE EXTREME, AND NEVER, THEREFORE, HAS THE SCOPE FOR EFFECTIVE CHOICE BEEN WIDER

Most important, in Wilson's day the modern global war system was approaching the peak of its power, but in ours it has been disabled. Each of the other aforementioned developments had the effect of curtailing it in a different way. The military force deployed at the top of the system, great as it was, ran into the buzz saw of even greater power based on popular will at the bottom, mustered by the almost universally successful movement for self-determination. As in Alice's croquet game in Wonderland, in which the mallets were flamingos and the balls were hedgehogs, the pawns in the imperial game, mistaken for inanimate objects by the imperialists, came alive in their hands and began, universally and unstoppably, to pursue their own plans and ambitions. In this new dispensation, which can guarantee against global domination far more reliably than the balance of power ever could, the wills of innumerable local peoples play the balancing role previously played by great powers.

While the self-determination movement was encasing the war system's feet in cement, nuclear weapons were immobilizing its head and limbs. What incentive was there for war when at the end of every military path open to the great powers was neither victory nor defeat but everyone's annihilation? Coexistence had always been a wise policy; now it became a necessary one. It remains so—American conventional military superiority notwithstanding—for all nuclear-capable powers. It is still quite possible for nations to stumble across the dread threshold, committing genocide and suicide in a single act, but the option is hardly tempting.

Even as self-determination movements and nuclear arsenals were, in their utterly different ways, paralyzing force as a final arbiter in global affairs, nonviolent revolution was proving the existence of a force that now could arbitrate. The Polish activist Adam Michnik may have soun[d] ed far-fetched in the 1970s and 1980s when h[e] suggested to his colleagues in peaceful resistan[ce] to Soviet-backed Communist rule that they h[ad] discovered a political equivalent of the atom[ic] bomb; but, in fact, it was more than an equiv[a]lent, for the atomic bomb could not accomplis[h] what they and their counterparts throughout th[e] bloc accomplished: the Soviet collapse.

At the same time, the revival of liber[al] democracy, itself in good measure a product of [a] long string of nonviolent revolutions in ma[ny] parts of the world, was creating a growing, in[-]formal bloc of nations whose members enjo[y] peaceful relations not because they bristle wit[h] arms or have established a cumbersome struc[-]ture of collective security but merely becaus[e] they lack any reason or inclination for war an[d] possess cooperative means for resolving suc[h] disagreements as do arise.

All of these developments have deep historic[al] roots. None has been repealed by the attack of Sep[-]tember 11 or anything that has followed. In com[-]bination, they have created fresh possibilities, no[t] yet canceled, for a more peaceful future.

Never have the realizable possibilities both for horror and for hope been more extreme, and never, therefore, has the scope for effective choice been wider. As in 1919 and in 1945, when the United Nations was founded, the basic choice is between an international system based on co-operation and one based on force—or, to be exact, one based on cooperation in which force plays a subordinate and supportive role and one based on force in which cooperation plays the subordinate role. The terms of choices in general have an anatomy that is conditioned by the reali[-]ties of their time. In 1918 the choice for force could in practice only mean continued reliance on such safety as could be found in the context of the war system, and the choice for cooperation could only mean the attempt to create *ex nihilo* Wilson's global scheme, which the French premier Georges Clemenceau mocked as a "constitution for the whole world." In the world of today, neither of these alternatives is available. Others are on the table. Let us consider the new anatomies of today's alternatives, beginning with a decision for force and then turning to a decision for cooperation.

FORCE AS THE SOLUTION TO FORCE: THE LOSS OF BALANCE

Organized violence plays a double role in the search for peace, for it is both the problem to be solved and one of the remedies on offer—a remedy for itself. This attempted solution to the dilemma is as old as

hi ory. When Clemenceau rejected Wilson's vi n in favor of the war system, he was referri to definite plans for defending his country. H trusted in the hope, codified in the realist sc ol of political thought, of creating a bala e of power, which has always been the main h e for peace within the context of the intact w system.

When nuclear weapons were invented, war a ng the great powers became unworkable, yet t idea of balance survived, now in the form of t balance of terror. With the end of the Cold W r, however, a new chapter has opened in the r clear story, and the nuclearized form of the c idea of balance is itself crumbling in the face c ccelerating nuclear proliferation. Nuclear ar- s als are losing their Wilsonian virtues as keep- o of stability and peace.

Some analysts, it is true, have argued to the ntrary that the balance of nuclear terror can ac- ally be extended and strengthened by prolifer- on. Just as nuclear weapons stopped the two eat powers of the Cold War from fighting a hot r, so, it is suggested, can they immobilize twen- or thirty or more nuclear owers, in a grand peace ased on universal terror. he political scientist Ken- eth Waltz, for example, as suggested that "the easured spread of nuclear eapons is more to be wel- omed than feared." He opes that the Soviet- merican stalemate en- rced by deterrence during ne Cold War might be en- arged to include many nore nations. What has not been explained is how a teadily growing number of nuclear powers, each capa- le of annihilating some or all of the others, can bal- ance their forces. Mutual assured destruction is a pol- icy whose logic fits a bipo- lar relationship. It defies adjustment to a world of unconstrained proliferation.



Proliferation, indeed, undermines stability in every sense of that word. In the first place, it subverts strategic stability. Strategic balance during the Cold War was said to depend on the attempt to maintain a rough equality between the forces of the two sides; but in a world of many nuclear powers this goal would be unreachable. If country A and country B, the argument went, were to painstakingly craft a stable nuclear balance (something, incidentally, that the Soviet Union and the United States were unable to accomplish as long as the Cold War continued), it could be overthrown instantly by any nuclear-armed country C that suddenly allied itself with one or the other. Proliferation is also bound to undermine the foundations of technical stability. During the Cold War, the United States and the Soviet Union sought a kind of safety in the policy of mutual assured destruction, but in practice they found that their nuclear command-and-control systems were so vulnerable to a first strike that the retaliation required by the doctrine could not in fact be assured. To cure the problem, the two governments resorted to policies of launch-on-warning—that is, each planned to launch its retaliatory strike after receiving a warning that the other side had launched its first strike but before the missiles had arrived. This system reduced the decision time for a retaliatory launch to about five minutes, sharply increasing the risks of accidental war. It is hardly reasonable to expect that smaller, poorer nations, perhaps sharing a common border, will accomplish this.* The warning time between India and Pakistan, for example, is effectively zero. What the experts call arms-control stability—meaning conditions favorable to negotiated limits on or reductions of nuclear arsenals—would also be destroyed. During the Cold War, the United States and the Soviet Union, unable to agree on numerical offensive limits, built up their collective arsenals to the preposterous collective level of some 75,000 nuclear warheads. In a multipolar nuclear world, arms-control agreements would become exponentially harder to achieve.

Finally, multiplying nuclear arsenals would increase the danger of nuclear terrorism. A world of proliferation would be a world awash in nuclear materials. The balance of terror depends on fear of retaliatory annihilation, but terrorists have no country

** The flight time of intercontinental ballistic missiles from Russia to the United States is about twenty-five minutes. When the ten minutes or so needed to verify that the warning of an attack is real are subtracted, and the ten minutes needed to launch the responding rockets from their silos is further subtracted, only five minutes are left for the president's decision. Many analysts believe that the shortness of time forces the president to make the one decision that has been prepared for: to launch. In any case, the potential for catastrophic mistakes under these conditions is obvious.*

whose annihilation they fear. Many, unafraid to lose even their own lives, blow themselves up with the bombs they aim at others. The terrorist bent on self-immolation with a weapon of mass destruction is the nemesis of balance. Deterrence has no purchase on the dead.

FORCE AS THE SOLUTION TO FORCE: EMPIRE

There still remains, however, one alternative to consider among the international structures of force traditionally available: not a balance of any kind but domination—universal empire. The nation now aspiring to something like this role is, of course, the United States. Its military supremacy is one more reason that the realists' stock-in-trade, the balance of power, has become impracticable. There can be no balance if one power has military forces mightier than all the others put together. Not a balance of power but a monopoly of power—or, at any rate, of force—is the current aspiration of the United States, which has announced its intention not to let any other nation "surpass" or "equal" it. The new state of affairs is sometimes referred to as "unipolarity," but the term is an oxymoron, for by definition "polarity" requires two poles. The Bush Administration's official statement of its global policy, "The National Security Strategy of the United States of America," falls into a similar contradiction when it speaks of a "balance of power that favors freedom." A balance that "favors" something, no matter how worthy, is again by definition not a balance.



Although the balance-of-power and the balance-of-terror systems were based primarily on coercion, both contained significant admixtures of cooperation. Both depended on a sort of brute equity among two or more powers. If the balance [illegible], neither could claim a right to attack the other: they had to coexist. Under the balance of terror, the element of cooperation was especially strong. The two sides were paradoxically partners in survival, bonded in the common [illegible] that would annihilate them. A global hegemonic peace, in contrast, would mark the ultimate triumph of the principle of force as the key to safety. Its foundation would be not equality or consent of any kind but the absolute and unchallengeable superiority of one power and the vassalage of all others—not mutual nonaggression but one power's right of preemption, not coexistence but the right of one to execute "regime change" wherever it pleased.

The idea of American global hegemony thus carries the rule of force to an extreme. And yet, fantastic and unreal as the ambition may be, there is a logic underlying it. Means, this logic runs, must be adequate to ends. Since the danger of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is in its nature global, so must be American domination. The United States must employ its overwhelming military superiority to stop proliferation everywhere. On behalf of its own and the world's safety, it must fight a series of what can be called disarmament wars. In President Bush's words in his State of the Union address of 2002, the United States "will not permit the world's most dangerous regimes to threaten us with the world's most destructive weapons." If the United States followed through on this logic, it would indeed become, you might say, a "disarmament empire," dedicated to preserving the world from the peril of weapons of mass destruction. If solutions to nuclear proliferation were restricted to coercive structures, some form of imperial domination would be the form it had to take.

To acknowledge the existence of this logic is not to overlook the more mundane and sordid aspects of American imperial ambition. All empires are in a sense disarmament empires: they rule by overmatching and defeating—by destroying or disarming—every foe and rival. All empires have tried to conceal raw self-interest behind a veil of noble ideals, and there is no sign that an American imperialism would be an exception. The most obvious and the crudest of these motivations is the wish to keep or seize control of oil reserves in Central Asia, the Middle East, and elsewhere. Far more sweeping is the assertion of "The National Security Strategy" that in all the world there is now "a single sustainable model for national success": American "freedom, democracy, and free enterprise." It is a formulation that when wedded to the assertion of unchallengeable American military superiority and the right to intervene preemptively anywhere on earth, plainly sets the stage for attempts to impose

erica's will on nations in almost any area of r collective existence.

Global hegemony, however, has not suddenecome feasible simply because the balance power and the balance of terror no longer k. Even if we suppose that the United States ld complete the transition from a republic to empire, the whole history of the modern pe- suggests that hegemony, whether idealistic elf-interested, is not possible. For any imperplan in the twenty-first century tilts against at so far have proved to be the two most werful forces of the modern age: the spread of ntific knowledge and the resolve of peoples reject foreign rule. If the history of the last eral centuries is any guide, neither of these ces can be bombed out of existence.

Empire, the embodiment of force, is the anthesis of democracy and self-determination. It plates equity on a global scale. No lover of edom can give it support. It is especially ntrary to the revolutionary tradition and unding principles of the United States. Can a ation that began in rebellion against the eatest empire of its time end by turning itself to a still greater empire? Perhaps it can, but ot if it wishes to remain a republic.

The most persuasive rationale for empire is s promise of deliverance from the threat of eapons of mass destruction, but the views of ost countries on this subject are very different om those of the United States. The Bush Adinistration looks out upon the world and sees evildoers" trying to procure dreaded weapons; he world looks back and sees a hypocritical reat power that itself possesses those weapons nd threatens their use. Most countries fear hose who already possess and brandish nuclear weapons at least as much as they fear those who re merely trying to get them. In their view, the goal of stopping proliferation deals at best with a secondary aspect of the nuclear problem. They still see what has perhaps become invisible to American eyes: that the United States and Russia have thousands of nuclear weapons pointed at each other and at other countries and refuse any suggestion that they surrender these arsenals. Most countries also see that the club of possessors has grown to include India and Pakistan, between whom the danger of nuclear war has become acute, and they note that no plan is on the drawing board to denuclearize these nations, either. On the contrary, nuclearization has been a ticket into the good graces of the United States for both countries. They note, too, that if a nation obtains a nuclear arsenal, as North Korea recently says it has done, it may be able to escape "regime change" by deterring the surrounding powers, including the United States. Finally, they observe that the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, under which 182 countries have agreed to forgo nuclear arms, is in jeopardy of breaking down because the five nations that according to the terms of the treaty temporarily possess nuclear weapons show no sign of fulfilling their pledge under its Article Six to eliminate their nuclear arsenals. (Three of the other four nuclear powers are nonmembers of the treaty, and the fourth, North Korea, withdrew from it in January.) It was in defiance of this nuclear double standard that India set off its five nuclear tests in 1998, prompting Pakistan to detonate at least five of its own. Was "regime change" an option in these cases? Will it be if Iran, Egypt,

CAN A NATION THAT BEGAN IN REBELLION AGAINST EMPIRE END BY TURNING ITSELF INTO AN EMPIRE? PERHAPS IT CAN, BUT NOT IF IT WISHES TO REMAIN A REPUBLIC

Libya, Syria, or, for that matter, Japan or Germany builds a nuclear arsenal? Does the United States propose to overthrow the government of every country that rebelling against the attempt to institutionalize the double standard, seeks to acquire weapons of mass destruction? The attempt appears more likely to provoke than to prevent proliferation, as has already happened in North Korea. Nations threatened with that nightmare of the ages, a nation seeking global domination, will go to desperate lengths to redress the balance. Nuclear weapons are an obvious means. The war stopper of the Cold War is well on its way to becoming an empire stopper in the post–Cold War period.*

What is true for proliferation of nuclear weapons is also likely to be true for their use. Force, history teaches, provokes counterforce. What goes around comes around. The United States is the only nation on earth that has used nuclear weapons. It still threatens their use in a first strike, even against nonnuclear powers. An American attempt to dominate the world by force is a recipe for provoking their further

* *Some of the paths that future proliferation might initially take are already clear. The nuclear program in North Korea, whose missiles are capable of striking South Korea, Taiwan, and Japan, has prompted fears that all of these countries might likewise pull out of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and develop nuclear arsenals. In the Middle East, Iran has been moving steadily toward a possible nuclear capability. In South America, advisers to Brazil's newly elected president, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, suggested that in an increasingly nuclear-armed world Brazil should not foreclose its nuclear option. If Brazil nuclearized, Argentina would be likely to follow suit.*

use, not only in other parts of the world but especially on American soil.

There is every reason to believe that the passion for self-determination will be just as irrepressible as the spread of destructive technology. Historically, imperial rule has rested on three kinds of domination: military, economic, and political.* The United States enjoys clear superiority in only one of these domains: the military,

THE MORE THE UNITED STATES RESORTS TO FORCE TO HAVE ITS WAY, THE MORE IT WILL BE DISLIKED; AND THE MORE IT IS DISLIKED, THE WEAKER IT WILL BECOME POLITICALLY

and then only in the conventional sphere. Even the effectiveness of this influence is sharply restricted by the existence of nuclear weapons in the arsenals of eight rival powers, whose capacity to deter the United States will remain intact no matter how much American military spending increases. American economic strength is great, yet in this domain the United States has several equals or near equals, including the European Union and Japan, who are not likely to bend easily to America's will. Most important, in the political arena, the United States is weak, precisely because in the contemporary world military force no longer translates readily into political rule. And the more the United States resorts to force to have its way, the more it will be disliked; and the more it is disliked, the weaker it will become politically. "Covenants, without the sword, are but words," Hobbes wrote. Since then, the world has learned that swords without covenants are but empty bloodshed. The Romans in ancient times were able to convert military victories into lasting political power. Two thousand years later, after the success of nonviolent revolution as well as of people's wars, the United States has no such ability. In the political arena, the modern lesson that even when winning military victories is easy building political institutions in foreign lands is hard, or impossible, still obtains. The nation so keenly interested in "regime change" has small interest in "nation building" and less capacity to carry it out. Can the world in the twenty-first century really be ruled from 35,000 feet? Does power still flow from the barrel of a gun—or from a Predator drone? Modern peoples have the will to resist and the means to do so. Imperialism without politics is a naive imperialism. In our time force can win a battle or two but politics is destiny.

Do America's current leaders believe that the peoples of the world, having overthrown the great empires of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, are ready to bend the knee to an American overlord in the twenty-first? Do they imagine that the nation's allies are ready to become its vassals? Have they forgotten that people hate to be dominated by force? History is packed with surprises, some of them appalling. The leaders of the totalitarian Soviet empire miraculously had the good sense to yield up their power without unleashing the tremendous violence that was at their fingertips. Could it be the destiny of the American republic, unable to resist the allure of an imperial delusion, to flare out in a blaze of pointless mass destruction?

THE OTHER WAY

In sum, the days when humanity can hope to save itself from force with force are over. None of the known international structures of force—not the balance of power, not the balance of terror, not empire—can rescue the world from the extreme violence, now of literally apocalyptic potential, that so plainly threatens it. Only cooperative structures offer hope.

Shall we, then, return to the fray with a third round of Wilsonism? Shall we attempt once more to write a constitution for the whole world? We must answer in the negative. It would not make sense to apply his twice-failed solution to problems that no longer exist. One day, humankind may organize itself into a true body politic. Perhaps this will be some remote variation on the United Nations, whose hand now lies so lightly on the world; perhaps it will be some new organizational form. That day had not come in Wilson's time. It had not come in 1945. It has not come in ours, either. Even as an ideal, the structure of a global body politic remains uninvented. Such a novel object

Many writers have suggested that the world's large consumption of America's popular culture is another aspect of its imperial domination. The hallmark of imperial domination, however, is obedience to force, and the world's taste for American movies, music, and television is quite voluntary. Not all forms of national influence are imperial, or need to be thought of in that light. The larger point is that there are many nonimperial ways by which the United States, or any country, can interact with the world.

Resistance to American domination has already appeared in unexpected places. Some critics, taking their cue from history, have scanned the horizon for other governments that might league together to stop the new hegemon. Resistance has first appeared elsewhere—not among governments but among peoples. Germany's chancellor, Gerhard Schröder, was reelected on a platform of opposing an American war against Iraq. Roh Moo Hyun won the presidency of South Korea in part by opposing America's hard-line policy toward North Korea. Polls in dozens of countries have shown rising resistance to American foreign policy.

alikely to take a familiar form. The need for al political structures to deal with the glob- d economy and the swiftly deteriorating glob- nvironment is manifest. Yet it would be pre- ure to suppose that these structures should stitute a "world government" or a "world state." e words "state" and "government" carry too ch unwanted baggage from the past. Why uld an organization whose purpose and sur- nding context would be so different from those national governments repeat their structures? rhaps the federal tradition is the most promis- one, but no existing federation provides a del.) Nation-states, for example, have been in ondition of unceasing rivalry and conflict with e another, and this has shaped the most basic ments of their architectures. A global body litic, by contrast, would exist alone on earth, a cumstance that must have the profoundest con- quences for its character, if only because of the ood-chilling possibility that were it endowed th anything like the powers to which existing ates are accustomed, it might become repres- ve, leaving no corner of the earth free. There is raw freedom in the plurality of states that the orld should not surrender easily or without the mest confidence that a more civilized freedom an be defended and maintained.

Forgoing the attempt to create a constitution r the whole world, however, is not something lament but to welcome. It was the early twen- eth century's entrenched war system that by rcing on Wilson the re- uirement of solving every- hing at once, defeated im, and it is perhaps the reatest of our inestimable dvantages in the early wenty-first century that we lo not face this monster. No longer is it necessary, as it was in Wilson's time, o put in place a global sys- em of law as a precondi- ion for dismantling the structures of force. The two tasks can proceed along separate tracks, each at its own pace. No longer do we face the impossible task of uprooting the war system all at once or not at all: the all-or-nothing dilemma has dissolved. Seeing, just as Wilson did, that the path of organized violence condemns us to horror and catastrophe (now potentially much greater than in the first half of the twentieth century), we can adopt his comprehensive goal of building a peaceful world but are at liberty to carry it out step-by-step. We can borrow a leaf from the Eastern Europeans. Rejecting a choice between accommodation and violent all-or-nothing revolution, they decided upon the incremental pursuit of revolutionary ends by peaceful, reformist means. Acting on the basis of common principles yet without any blueprint—in "cooperation without unification," in the phrase of the late French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu—they pooled the variegated forces of society to achieve a radical renewal of their lives that in the end accomplished all that was necessary. A decision today to create a cooperative rather than a coercive world would not have to be the realization of any single plan drawn up by any one person or council but could develop, like open software, as the common creation of any and all comers, acting at every political level, within as well as outside of government.



The agenda would be to foster cooperative instead of coercive means at every level of politics. At the street level, this would mean choosing the creation of civil society over violent insurrection—the general strike, "social work," or the flying university over the suicide bombing, the assassination of a local official, or the attack on the local broadcasting station. At the level of the state it would mean choosing democracy over authoritarianism or totalitarianism. At the level of international affairs, it would mean choosing negotiation, treaties, and other international agreements and institutions over war and, in general, choosing multilateral international structures over unilateral ones; at the still more comprehensive level of biological survival, it would mean choosing preservation of the earthly environment that we hold in common as well as nuclear disarmament over heedless economic growth and the balance of nuclear terror. The choice is never merely the rejection of violence; it is always at the same time the embrace of its cooperative equivalent.

Such a broad effort, although lacking the explicit, technical coherence of a blueprint, would possess the inherent moral and practical coherence of any set of actions taken on the basis of common principles. Every page of history shows that violence incites more violence, without respect for national borders or the boundaries that supposedly divide foreign from domestic affairs. All forms of terror,

from the bomb in the pizza parlor to the torture in the basement to the globe-spanning balance of terror, foster and give encouragement to another. Nonviolence is likewise synergistic and contagious. For just as there is a logic of force, there is a logic of peace. Just as violent revolution and terror (whether nuclear or conventional) foster repression and dictatorship, nonviolent revolution and peaceful resistance pave the way for the establishment of democracy. Just as dictatorships incline toward war, democracies incline toward peace. Just as war is the natural environment for repression and dominance by the privileged few, peace is the natural environment for human rights and help for the poor.

Consider, for example, the ramifications of the peaceful rebellion against Soviet rule. It was met, as a violent revolution surely would not have been, with Gorbachev's restrained reformist response, which led, however unintentionally, to the end of the Soviet regime, which in turn created the conditions for peace among the Cold War powers. The Soviet collapse then became one factor in the decision of the ruling white minority in South Africa, now freed from their fear of Communism, to yield power to the black majority. And recall by contrast that the outbreak of the First World War led to the rise of totalitarianism, which led to the Second World War, which led in turn to the advent of the Cold War and the species-threatening nuclear balance of terror. No one planned or foresaw these chains of consequences, but they were as sure and real as anything anyone did plan.



For the United States, choosing the cooperative path would require, as the first order of business, choosing the American republic over the American empire. The enduring dilemma of American foreign policy has been how a republic can be fully engaged in the world without compromising or destroying its republican institutions. The problem was fully visible to the nation's founders. No institutions were more important to them as models than those of the Roman republic. And yet they knew well that Rome had lost those institutions when it transformed itself into an empire. In James Madison's words:

> The veteran legions of Rome were an overmatch for the undisciplined valor of all other natio
> final victim to her military triumphs; and that t
> liberties of Europe, as far as they ever existe
> have, with few exceptions, been the price of

One solution to the problem for the newbo United States was isolationism, which, in effe sought to save the republic by abandoning t world—a plan that turned out to be infeasib when it became clear that the republic's fa also depended on the world's fate. Another, o posite solution was to try to save the world turning it into a republic—Wilson's dream. I essence was to try to adapt the lessons of Ame ica's Constitutional Convention to the who globe, creating, in effect, the foundation of a li eral global state. The co ditions that had made th Constitution of the Uni ed States possible did n exist, however, in Wilson day (and still do not exist ours), and the plan prove overambitious and impra ticable. Still another a tempted solution—i creasingly popular aft American entry into th Second World War, whe America's full engagemer with the world became i reversible—was to adap realpolitik to America needs. This permitted th engagement that was nee ed but also imperiled th country's republican insti tutions, as the founders ha foreseen, leading, to nam only the most serious episode, to the crisis of th Watergate years. The fourth solution is to discard the balance of power championed by the re alpolitikers: to turn to imperial ambitions.

The new conditions in the world offer, per haps for the first time, foundations for a new cooperative American foreign policy that i both thoroughly republican and thoroughly engaged with the world. Unlike isolationism this policy would be fully committed to creat ing a more just, peaceful world. Unlike re alpolitik, it would be consistent with the re quirements of the Constitution and the consensual basis of democratic government Unlike Wilsonism, it would be gradual in its means, even as, like Wilsonism, it would be radical in its goals. Its model would be not the Constitution, which cast the net of law over all the states, but the Declaration of Indepen-

ce, which announced to the world the will he American people, and indeed of all peo-, to take control of their own destinies in a tracted fight. The extension of law cannot cede, but must follow, the extension of ver. As we have seen, however, power does need to be based on force; it can be based cooperation. To the extent that power, nerated by cooperative association at every el of life, is built up, international law can d will follow it.

For Americans, the choice is thus at once tween two Americas and two futures for the ternational order. Which path the United ates will choose is likely to be decided in a ng, arduous struggle in the years ahead. Its tcome cannot be predicted. An American public will require a political party that is dicated to defending democracy at home and vancing peace abroad. In an imperial Ameri-, war would concentrate power in the hands the president—checks and balances would at an end—and concentrated power would ize wealth; fear would constrict freedom; ectoral politics, to the extent that they still attered, would be increasingly dominated by oney, above all corporate money, whose in-erests would trump the people's interests; the ap between rich and poor would likely in-rease; military spending would crowd out so-ial spending; the social, economic, and eco-ogical agendas of the country and the earth would alike be increasingly neglected. In a re-ublican America, on the other hand, the im-nense concentration of power in the executive would be broken up; power would be divided again among the three branches, which would resume their responsibility of checking and bal-ancing one another as the Constitution pro-vides; civil liberties would remain intact or be strengthened; money would be driven out of politics; the will of the electorate would be heard again; and politics, and with it the power of the people, would revive.

Yet no American decision alone can secure peace in the world. It is the very essence of the task that many nations must cooperate in the effort. If they do, however, they will find that twentieth-century history has presented them, side-by-side with all its horrors, an abundance of materials to work with. There are grounds for optimism in the restricted but real sense that if the will to turn away from force and toward cooperation were to develop, there are more extensive and solid foundations for accomplishment than have ever existed before. It is quite possible that other countries or alliances would have as much to contribute as would the United States. For example, the European Union may have more to offer the world by way of a model. Its newer experience of federation, though as yet less successful than the American, was explicitly and successfully based on a will to overcome the danger of the world wars that disfigured Europe in the twentieth century. Having chosen peace for itself, Europe is now ideally positioned, if it so chooses, to contribute to peace in the world.

DECIDING TO EXIST

A decision to gradually dismantle structures of coercive power and to create alongside them loosely coordinated, multiform, flexible structures of cooperative power would encompass a multitude of specific campaigns, plans, treaties, and agreements, including ones for disarmament, conventional as well nuclear; democratization and human rights; help for the poor; advancement of international law; environmental protection; strengthening of the United Nations and other international bodies; and local and regional peacekeeping and peacemaking. Global warming cannot be stopped by B-52s any more than nuclear proliferation can; only cooperation in the form of binding treaties can accomplish either task. Peace, as has been noted, begins when the hungry are fed. It is equally true that the hungry will be fed when peace begins. Peace, social justice, and defense of the environment are a people's triad to pit against the imperial triad of war, economic exploitation, and environmental degradation. Fighters for freedom, fighters for social justice, disarmers, civil disobeyers, democrats, civil-rights activists, and defenders of the environment are legions in a single multiform cause, and they will gain strength by knowing this, taking encouragement from it, and, when appropriate and opportune, pooling their efforts.

NO AMERICAN DECISION ALONE CAN SECURE PEACE IN THE WORLD. IT IS THE VERY ESSENCE OF THE TASK THAT MANY NATIONS MUST COOPERATE IN THE EFFORT

As examples of steps to be taken, let us briefly consider four measures, not because they are in any way comprehensive or even, in every case, necessarily the most important ones that can be imagined but because they are timely, realistic, and illustrative of the thematic unity that a concerted choice in favor of a cooperative world would manifest. They are a worldwide treaty to abolish nuclear arms and

other weapons of mass destruction; the foundation of a democratic league to support democracy worldwide as an underpinning of peace and to restrain existing democracies from betraying their principles in their foreign policies; a program of international intervention to ameliorate, contain, or end local and regional wars on the basis of a reformed conception of national sovereignty; and a concerted effort to enforce a prohibition against crimes against humanity.

In Wilson's day, the violence to be avoided was war—above all, world war. In our time, we must prevent not only war but nuclear annihilation. The menace of annihilation—of cities, of nations, of the species—arguably suppressed the menace of world war, and now we must suppress the menace of annihilation. A decision for nonviolence, in our time, is a decision to exist.

An agreement to abolish nuclear arms and all other weapons of mass destruction is the sine qua non of any sane international system in the twenty-first century, and the necessary condition for the construction of a cooperative world. Any other attempted settlement of the issue of weapons of mass destruction will clash with plans to halt or reverse proliferation, with other efforts to bring peace, with common sense, and with elementary decency. No reliable policy can be founded upon the permanent institutionalization of a capacity and an intention to kill tens of millions of innocent people. No humane international order can depend upon a threat to extinguish humanity.

THE MENACE OF ANNIHILATION ARGUABLY SUPPRESSED THE MENACE OF WORLD WAR, AND NOW WE MUST SUPPRESS THE MENACE OF ANNIHILATION

Abolition alone provides a sound basis for the continued deepening and spread of liberal democracy, whose founding principles are violated and affronted by the maintenance of nuclear terror. And a clear commitment to abolition, by ending the nuclear double standard, alone can create a basis for stopping nuclear proliferation and making effective the existing bans on other weapons of mass destruction. The logic of abolition is the real alternative to the logic of empire.

But, my critics will ask, won't the abolition of nuclear weapons undo one of the very building blocks of peace that I have named? If the ever present danger of nuclear annihilation has paralyzed great-power war, won't great-power war spring to life once nuclear weapons are removed from the picture? The answer to the question lies at the very root of the nuclear predicament. It is a profound misunderstanding of the nuclear age to suppose that its basic features emanate from nuclear hardware. They do not. They emanate, as we have seen, from the scientific knowledge that underlies the hardware. The number of nuclear warheads in the world can fall and the number of fingers on the nuclear button can decrease, even to zero, without subtracting a single digit from the physical equations on which the bomb is based.

The spread of this knowledge throughout the world guarantees that the war system can never operate on a global basis as it did before. The persistence of the knowledge and the capacity to rebuild nuclear arsenals, or produce other weapons of mass destruction, will stand in the way. Let us imagine that nuclear weapons have been abolished by treaty, and that a nation then violates it by secretly or openly building a nuclear arsenal and threatening to use it to bully the world. As soon as the threat has been made, scores of other nations, all nuclear capable, would be free to build, and threaten the use of, their own nuclear arsenals in response, in effect deterring the violator. Not global hot war but a reignition of cold war would result and reestablish a crude system of mutual assured destruction. Wider war would be deterred, just as it is in our world of large nuclear arsenals. The important point, as always in matters of deterrence, is not that the threatened nations would necessarily rearm (though this "scenario" has a credibility that many existing ones lack) but that any government would know in advance that such a response was available, and would have every reason to desist from its reckless scheme in the first place. The threat would not constitute nuclear deterrence in the classic sense of threatening instant nuclear retaliation, yet it would still be a kind of deterrence.

Abolition, when seen in this cold light, can not mean a return to the pre-nuclear age, whether one might wish for such a development or not, nor can it rule out once and for all a resurgence of nuclear armaments in some future dark age, whose coming no one can preclude. It does, however, mean that a return to the global adapt-or-die war system is impossible. Abolition, in view of these circumstances, which as far as we know are unchangeable, would be nothing more or less than an indispensable though insufficient recognition by the human species of the terrible, mortal predicament it has got itself into and a concrete expression of its resolve to find some relief

olition should not be undersold, but it uld not be oversold either.*

Even as the structures of coercive power are dually being retired from use, structures based cooperative power must gradually be built up. ne of these could be the foundation of a demotic league, designed to foster and build upon the aceful proclivities already found in the very re of the democratic process. It is true that the wer of democratic states to promote democra- outside their own borders is, by the very nature democracy, limited. States cannot create democ- cies; only peoples can, rough their actions and nsent. (Of course, states e perfectly capable of cre- ing dictatorships.) Nev- theless, democratic states an assist one another or eoples already seeking to und or preserve democra- y. Such assistance would e strengthened by the undation of an alliance ade up of the democratic ountries of the world.



The main alliances in hich the democracies now re involved present an nomalous picture. They re founded on every possi- le principle but democra- y itself. NATO, for exam- le, is an alliance made up ntirely of democracies, but ts purpose is strictly military. The central oblig- ation of the treaty—to come to the defense of any member who is attacked—depends in no way on the character of the regimes involved. In the absence of the Soviet Union, whose advance into the center of Europe at the end of the Second World War prompted the alliance's creation, the need even for this pledge of mutual assistance is unclear. The only war in NATO's history—the campaign to drive Serbian forces out of Kosovo—did not involve an attack on a member.

The European Union is another alliance made up of democracies. Founded originally to foreclose a military danger—recurrence of war among the nations of Europe—it evolved over the decades into an organization in which economic concerns predominate. Only recently has the Union been asking itself what political and military functions it might also assume. Moreover, it is so far restricted to geographically contiguous nations.

The qualifications for joining the democratic league would be observance of standards of democratic governance and human rights. No state that failed to meet the standards could join; any state that departed from them would be subjected to sanctions or expulsion. These requirements would give expression to the strong interest that every democratic country has in the preservation of democracy elsewhere in the world. The democratic character of all the states involved would also make supranational institutions among them far easier to establish than they are at the United Nations, where dictatorships have equal voice with democracies in votes on human rights. Juridical and legislative institutions of restricted scope could be added to executive ones. The European Convention on Human Rights, establishing the European Court of Human Rights, already gives that court jurisdiction over human-rights violations within member states. The European parliament, whose members are directly elected, gives limited expression to an all-European public opinion.

The simplest and most obvious direct contribution that such a league could make to

* *My critics may also wonder whether such "weaponless deterrence" is an improvement, either militarily or morally, over the present system of armed deterrence. The simple answer is that in a world in which nuclear know-how is inexpungible, the step of physically eliminating nuclear weapons would create a threshold that would be difficult to recross in the other direction—just as today the threshold between conventional and nuclear war is difficult to cross. Even after such abolition, a critical decision would remain to be made: whether or not to continue to rely as a matter of policy on nuclear rearmament in the event that the abolition treaty is violated. The nuts and bolts of any abolition agreement would be highly detailed arrangements suppressing certain technologies—all, of course, inspected to the hilt. The agreement would specify exactly which nuclear-bomb materials are permitted, in what quantities, and where. There assuredly would be an enforcement provision in the treaty, specifying what it is that the menaced nations of the world are entitled or obliged to do in the event of the treaty's violation. If nuclear rearmament is specified as a response, and technical arrangements suitable for it are provided, then, to an extent, the world would still be relying on nuclear terror to counter nuclear terror. If, on the other hand, nuclear arms are banned absolutely by the treaty, and nuclear rearmament is forbidden even in the face of the treaty's violation, whose remedy is sought by other means, then the world would formally and finally have renounced all dependence on nuclear terror for its safety. This is not the place, however, even to attempt to summarize the cases for and against the abolition of nuclear weapons, which I have discussed at great length elsewhere.*

international peace would be a pledge to resolve all disputes among its members without recourse to war, thus formalizing the historically demonstrated fact that democracies do maintain a peace among themselves. A vow by democratic Finland not to attack democratic India and vice versa would perhaps not be the end of history, and would do little to stop the wars that tear apart the Congo, yet the creation of a large body of nations in all parts of the earth that both formally and actually had renounced war in their mutual relations would provide a powerful example, and over time perhaps a direction for the world as a whole.

Natural corollaries would be a commitment by the league to support the elimination of nuclear weapons, to steadily reduce the sale of conventional arms to other countries, and to devote its resources to restraining or ending local or regional wars wherever it realistically could. Far more important and difficult, however, would be a commitment to check the aggressive tendencies that have constituted the brutal, exploitative side of many democracies' relations with the rest of the world. The most serious and lasting contribution of a democratic league would be to lay to rest the Western imperial tradition, choosing democracy once and for all. In order to be worthy of the name, a democratic league must be an anti-imperial league. Member nations would jointly resolve not to create or support repressive regimes, not to use armed force merely to advance commercial or other national interests, and in general to address international problems on a cooperative basis. The American people's choice of republic over empire would be necessary. If nuclear abolition by international agreement is the true alternative to empire, which is based on coercive power, then a gradual globalization of democratic procedure, which is based on cooperative power, is the procedural alternative.



DELAMINATING SOVEREIGNTY

The spread of democracy, in turn, necessitates a revision of international law to accommodate political arrangements of limited or mixed sovereignty. In parts of the world in which peoples are intermixed in a single territory, the longing for democracy can bring bloo shed, as the world has seen in the former Yu goslavia, parts of the former Soviet Union, th Middle East, and Ireland, among other places.

Sovereignty, the conceptual crystallization o the all-or-nothing trap that doomed Wilsonism is a bundle of powers forced together under th pressure of military necessity or ambition. That why, in recent popular incarnations of sove eignty, only a single formula has been accepted– that the people, their territory, and the state hav to be congruent and exclude all overlaps: a mixe national population, divided sovereignty right and divided authorities. Certainly, division was ou of the question as long as the global adapt-or-d war machine subjected nations to its crushin pressure. Now that this machine has been para lyzed and the pressure lifted we can open the que tion again. In fact there are already signs of chang In regions where coercive power, sovereign and in divisible, has yielded, structures of cooperativ power, limited and divisible, have flourished. Th most striking example is again the Europea Union. Let us recall tha sovereignty was first asser ed in Europe by absoluti kings as a scythe to cu down the tangled thicke of medieval political inst tutions, with their dens overlapping webs of eccles astical as well as secula rights, privileges, and dutie Although sovereignty now defended as the gua antor of the plurality o states, originally it was d versity's enemy. It was th instrument of a radical sin plification of politics, re ducing the array of politica actors to subjects on the on side and a sovereign on th other. The development o the European Union, how ever, shows that democra ic states at peace with one another are now fre to create a rich variety of hybrid arrangement most of them unimaginable under the terms of th choice between a Wilsonian global constitutio and the old war system. The Union's economi and political institutions, which inch forward ye by year, are already characterized by a complex ty not far from the medieval.

Formulas for shared or limited sovereignty ar also a necessary part of any solution, other tha ethnic cleansing or genocide, to most postimpe rial wars of ethnic national self-determination, i so many of which the requirement of one state fo one people on one territory has proved to be

pe for nightmare without end. For delami-
ing sovereignty entails delaminating self-
ermination, at least as it has been conceived
litionally. Self-determination, one might say,
st yield to self-*determinations* and *selves*-
ermination—that is, to permission for more
n one nation to find expression within the
der of a single state and to permission for in-
iduals and groups to claim multiple identi-
s—for example, Kurdish and Turkish.

One example that offers particular promise is
on-again, off-again Good Friday Agreement
1998 in Northern Ireland. In the European
nion, the absence of conflict made structures
divided power possible; in Ireland, divided
uctures of power are being used to bring an end
a conflict—a more difficult challenge. The
rties to the Good Friday Agreement did not set
t to dismantle sovereignty, yet that is what
e agreement does. We will look in vain in this
reement for power that can be called sovereign.
he people of Northern Ireland remain citizens
the United Kingdom, yet they have been
anted a constitutional right that the citizens of
w, if any, other nation-states enjoy: the right
remove themselves and their land and goods
another country, the Irish Republic—in short,
secede upon a majority vote. (It is a right that
ne Muslims of Kashmir, the Tamils of Sri Lan-
a, and the Tibetans in China, to give three of
nany possible examples, would dearly love to
cquire.) They have a clear right to remain
ritish but no obligation to do so. Such a right
s perhaps the most elementary collective right
people can possess, the right to self-determi-
nation. And yet in Northern Ireland this right,
which is in truth a power, is obviously conditional
nd limited. It was created by decisions in the
Jnited Kingdom and can be suspended by the
Jnited Kingdom, which can restore direct rule
ver Northern Ireland. The Irish Republic ex-
plicitly renounced its demand for sovereignty
over Northern Ireland, yet thereby gained,
through the newly created North/South Minis-
terial Council, on which officials of both parts of
the Irish island sit, more actual influence over the
north than it had ever had before. These arrange-
ments have left behind traditional notions of
sovereignty, allowing for all kinds of incremen-
tal, mixed institutions and arrangements that
are more various and more nuanced than the
bare choice between union with Great Britain
and union with the Irish Republic.

At the same time that the United Kingdom was
entering into this agreement, it was devolving
new powers on Scotland and Wales, in its most
radical constitutional reform of the twentieth
century. When we consider that both innova-
tions were occurring within the context of the
steadily evolving constitutional arrangements of
the European Union, we arrive at a picture of
fundamental political transformation of the Eu-
ropean continent, and we begin to grasp that na-
tional sovereignty is giving way to new forms in
the very Europe in which that concept was born.

ENFORCEMENT

In a program whose overall object is to wean politics from its reliance on force, the question of enforcement is obviously vexatious. It's clear, however, that if the international community should ever embark on such a program, enforcement would be a necessary element. The question is what its scope, provenance, limitations, and legitimation should be. At one extreme is the American hegemonic plan, which is almost all enforcement, including the unilateral right of a single power to attack and overthrow other governments at will. At the other extreme is no enforcement, a Gandhian global politics. Somewhere in between is a vision of an international community that fundamentally relies on consent and the cooperative power it creates but nevertheless reserves the right to use force in certain limited, well-defined circumstances sanctioned by defined, widely accepted procedures. A global

THE REQUIREMENT OF ONE STATE FOR ONE PEOPLE ON ONE TERRITORY HAS PROVED TO BE A RECIPE FOR NIGHTMARE WITHOUT END

nuclear-abolition agreement, for example, would require enforcement in the event of a violation. Ideally, force would play the restricted policing role that it does in a democratic state. I say "ideally," because if an international police force is to be legitimate there must exist an international order whose legitimacy is generally recognized, and this is just the thing that is largely missing in the world today. Its gradual strengthening—again, by increments, not in any single leap—would be both cause and consequence of a cooperative program.

The advantage of our circumstances over Wilson's are again evident. Because of the war system's demise, there is no requirement to establish an overwhelming international military force that could impose its will on all miscreants. For excellent reasons, this idea no longer even crosses most people's minds. To the extent that any plan remotely like it is current, it is the dream of hegemony that tempts American policymakers. We are free in the area of enforcement, as well, to proceed incrementally. To whatever extent the international community decides to exist—and no

[illegible] can seek to end it are a few selected internationally agreed upon principles. Such an approach, it is true, would not end war at one stroke, as the League of Nations and the United Nations were supposed to do, but it would close the demoralizing gap between grandiose rhetoric and trifling deeds—that perennial consequence of the bad faith of good intentions that was the curse of attempts at international peacemaking in the twentieth century. It is in this context that a campaign against international terrorism would find its place. As this terrorism is global in character, it is fitting that the response should be global. A global response requires cooperation, guided by principles such as those recently adopted by the United Nations for this purpose. Historically, the greatest successes in reducing terrorism have been accomplished by a combination of police action and political attention to underlying causes. There is no reason to suppose that a global version of such a program would be different. It is as difficult to imagine that the United States, acting alone or together with just a few nations, will be any more able to coerce or overthrow every regime that "supports" terrorism than it will be able to do likewise with every proliferator of weapons of mass destruction. The cooperation of governments, not their antagonism, is the essential ingredient in opposing either action.

The immediate further need is for a principle that defines the purpose and scope of enforcement actions to be sanctioned by the international community. One such principle has already been identified, though without being much enforced: the obligation to prevent and punish crimes against humanity. The concept of crimes against humanity gained currency at the Nuremberg trials, in which the victors of the Second World War held Nazi leaders accountable for the atrocities of their regime. Recently, it has been applied again in legal proceedings in special international tribunals against the former president of Yugoslavia, Slobodan Milosevic, and against the perpetrators of the Tutsi genocide in Rwanda. The newly constituted International Criminal Court, making use of the language of the Nuremberg Charter, has defined crimes against humanity as acts, including murder, torture, rape, forced disappearance, and persecution, when committed "as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population, with knowledge of the attack." The key distinction therefore is between abuses of individuals, which are not crimes against humanity per se, and abuses that occur as part of an assault against a defined group, whether ethnic, religious, racial, or national. The most important of the crimes against humanity historically is genocide—specifically outlawed by the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide of 1948—which may be roughly defined as an assau upon the life of one of the earth's peoples.

Why groups, however? Why should the inte national community concern itself especially wi collectivities rather than individuals? An obvio pragmatic reason is that if the international co munity accepted responsibility for enforcing i dividual human rights, it would have to constitu itself as a world state. The justifications for c lective international intervention would be u limited, since there is no country on earth which some human-rights abuses do not occur

Laws mandating international action to s aside sovereignty in the name of stopping crim against humanity would revise this understandi without throwing it out. The state would still recognized as the prime international actor, but would no longer necessarily be recognized in eve case as the nation's legitimate representative. T international community (but not any single po er) would assert a sharply limited and exceptio al right to judge the fitness of a state to repres its people. Such a recognition would form a na ural complement to the revisions of sovereign needed to settle the wars of national se determination. When Slobodan Milosevic soug to forestall intervention against his genocid campaign in Kosovo, he invoked sovereignty. response, the international community could o ly argue circuitously that his crimes within h own borders were a "threat to peace." A simpl and stronger answer would have been, "In wh sense can you call yourself the sovereign repr sentative of a people that you are seeking to d stroy? Your genocide nullifies your sovereignty

Stopping crimes against humanity would be new vocation for the international communit which has generally looked the other way wh such crimes have occurred. Not until very r cently has the concept of collective rights ma headway. Consistently enforcing the prohibitio of genocide, based on the conviction that th international community can no more tolerate th murder of one of its peoples than national co munities can tolerate the murder of a perso would be a sheet anchor for the collective righ of peoples.

A commitment to stop crimes against humar ity is a natural corollary to a program that d mands nuclear abolition, fosters democracy, an delaminates sovereignty. The required shift i principle would look beyond states to peoples, i whom the roots of political legitimacy would b acknowledged. The principle would also apply t the nuclear threat, whereby not only every peop but the human species as a whole have been place at risk of extinction. The doctrine of deterrenc which "assures" the safety of one people from nu clear attack at the hands of another by menacin both with annihilation, is, to describe it witho

herbole, a policy of retaliatory genocide. It was the destination to which the great powers, once they had failed to agree on the abolition of nuclear weapons in 1945, were to a certain extent helplessly driven by the logic of the war system in which they were entangled. Nevertheless, it is inescapable that carrying out genocide in the event of nuclear attack is the heart of the policy. One of the deepest and most important consequences of a prohibition of genocide would be the eventual prohibition of nuclear deterrence.

Nine decades after the guns of August, the world has to decide whether to continue on the path of catastrophic violence charted in the twentieth century and now consumed in the twenty-first or whether to reverse course and embark on a new, cooperative political path. It is a decision composed of innumerable smaller decisions. Some are already clear; others will present themselves along the way. The steps so far outlined, ambitious enough in themselves, include a few of the most obvious, and I have mentioned them because they represent an attempt to respond to the perils and dangers of this era by building on foundations that are in existence. For nuclear arms and the other weapons of mass destruction have already brought about the bankruptcy of violence. And political events both earthshaking and minute have revealed the existence of a force that has the potential to overmatch violence throughout the political realm. It is the cooperative power of nonviolent action. It is new, yet it has roots that go deep into history and is now tightly woven into the life of the world. It has appeared in political affairs large and small, from nonviolent revolution in Eastern Europe to the procedures of liberal democracy to global treaties such as the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. It has already altered basic realities that everyone must work with in politics—including the very nature of force and political power. It can be our bulwark and shield in the century ahead against the still unmastered perils of unlimited potential violence.



For in our age of deep and sustained democratic revolution, the power that governments inspire through fear remains under constant challenge by the power that flows from the freedom of people to act on behalf of their interests and beliefs. Whether one calls it cooperative power or something else, it is this that with the steady widening and deepening of the democratic spirit, has, over and over, bent the great powers to its will. Its point of origin is the heart and mind of each ordinary person. It can flare up suddenly and mightily but gutter out with equal speed, unless it is channeled and controlled by acts of restraint. It grows out of social work as well as political activity. In the absence of popular participation, it simply disappears. Its chief instrument is direct action, both noncooperative and constructive, but it is also the wellspring of the people's will in democratic nations. It is not an all-purpose "means" with which any "end" can be pursued. It cannot be "projected," for its strength declines in proportion to its distance from its source. It is a local plant, rooted in home soil. It is therefore mighty on the defensive, feeble on the offensive, and toxic to territorial empires, all of which, in our time, have died. It stands in the way of any future imperial scheme, American or other. Its watchwords are justice and freedom. Yet it is not just an ideal but a real force in the world. In revolution it is decisive. Allied with violence, it may accomplish immense things but then overthrow itself. Tempered by restraint it can burn indefinitely, like a lamp whose wick is trimmed, with a steady flame. Under the name of "the will of the people" it has dissolved the foundations first of monarchy and aristocracy and then of totalitarianism; as "opinion," it has stood in judgment over democratically elected governments; as "rebellious hearts and minds," it has broken the strength of great powers engaged in a superannuated imperialism; as "love of country," it has fueled the universally successful movement for self-determination; gone awry, it has fueled ethnic and national war and totalitarian rule, which soon suffocate it, though only temporarily. It now must be brought to bear on the choice between survival and annihilation. It is powerful because it sets people in motion and fixes before their eyes what they are ready to live and die for. It is dangerous for the same reason. Whether combined with violence, as in people's war, sustained by a constitution, as in democracy, or standing alone, as in living in truth, it can become the final arbiter of the public affairs of our time and the political bedrock of an unconquerable world. ■

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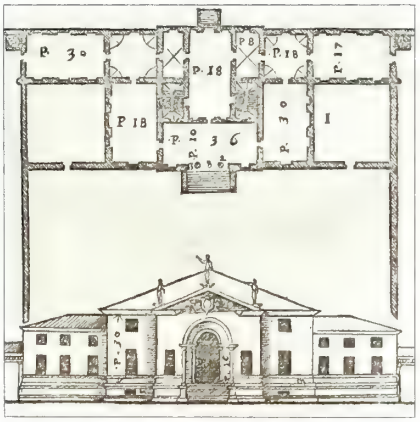
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A HOUSE UNDIVIDED

Andrea Palladio and the science of happiness

By Dave Hickey

ANDREA Palladio's Villa Poiana still stands amid cultivated fields on the flat lowland plain south of Vicenza, just beyond the hamlet of Poiana Maggiore. It is visible from the road: a chalk-white shoebox of plastered brick with an unadorned, gabled facade that pushes slightly forward from the rest of the house. The facade hints at being a temple front, but the base of its triangular pediment is interrupted to accommodate a radically stylized, tripartite Palladian door: a tall central archway flanked by two thin rectangular portals. A plaster fascia surrounds the three openings, and over the central entryway the fascia is incised with a halo of blind oculi—a shallow arched recess that is itself incised by five circular recesses. At the top of a shallow flight of stairs, the door, crowned by this halo, affords formal access to the villa's loggia. Two rectangular windows flanking the entryway open onto the loggia as well.



The effect is eccentrically handsome and sweetly austere, but for a modern visitor, approaching the villa on foot, the experience of confronting its white austerity in an agricultural landscape dotted with curvaceous, candy-colored contemporary farm equipment is decidedly uncanny, spookier than it is awe inspiring. The building stands there amid the colorful, outsized functional toys of the present like the ghost of a modest and elegant past, or the promise of a gentler future. In either case, there is virtually no connection between the accoutrements of contemporary agriculture and Palladio's building. Even the invitation to read prescient modernity into the simplified design of Poiana's facade is quickly forestalled by three life-sized statues of female muses (drama, music, and sculpture) that adorn the top of the pediment. Two more statues, these representing Hercules and Neptune, stand on the stair abutments guarding the entryway.

Many years ago, climbing the stairway between Hercules and Neptune for the first time, I remember wondering how I could possibly reconcile my intense awareness of the villa's cultural remoteness with my physical certainty that there was nothing ill designed about Palladio's building. The villa's shapes and forms seemed so physically impeccable and deftly arranged that no ameliorative adjustment was imaginable, and, intrigued by this impression, I walked back out into the courtyard and stood

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Elevation of the Villa Poiana and all display letters from *I quattro libri dell'architettura*, 1570
The Lessing J. Rosenwald Collection, Library of Congress © 2003 OCTAVO/www.octavo.com

there staring at the facade until I could see what I had been looking at.

What I saw, finally, were those five life-sized statues, the very elements that to my modern eyes had at first seemed the most extrinsic. Seen from the front, the three ethereal muses above and the two avatars of earthly power below chart the circumference of a "designer's circle" that embraces





the heart of the house and gives it human scale. The lower perimeter of this imaginary circle rests on the top of the stairway, and the five shadowed openings in the building's loggia define an intersecting semicircle whose diameter rests on the same stair line. The halo of blind oculi crowning the entryway defines a smaller circle that centers the whole composition. These elements, harmonized in real space, constitute the armature of Palladio's symmetrical, physical music: one design, three circles, five life-sized gods of grace and power, five generous portals for their mortal counterparts, and five blind eyes to gaze with calm disinterest on the world beyond their brave redoubt.

To hear the music more clearly, one need only climb the steps, cross the villa's shadowy loggia, and step into its grand sala. One does this as through a designer's looking glass, for if the villa's exterior is all rigor gladdened by ebullience, the interior is all ebullience harmonized by formal discipline. The sala is exactly the size you want it to be, about the size of a generous SoHo loft, with a frescoed ceiling. Its white walls are washed with complex patterns of light from a large rear window whose design mimics that of the front facade but with clear oculi. (These windows, of course, look out across ancestral lands, not at the world beyond.) The rooms off the sala are more personal and extravagant. Their walls are solidly frescoed with trompe l'oeil architecture, designed by Palladio, that frames a profusion of painted narratives and landscapes. In the grandest room, the *Sala degli Imperatori*, no less, Anselmo Canera has painted a series of intrica but bloodless Roman equestrian battle scene These paintings alternate with trompe l'oeil nic es that enclose painted statues of Rome's soldi emperors. Off this sala, a more intimate *came no* has been frescoed by Bernardino India into fantasyland of monkeys, parrots, nymphs, saty and lascivious cherubs.

It is all, quite literally, something to b hold. More than a half-century after t Villa Poiana was completed, its courtly ae thetic was succinctly appropriated by Pa ladio's greatest follower, Inigo Jones, characterize his own Banquet House Whitehall Palace: "Outwardly every wy man carrieth a graviti in Publicke places Jones wrote, "yet inwardly hath his ima inacy set on fire, and sumtimes licentcious flying out, as nature hirself doeth ofte times stravagantly." The interesting thi about Jones's *aperçu* is that while it pe fectly captures Palladio's idea that a buil ing might be emblematic of our inner a outer selves, it devastates his delicate ton ity. As a child of the baroque, Jones i stinctively (and correctly by modern sta dards) presses Palladio's theatrical, harmon balance of the inner and outer self into a Manich drama in which the inner and outer self *oppose* ea other. Palladio was never so bloody-minded pretentious. His "stravagance" was never that e travagant nor his licentiousness ever that lus He built civilized structures to be sited on cul vated land, and the secret of their elegant theat has always been their blessed absence of dram

IT IS all the more appropriat then, that the legendary prov nance of the Villa Poiana shou be as replete with comic theater it is bereft of stark dramatics. A cording to Witold Rybczynski, in his rece book, *The Perfect House: A Journey with the R naissance Master Andrea Palladio*, the story go like this: In the year 1534, in the small city Vicenza on the Venetian terra firma, a twent six-year-old stone carver from Padua marries carpenter's daughter. The groom, one Andrea Pietro, a member of the mason's guild, is em ployed locally at the Pedemuro workshop und the tutelage of its *capomaestro*, Giovanni Pc lezza. The bride, Allegradonna, works in th service of Lady Angela Poiana, a Vicentine n blewoman who kindly provides her maidserva with a dowry (valued at twenty-eight ducat consisting of a bed, a pair of sheets, three ne shirts, three used shirts, handkerchiefs, assorte clothing and lengths of cloth. For the first tw years of their marriage, Allegradonna and A drea share his room at the construction shop.



the movie version, they would use the lengths of cloth for curtains.

Ten years later, Lady Angela's husband, the *cavaliere* Bonifacio, commissions this same young man to design and build for him a substantial agricultural villa at Poiana Maggiore, and Andrea di Pietro, the *popolano* stone carver (now better known as Andrea Palladio, architect to the *nobili*), rewards his old friends' patronage by creating for them one of the touchstones of domestic architecture in the West. At this point in the narrative, if it were, in fact, the animated feature film it so closely resembles, the handsome Andrea would almost certainly stand in the light-drenched sala of his newly completed villa and, holding his tattered building plans out before him, sing a pop song about making dreams come true. Friendly birds would swoop around him. Attendant mice would dance about his feet. And even without this cartoon entourage, the bare historical narrative still illustrates the most beguiling attribute of Andrea Palladio's career: his buoyant ascent from the artisan classes to heights he could not have imagined growing up as a mason's apprentice in the Venetian lowlands.

In this respect, Palladio's career most resembles that of his near contemporary William Shakespeare, who codified modern English usage as Palladio codified modern architectural practice. We know more about Palladio than Shakespeare, of course, but we know roughly the same things, and no matter how closely we chart the arc of their careers, no matter how clearly we see them adapting complex circumstances to the rigor of their own visions, the aura of high-comic in evitability persists. It looks so easy. Through wha seems an improbable confluence of talent, ci cumstance, and happy chance, they follow the interests, find their friends, do their work, an achieve the fame they deserve in their own life times. In Palladio's case, you can search the doc uments for those revealing moments of conflic rejection, and misunderstanding that define ou perception of artists like Michelangelo or D Vinci and find no evidence that Palladio eve even complained, much less fought or even strug gled. In every case, it seems, the elements cor spired on his behalf, and seem to have been cor spiring well before he was born in 1508.

During the late fifteenth century, the naviga tion of the Cape of Good Hope, the discovery o America, and the nagging distraction of wars o the peninsula precipitously weakened the Venet ian republic's maritime power and loosened its gri on eastern trade. These irrevocable economic re alities occasioned a new interest on the part of th Venetian aristocracy in the commercial possibil ities of agriculture on the unexploited land sur rounding the city. This interest ultimately led t a building boom in the Veneto, and, in 1527 this burgeoning commercial renascence was in tellectually enhanced when Lutheran mercenar ies sacked Rome. The resulting social chaos an the collapse of papal patronage created a top-tie diaspora of aristocrats, artists, and intellectuals many of whom fled to Venice and the Veneto They were joined by a large contingent of cos mopolitan Venetians who had been longtime res idents of The Eternal City.

The resulting carnival of expatriate intellectua ferment and commercial rapacity provided the set ting for Palladio's coming of age as an architect It would be hard to imagine a better one. There were buildings to be built; there was money t build them and a competitive intellectual at mosphere to refine their aspiration. Amazingly even the existing structure of architectural pa tronage conspired to guide Palladio through th early years of his career. At the time, Jacopo Sansovino, official architect of the Venetian re public, had his pick of public projects. Michel Sanmicheli, as the republic's chief military ar chitect, controlled those commissions. So youn Andrea Palladio was thrown by necessity int the less prestigious practice of domestic archi tecture, like Br'er Rabbit into the briar patch, a the very moment of its coming of age, and there thanks to the laws of primogeniture, he discov ered an insouciant coterie of competitive younge sons, scions of the Venetian nobility, hungry fo elegant, modern villas that would surpass in grandeur and vogue the ancestral piles their el der brothers had inherited.

As it turned out, the homes Palladio designe

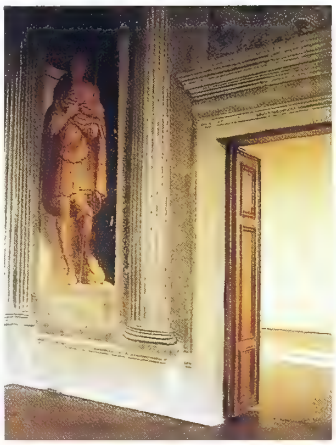


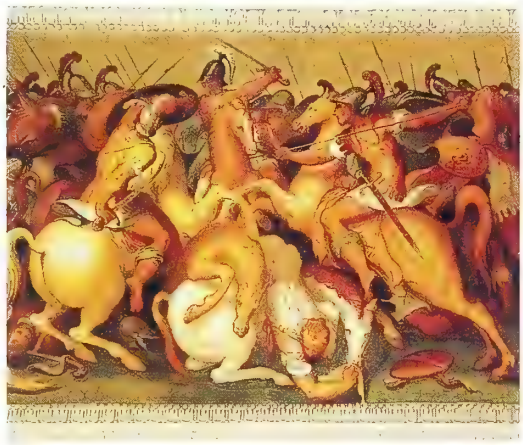
Photograph of an interior fresco at the Villa Poiana (detail

these lively patrons were, in
t, the very embodiment of au
ırant, because Venice at that
ıe was the essence of up-to-date.
a time when most European
:hitects were acquiring their
owledge of antique and mod-
ı architecture by word of mouth
through circulated drawings,
ɛ Venetian publishing indus-
made the world both avail-
le and affordable to the young
lladio—as it would ultimate-
make Palladio available and af-
dable to the world. At a time
ıen most European architects
re covering windows with oil
per and canvas to achieve
ırky translucency, Palladio was
vesting his domestic spaces
th breathtaking lightness and
ightness that was possible
ıly because Venice was the
eatest single source of glass-
aking in the West, and only
ere was glass plate affordable
ıd plentiful enough for such
nerous domestic fenestration.
In truth, only in Venice, and
ıly at that time, was Andrea
ıllladio even possible. Matur-
g as an architect, Palladio in-
rited a short but exceptionally
nse tradition of classical appropriation, called
ıe *all'antica*, that was founded in the late fif-
enth century to reassert the continuing pres-
ıce of pagan Mediterranean culture on the Ital-
n peninsula and to purge contemporary building
foreign Gothic excess. The tradition began
ith the harmonious restraint of Bramante and
aphael, whose thoughtful classicism was sub-
quently dramatized by Michelangelo and Giulio
omano, whose flagrant originality Palladio was
ɔle to civilize and domesticate without oc-
uding its theatricality or falling back into clas-
cal mimicry. In doing so (and by being there to
ɔ it in the right place at the right time), Palla-
io was able to synthesize the classical idioms of
is predecessors, the fashionable tastes of his
enetian clients, and the unforgiving prerequi-
tes of rural domestic housing into the first tru-
modern, indigenous Italian architecture.





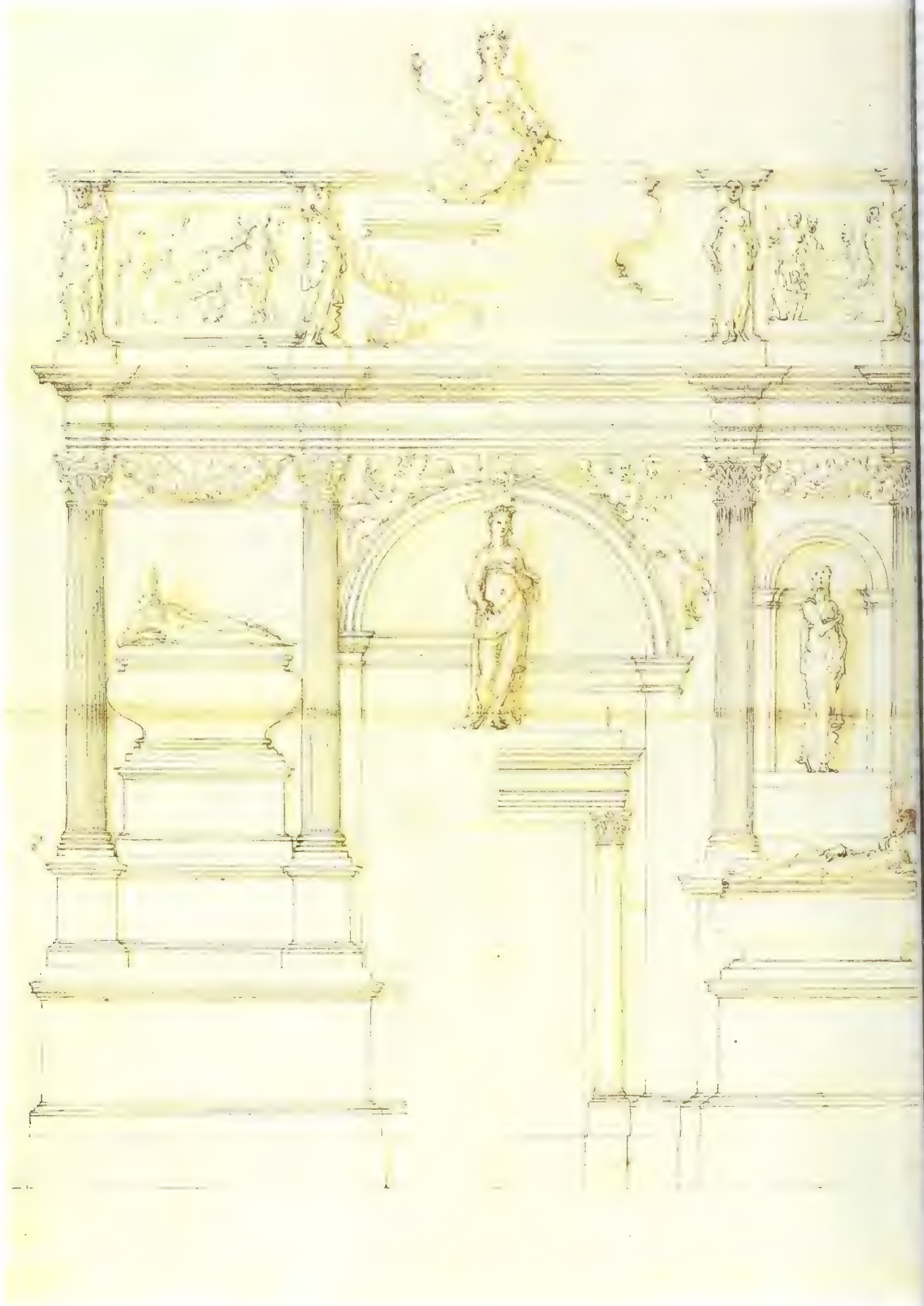




DALLADIO'S progress toward this achievement began in 1537, when the Pedemuro workshop received a commission to remodel a house in Cricoli, just outside Vicenza's orthern city gate. The house was owned by the fty-nine-year-old scion of Vicenza's oldest family, Count Giangiorgio Trissino, who for many years had been a resident of Rome. At this time in his life, Count Trissino was the very model of a Renaissance intellectual, a restlessly cosmopolitan scholar, poet, and amateur architect who moved in the highest circles and counted dangerous divas like Lucrezia Borgia and autocratic patrons like Isabella d'Este among his confidantes. Trissino was no snob, however. He was, in every sense, an articulate meritocrat who since his return from Rome had become a passionate booster of his own hometown. It was in aid of this boosting that the house in Cricoli was being stripped of its outré Gothic accoutrements and redesigned in the *all'antica* style to serve as the site for an academy that would bring progressive Roman culture to the provincial Veneto.

Legend has it that Count Trissino met Andrea di Pietro on the building site at Cricoli. There is no documented evidence for this, but it is a reasonable supposition. Rybczynski asks the apposite question: "Where else would a count meet a stone-mason?" In any case, the two did meet, and they formed a close relationship. According to Palladio's friend and biographer, Paolo Gualdo, who was a canon of the Cathedral of Padua, Trissino found Andrea di Pietro to be "a

hotographs of interior frescoes at the Villa Poiana (details)



ung man of very spirited character and with a
eat aptitude for science and mathematics." An-
ea di Pietro found in Trissino an egalitarian
tron who encouraged his natural abilities,
ined him in the precepts of Vitruvius, and in-
oduced him to the world outside Vicenza. In
41 and again in 1545, Trissino took Andrea to
me, where the fledgling architect made the
easurements and drawings that in the years
nce would establish his scholarly fame. It is in
eping with the theatrical nature of Palladio's
e, however, that the first trip patron and pro-
gé took together, in 1538, was to the only oth-
city Andrea di Pietro had ever known, to Pad-
a, the city of his birth, the setting of his
neventful youth, and the site of his original ap-
enticeship to a local stonemason.

Andrea returned with Trissino, however, to a
dua he had never known, to the intellectual seat
the Venetian republic. There he met four uni-
ersity students from Venice, Vettor Pisani,
aniele Barbaro, Giorgio Cornaro, and Pietro
odi, all of whose families commissioned villas
om Andrea Palladio, once the fashionable ar-
itect had been invented. Andrea also met two
his esteemed future colleagues, Sebastiano Ser-
o and Michele Sanmicheli (who happened to be
distant relative of Palladio's employer, Giovan-
i Porlezza). Serlio and Sanmicheli were promi-
ent architects in the *all'antica* style, and, like
rissino, they had abandoned
ome after the sack. Neither was
nguishing in exile, however. The
enetian republic employed San-
icheli, and Serlio was writing—
e old man had just published the
rst volume of his *Tutte l'opere d'ar-
hitettura et prospetiva*. Today many
cholars credit Serlio with teaching
Andrea di Pietro the principles of
rchitectural drawing, and, true or
ot, we know that Serlio taught the young man
omething. The tripartite arch-and-wing window
hat the older architect designed, the *serliana*, is
ow referred to as a Palladian window.

After their return from Padua, it became in-
reasingly clear that Count Giangiorgio Trissino
ad more or less elected Andrea di Pietro to be
he first great native architect of Vicenza. Two
ears later, Andrea began signing himself Palla-
lio, a name with deep personal significance for his
atron. During this period, the count was writing
Homeric epic, *l'Italia liberata dai Goti*, recount-
ng two campaigns waged by the Roman gener-
l Belisarius against the Ostrogoths in sixth-
entury Italy. At one point in Trissino's narrative,
n architecturally trained angel named Palladio
uides the heroes through a splendid palace em-
lematic of Italy's Goth-free past and future.
Trissino, of course, had named the angel Palladio
after Pallas Athene, the Greek goddess of embodied wisdom, wit, and skills of craft, and by taking his own name from Trissino's angel and Athene, Andrea Palladio claimed their dual inheritance. His relationship to these adopted spirits was the same relationship he would design into the Villa Poiana, between the Poiana family and their guardian gods and muses, so there is every reason to believe that Palladio took the mandate of his adoptive namesakes very seriously. He would, after all, spend the rest of his life liberating Italy from the Goths.

PALLADIO today is acknowledged to be the most influential and imitated architect in the history of Western civilization, and his great treatise, *I quattro libri dell'architettura* (1570), ranks along with the Bible, Shakespeare's plays, and Caesar's commentaries as one of the indispensable texts that accompanied the entrepreneurs and adventurers who constituted the leading edge of its European and American expansion. The human resources out of which this achievement was fashioned, however, still remain elusive. The tone and temper of Palladio's life and work are so fluidly continuous with each other, and with the world in which he lived and worked, as to deny him any clear silhouette. Like his great admirer Goethe, he seems to have embodied the virtues of his time so perfectly that he disappears into them, and, even today, his influence, like Shakespeare's, is so pervasive that he seems one of us, only better (or we one of him, only worse).



This has always been the case. Paolo Gualdo assures us that Palladio invariably "gave the most intense pleasure to the Gentlemen and Lords with whom he dealt," that he also kept his workmen

> constantly cheerful, treating them with so many pleasant attentions that they all worked with the most exceptional good cheer. He eagerly and lovingly taught them the best principles of the art, in such a way that there was not a mason, stonecutter, or carpenter, who did not understand the measurements, elements, and rules of true architecture.

Even artist and biographer Giorgio Vasari, who was instinctively competitive and far from an

Design for the inside wall of the facade of the Church of San Francesco della Vigna with the Grimani
uneral monuments (opposite) and capitals (details, above), by Andrea Palladio © City Museum of Vicenza

[illegible] and Palladio to possess "such an inv[illegible] and gentle nature that it makes him beloved of everyone." The people of Venice, who were, if anything, an even harder sell, rewarded him with a satirical encomium of the sort one bestows upon a beloved but eccentric uncle:

> *Palladio does not visit prostitutes for any bad reason*
> *And even if now and again he does visit them,*
> *He does it in order to urge them to build*
> *An ancient atrium in the middle of the brothel district.*

So what do you do with a great artist whose talent and intelligence no one ever thought to doubt, whose secret intentions no one ever thought to question—who seems to have been, in fact, the very incarnation of charm? Well, first, you don't doubt it. Palladio, clearly, was a cool guy, and charm is the one unfailing resource of artists who function in the social sphere, the mystic talisman of entertainers and architects, of portraitists and fashion designers—of all those, in fact, who, like Palladio, have risen in the world. Charm defends these spirits by investing its recipients with a giddy sense of well-being that makes even the most casual curiosity about its sources seem de trop. Who, after all, in his or her right mind, would presume to cavil at Cary Grant's *pedigree*? Or Elsa Schiaparelli's *motives*? Or John Singer Sargent's *morality*? Charm is the last, single, solid, impervious shield against these vices of modernity, and in Palladio's case, since charm is a virtue almost universally ascribed to his buildings, there is every reason to believe that his was genuine.



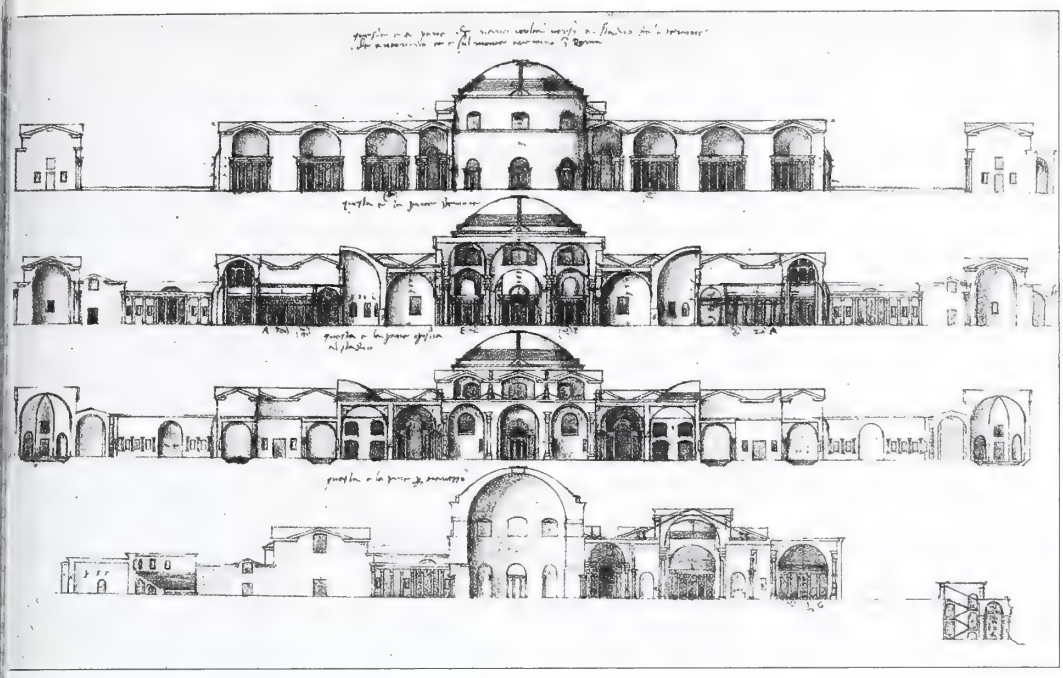


Yet only the most bourgeois paterfamilias would try to pass off Palladio's life as a fairy tale. Architects in the sixteenth century were greatly admired, assiduously courted, and elegantly entertained, but they were paid by the drawing and only occasionally honored with a casual gratuity by their all-too-forgetful clientele. Sometimes, if they were exceptionally politic and lucky, professional architects were placed on municipal retainer, and, at the age of forty, Palladio himself w[illegible] so retained by the city of Vicenza, but Vicenz[illegible] a small city and the retainer was proportiona[illegible]ly modest. As a consequence, Palladio's fa[illegible] even at its apogee, never translated into financ[illegible] security or genuine social advancement. Fro[illegible] the age of thirteen, when he began carving sto[illegible] in Padua, until the age of seventy-one, when [illegible] died on a construction site at Maser, Andrea P[illegible]ladio worked, and, as his friend Giambattista M[illegible]ganza remarked, "What he earned he spent."

That is the whole story. Palladio carved, carri[illegible] studied, wrote, drew, designed, built, and di[illegible] He sailed like a steady ship of industry through t[illegible] tempest of vanity, vendetta, and violence th[illegible] ravaged his times, producing tangible things th[illegible] people valued, preserved, and passed along to pe[illegible]ple who valued them, preserved them, and pass[illegible] them along in turn. Today, amazingly, more th[illegible] three hundred of Palladio's working drawings s[illegible] vive along with all of his written works. His boo[illegible] include two illustrated tour guides to the antiq[illegible] and Christian architecture of Rome; an Itali[illegible] edition of Vitruvius upon which he collaborat[illegible] with his friend and patron Daniele Barbaro; [illegible] Italian edition of *Caesar's Commentaries* that [illegible] produced with his sons and for which he provi[illegible]ed drawings based on Caesar's architectural d[illegible] scriptions; and finally, most importantly, his ma[illegible] terpiece of practical lucidity, *I quattro lib[illegible] dell'architettura*, which has been recently repu[illegible] lished in an equally lucid English translation [illegible] Robert Tavernor and Richard Schofield.

Of Palladio's own buildings, the vast majori[illegible] of his palazzi, basilicas, th[illegible] aters, and churches were bui[illegible] of stone in Vicenza an[illegible] Venice. They were designe[illegible] to survive, and most of ther[illegible] do. In addition to these, Pa[illegible] ladio designed thirty agr[illegible] cultural villas to be con[illegible] structed of timber, brick, an[illegible] stucco with stone accessorie[illegible] Construction was initiate[illegible] on twenty-eight of these vil[illegible] las. Twenty-four were com[illegible] pleted, and today, 466 year[illegible] after ground was first broker[illegible] seventeen of these ephemer[illegible] ally constructed farmhouse[illegible] survive intact and mostly restored, tucked away i[illegible] the Italian countryside. These buildings consti[illegible] tute the jewels in Palladio's crown, and Rybczyn[illegible] ski's book, which recounts his own recent tour o[illegible] these extant buildings, will doubtless serve as a[illegible] amiable and knowledgeable companion for futur[illegible] pilgrims in search of them, providing the visito[illegible] an evenhanded historical introduction to Palla[illegible] dio and a thoughtful meditation on the exten[illegible]

[illegible] Vicenza, by Canaletto. Courtesy of the Art Resource, New York City (left). Drawing of the [illegible] Andrea Palladio from *The Four Books on Architecture*. MIT Press, 2002 edition (right).



ıd sheer complexity of the architect's continu-
g presence in the cultural atmosphere.



HE CENTRAL and overarching reason for Palladio's continuing presence is perhaps too overarching for Rybczynski's purposes, but it is worth mentioning here that alladio survives today in the way that he does be-ause works of architecture are *not works of art*. Vorks of art are wild cards in the hand that cul-ure deals us. Their function is indeterminate ntil the hand is dealt, and, as a consequence, art makes and re-forms itself through a friction-ss process of addition or subtraction in which ach maneuver has equal weight—in which each, some degree, aspires to alter the function of the ork. Thus, there is a world of difference be-ween suppressing the painterly mark, as Roy ichtenstein does in his paintings, and suppress-ng the windowsills and stair banisters in a pub-c building. For better or worse, works of archi-ecture are not so protean. They are face cards in hat mythical cultural hand. They may be kings r knaves, according to your taste; they may be ubject to the whims of fashion and driven by he exigencies of climate and technology; but heir function does not change.

Palladio's parameters of "convenience, dura-ility and beauty" still apply, and the practice of rchitecture changes within their narrow win-low of forgiveness. Subtraction in architecture nvariably suppresses something essential or once onsidered to be; any addition not justifiable un-ler the rubric of convenience, durability, or beau-y is extrinsic by definition. Because of this, any successful work of architecture is mightily predisposed to remain so, as Palladio's do. They survive in our practical imagination as repositories of cultural options in a way that Michelangelo's sculpture and Raphael's painting do not. A painter, after all, may admire Raphael and a sculptor revere Michelangelo without confronting the challenge of their mastery on a daily basis. No architect can stand in a Palladian space without feeling the live challenge of its effortless grace.

That challenge remains, so Palladio is still here, and he is more here than any other historical architect, because, for good or ill, Palladio has always had the compromised benefit of being the first great scholarly authority on his own buildings and their first great popularizer. His reputation has always derived in equal parts from the conceptual elegance of his *quattro libri*, from the portable and practical applicability of that book, and from the mysterious eloquence of the buildings themselves. So there have always been at least three Palladios, and I would say four. There is Palladio the meticulous scholar of antique architectural practice, Palladio the scourge of Gothic excess and quiet poet of Renaissance classicism, and Palladio the pedagogue who taught the West how to build things beautifully and well.

Palladio the pedagogue, however, has had two distinct strains of influence. Most prominently and visibly, there is the willfully charmless Imperial Palladio whose influence is manifest in gray stone edifices strewn across the length and breadth of England, Scotland, and the northeastern United States. Devotees and followers of this Palladio, enraptured by imperial ambition, picked up the *quattro libri* as a lens through which they might

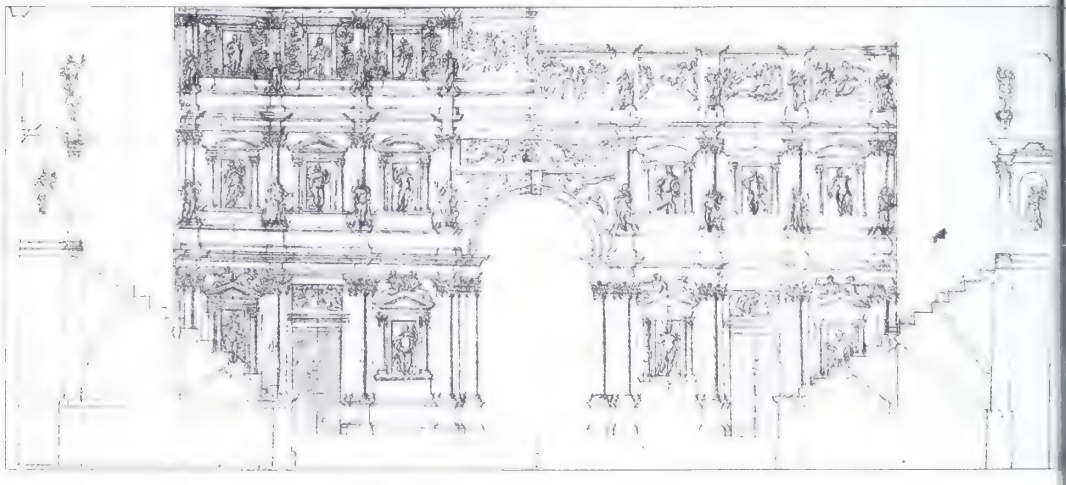
Drawing of reconstructed facades and sections of the Baths of Caracalla, Rome,
y Andrea Palladio © RIBA Library Drawings Collection, London

glimpse the lost grandeur of Augustan Rome. The Republican Palladio, whose influence we feel in Dublin and the southern United States, is another creature altogether. His influence survives more modestly in wooden, brick, and plaster buildings that grace small cities and the landscapes of temperate farmland. This is the Palladio of Thomas Jefferson, who saw himself in the citizen-architect of republican Venice, looking back through the lens of Vitruvius toward the chaste virtues of the Roman republic. The Imperial Palladio survives because stone does. The buildings that owe their existence to the more ephemeral, Republican Palladio (like republics themselves) require perpetual restoration and, amazingly, tend to receive it.

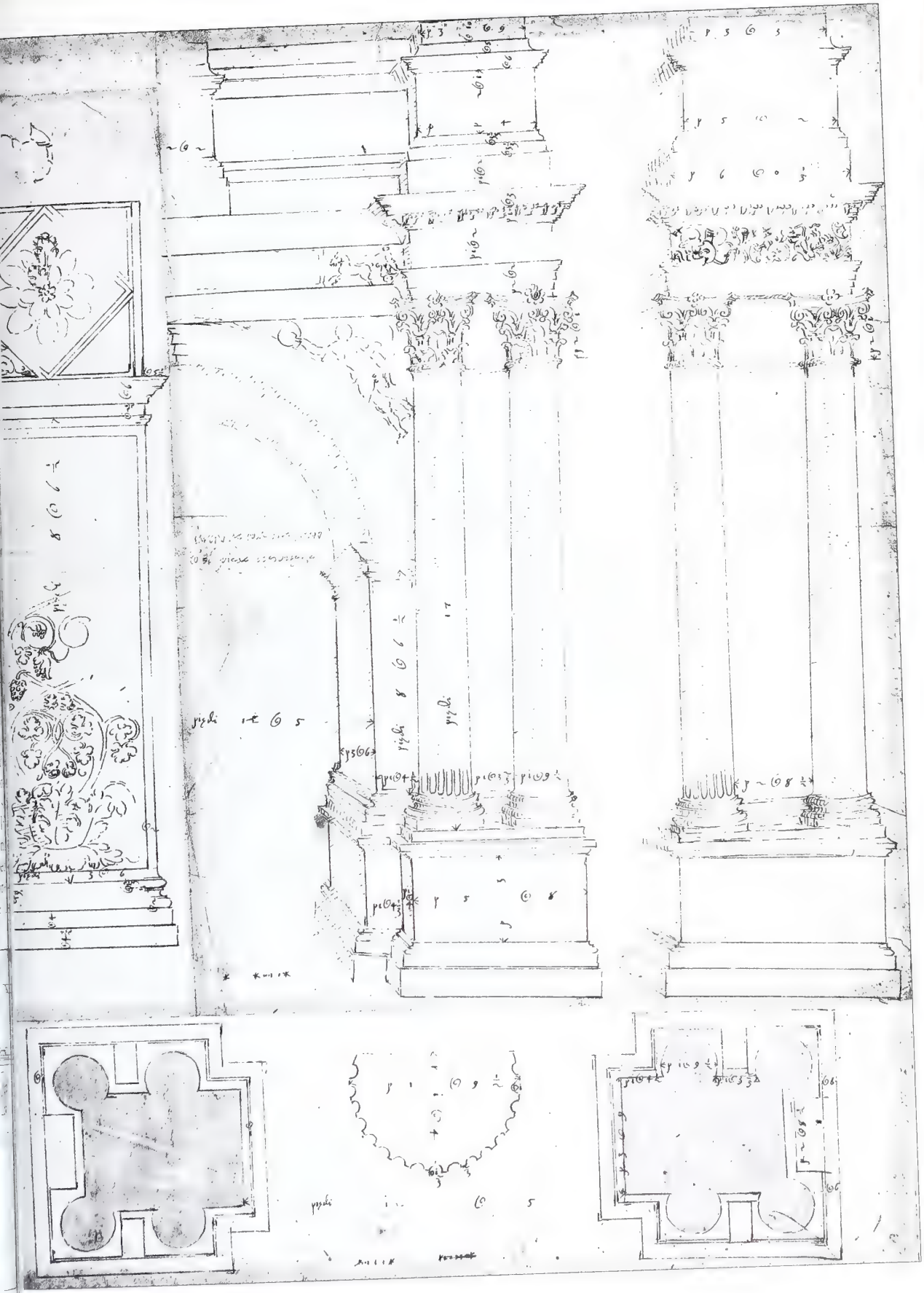
IN THE present cultural moment, however, there is Palladio's theory and there is Palladio's practice—his books and his buildings—and the constituencies of each are so distinct that there may well be no single, living Palladian who, in his or her heart of hearts, loves both with equal ardor. This schism is a defect of contemporary culture and not of Palladio, but it is no less real for being so. Scholars and theorists love the *quattro libri*, which are all history, design, concept, rigor, and process. Belletrists and closeted architects love the buildings, which never quite conform to their own conceptual schemata and invariably present themselves as symphonies of nuance and detail, of angled light, shifting texture, and palpable atmosphere. Scholars, who count what needs to be accounted for, wonder, as the noted architectural scholar Deborah Howard does, "what, if anything, remains to be said about Palladio." Critics, who write what they must when pleasantly surprised, continue to write and even surprise themselves. As Goethe confides to his journal, "The funniest thing is the way I expound all this . . . because when you're full of a thing, you can't stop talking about it, and you keep looking for some new angle tr which to show how wonderful it is."

So Palladio's buildings survive in living me ory while Palladio's book lives on as a concep al artifact in other books, and, needless to there is a healthy constituency of contempor scholars who would have Palladio's buildings s as conceptual artifacts as well. They argue (P ladio to the contrary) that the villas were ne intended to be "real" farmhouses with functi al attic-granaries and usable stables but rat genteel "ceremonial" farmhouses—faux temp with symbolic stables and vestigial granaries. T traditional distance of aristocratic life from co merce, they argue, would have precluded act grain in the attic or live horses right next do and even if it didn't, horses smell bad, and gr makes dust and attracts mice. The practical b efit of this argument for theorists is this: if Pal dio's villas are, in fact, "symbolic" farmhous they may be said to house the "idea" of farmi as contemporary museums house the "idea" of and court buildings house the "idea" of justice. Th by disdaining to shelter grain and animals, t villas may qualify as serious, canonical "critic architecture" by contemporary standards.

There are three problems with these arg ments, I think. First, they ignore the historical l ic that underpins building farmhouses as Rom temples. In Roman religion, augurs traditiona stood within a rectangular site called a templu where, facing south, they would read the signs weather and wildlife to predict the future. Far ers do the same, and the practice of augury alwa declared its roots in the ancient agrarian life of t Italian peninsula. Temples, of course, were co structed on particularly auspicious templa, nothing could be more correctly or sel consciously *all'antica* than building a Roman te ple as a farmhouse and closing this circle. The se ond problem with these arguments is their pr sumption that sixteenth-century *nobili* were



Drawings of interior facade projects for the stage of the Teatro Olimpico, Vicen (this page), and plan and elevation details of the Arch of the Sergii, Pol (opposite), by Andrea Palladio © RIBA Library Drawings Collection, Londo



[illegible] contemporary architects are. This leads to the doubtful conjecture that a commercial farmer, because of his lineage and the dust, would expose a cash crop to theft and the elements in a temporary structure while a secure, elevated, aerated granary waited readily at hand. Finally, and most egregiously, these arguments imply that horses smell bad. As the child of a family no less enamored of the horse than your average, galloping Venetian aristo, I must insist that, for horse people, *nothing* about a horse smells bad.

Having offered the caveats, however, I must also observe that if the advocates of Palladio's buildings as conceptual artifacts press the envelope a little, advocates of the buildings as magical objects do no less. First-person accounts of Palladio's buildings are redolent with the cozy patois of *sensibilité* and connoisseurship. The villas are found to be "enchanting." They "cast a spell" and "hypnotize." Rybczynski finds them to be at once "sophisticated and rustic, genteel and rude, cosmopolitan and vernacular," and Goethe is awestruck by the authority of their physical presence. "You have to see these buildings with your own eyes to realize how good they are," he writes. "No reproductions of Palladio's designs give an adequate idea of the harmony of their dimensions; they must be seen in their actual perspective."



Which is all a bit much, as well, though my sympathies are with Goethe, at least, in his insistence on the importance of being there. Even turbulent spirits like myself, predisposed to sneer at the very idea of "perfection" or "mastery," must ultimately acquiesce to the body's assurance that what Fred Astaire is to savoir faire, what Lou Reed is to resentful pettiness, Palladio is to graceful equanimity. He worked in an age that imagined aesthetics to be the science of happiness, and if a perfect house may be described as a domestic structure in which one feels more charmed, amazed, and blessedly at ease than human beings have any right to be, two or three of Palladio's villas must qualify. This, however, in no way mitigates the fact that the longer one lingers in Palladio's buildings the clearer it becomes that Palladio was not, in fact, distinct creatures, and is much less interesting for being treated that way.

Considered separately, neither Palladio [illegible] master of conceptual artifacts nor Palladio [illegible] poet of incarnate practice is all that persuasi[illegible] Palladio is a great designer and a master build[illegible] but the poetry of his buildings is far from u[illegible] formly inspired and the abstract underpinnin[illegible] his practice is always more metaphorical th[illegible] metaphysical, more conventional than conc[illegible] tual. Basically, Palladio had a general idea. Fr[illegible] left to right, inside and out, bottom to top, [illegible] seen from above, Palladio's villas aspire to prese[illegible] themselves as extensions of the human bo[illegible] Seen from the front or back, they mimic t[illegible] body's left-right symmetry. Inside and out, th[illegible] express the courtly me[illegible] phor of outward decor[illegible] and inner grace. Bott[illegible] to top, the buildings [illegible] cend in decreasing inc[illegible] ments that allude to t[illegible] legs, torso, and head. C[illegible] casionally, this bodi[illegible] metaphor is overlaid b[illegible] cultural metaphor as we[illegible] so the buildings rise fr[illegible] rustication at the base [illegible] refinement at the top.

Seen from the side, t[illegible] buildings are boring, wi[illegible] the obvious exception [illegible] Villa Rotunda, which [illegible] all fronts and suggests [illegible] us that Palladio reco[illegible] nized this problem. See[illegible] from above, the footpri[illegible] of a typical Palladian v[illegible] la, like a human bein[illegible] has directionality. Wh[illegible] extends in the front is recessed in the back, or vi[illegible] versa, so the building's footprint, essentially, is ju[illegible] a stretched facade. The front is projected direc[illegible] ly onto the back, so that the prospect of the buil[illegible] ing from behind reverses the pattern of its fron[illegible] All of these strategies are effective, of cours[illegible] and in some sense original, since there was n[illegible] strong tradition of freestanding domestic buil[illegible] ings in the Renaissance, but they are not rock[illegible] science, and it is hard to imagine them impres[illegible] ing us today were it not for Palladio's preterna[illegible] ural gift for intimate grandeur, because, most cri[illegible] ically, the man knew scale. He knew how b[illegible] was too big, how high was too high, and ho[illegible] wide was too wide. He understood that human be[illegible] ings feel the space they inhabit as an extensio[illegible] of themselves and that as the space expands s[illegible] does their sense of proprietorship. The larger th[illegible] space grows, the larger we feel, until, suddenly[illegible] with that last anxious inch, we feel small as ou[illegible] presence is dwarfed by the enclosure. Palladi[illegible] invariably expands his spaces to the warm inne[illegible]

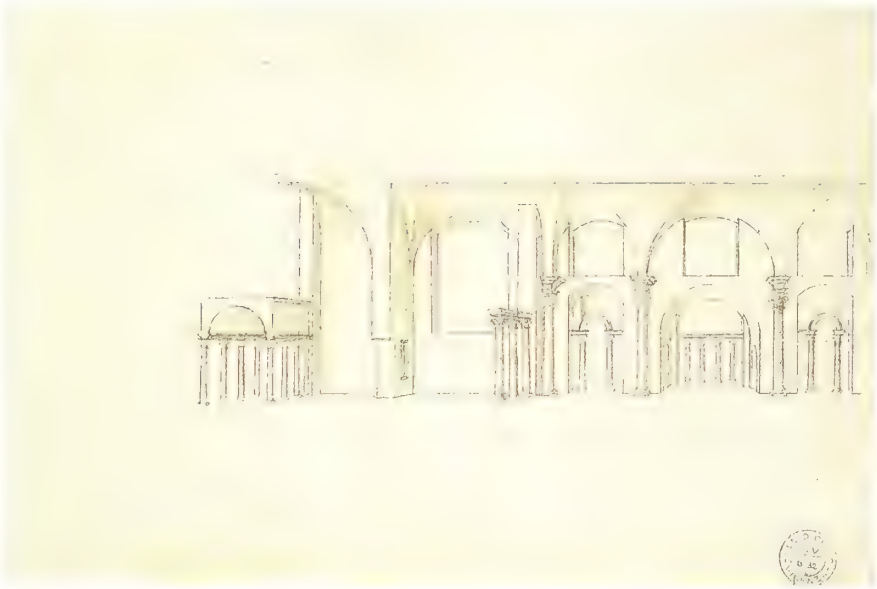
Sketch study after Parmigianino's *Pro*[illegible] and Michelangelo's *Last Judgment* by or aft[illegible] Battista Franco, credited to Andrea Palladio © RIBA Library Drawings Collection, Londo[illegible]

e of this fail-safe dimension, and, feeling this, are charmed by his making us larger and love not making us small.

THIS is no small gift, of course, but it is the gift of theory in practice and not of one or the other. By dividing Palladio we deny ourselves access to this transitional territory, i we usually do so through a logical process that s like this: First, the buildings astonish us. en we presume that the simple, workmanlike se of the *quattro libri*—which is perfectly appriate for the "how-to book" it is—reflects true temper of Palladio's actual personality. en we presume further that, having laid out the ıple precepts of building in prose accessible to amateur, Palladio had told us everything that knew about architecture. *Then*, thinking again he buildings and their sheer richness, we can't help but see Palladio as a Disney character, a fairy-tale stone carver/pedant-savant. This aracterization has the practical effect of flating our knowledgeable insights into his buildgs, but we might be better off, I think, or at least well off, if we presume that Palladio knew exly who he was and exactly what he was doing. We might assume that Palladio was, in fact, the rson who seems to have built his own buildings: at he was a cosmopolitan professional architect ıo came from nowhere to run with a fast crowd, at he brought with him from the stone yard a l measure of physical confidence, streetwise arm, and a shrewd outsider's insight into the bles of the gentry. Imagining this Palladio (who no more fictional than the pedant-savant and ore congenial to the sixteenth century), we njure up an ambitious professional of the artin classes, who, spurred by interest and aspiration, acquired scholarly understanding of anque architecture and a vast pository of proprietary knowlge about contemporary buildg and design. In doing this, e conjure a live spirit in the orld who must have been perctly delighted to adapt this nowledge and discipline, with nusement and élan, to the andiose aspirations of his privged and rapacious clientele.

This is a Palladio who makes nse, I think, a Palladio possed of what we used to call That Dean Martin Thing"—ıe magical ability to play the ole and sing the song while eftly communicating that as ovely and powerful as the role and the song might be, the role is just a role, the song is just a song, and the singer is no Orpheus, just another tradesman lively at his work. This trick, which is not really a trick at all but the attribute of a generous personality, explains why Palladio's buildings are never quite as intimidating as their clients might have wished them to be—why their aspirations to exquisite grandeur always bear with them the glimmer of a smile. This worldly Palladio seems to have grasped the fact that in his own time, thanks to the example of his predecessors, the gap between what was Roman and what was Italian had collapsed and that a good deal of theatrical panache was required to parade around in an architectural toga, especially in Venice.

This aura of sweet self-consciousness is, for me, the key to Palladio's charm. Viewed in its light, the distance we instinctively feel between the exquisite form of his buildings and their quotidian functions seems less critical or ironic than joyfully self-aware. This Palladio befriends us, shows us his hand, and rescues his buildings from the vice of pretension by the simple stratagem of not pretending. Because, unlike most of his predecessors and contemporaries, Palladio is never impersonating classical architecture, he is *performing* it, as Glenn Gould performs Bach, as Dean Martin performs "Volare," with a high heart, a generous wit, and unfailing aplomb—and, being Palladio, he arrived on the scene at exactly the moment when such a performance could best be appreciated. It is reassuring, then, that it still can be appreciated, since the real benison of Palladio's performances is the goodnatured permission they grant us to take the stage he has provided and perform with commensurate self-conscious elegance. ■



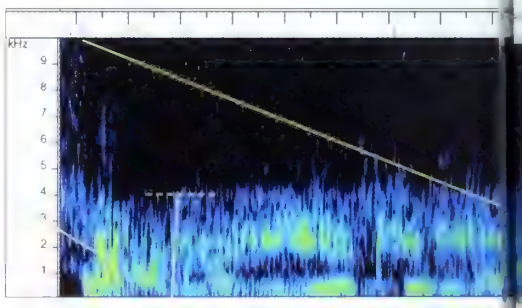
rawing of the Baths of Caracalla, by Andrea Palladio © City Museum of Vicenza

SPEAK O

Is Osama bin Laden alive? L

In February, the debate over war with Iraq was joined by an unexpected voice. Allegedly that of Osama bin Laden, its exhortations to "mujahedeen brothers in Iraq," broadcast on the Al-Jazeera satellite channel, were immediately invoked by the United States and Britain as iron-clad evidence of an Iraq–Al Qaeda link. That no one disputed the tape's veracity owed largely to events last November, when, after a similarly muddy broadcast had broken eleven months of silence from Bin Laden, word leaked that the National Security Agency's software had matched the voice to earlier recordings of the terrorist leader. "They can't get to 100 percent certainty, but they're sure he's alive," one source told Fox News, adding that the NSA's technology was nearly flawless. When the tape was analyzed by the Swiss speech-research institute IDIAP, however, its own software deemed the speaker an impostor. This graph, generated by IDIAP from the tape in question, may very well depict Bin Laden's voice. But the tape, and forensic audio analysis itself, are both so riddled with uncertainty as to suggest that our government's rapid verdicts may be driven less by science than by politics.

Here the voice's frequency and intensity are plotted over time, on a spectrogram; the former is represented by the wave's height, the latter by its color shifts. Forensic speaker identification, which is admissible as legal evidence in thirty-five states, assumes that no two human voices are alike, determined as they are by the dimensions of vocal cords, lips, teeth, and jaw muscles; the odds of two non-twins possessing identical physiological equipment are remote. This theory, although seemingly logical, has never been subjected to peer-reviewed scrutiny. What is known for sure is that the human voice varies significantly from day to day, even from minute to minute, due to stress, sickness, or even diet. Voice analysts insist that such variation can be accounted for, and that mimics cannot fool an experienced practitioner. But the error rate of forensic audio analysis remains uncertain, ranging in various studies from less than 1 percent to as high as 44 percent.

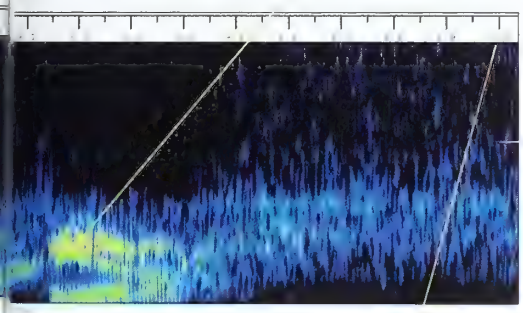


The sound waves produced by human speech typically vibrate at frequencies ranging upwards of 8,000 hertz. This Bin Laden sample, however, peters out well below the 4,000 Hz mark. The limited frequency indicates that the tape not only is a second- or third-generation duplicate but was also likely transmitted at some point via telephone—a suspicion borne out by the failure of Pakistani police to trace the tape's original source, despite arresting and interrogating at least a dozen people involved in the delivery. Phone lines act as "low-pass filters," lopping off vital forensic information and presenting analysts with only part of the sonic picture. Given the overall degradation of this recording, it is highly doubtful that a forensic scientist would offer a legal opinion as to the speaker's identity. As the Swiss researchers remarked in their report, "When addressing a problem with a scientific perspective (as opposed to a political approach), one has to be ready to also accept the uncertainty of the results."

E DEVIL

tape, *by Brendan I. Koerner*

The yellower the patch, the greater the sound's intensity, or volume. This clump may represent one of the guttural "formants," or vowel sounds, unique to Bin Laden's measured Arabic tenor. On the other hand, it may have been adulterated beyond recognition by background noise, reverberation, or other audio mishaps. Automated systems such as those used by both the NSA and IDIAP are not built to sift through such sonic detritus. They are geared instead toward "biometric" tasks: e.g., voice-activated access, in which a speaker is asked to utter a password and the characteristics of his voice are compared with an audio clip on file. Both the password and the sample are captured in sedate, controlled surroundings, and by high-quality equipment; as a result, accurate identification rates of 95–98 percent are common. Such systems are not designed to analyze sounds from an uncontrolled, real-world situation; let alone those recorded in a desert cave, through a beat-up mike, onto a fifty-cent analog cassette, and then played over a phone line.



Low-energy striations like these represent ambient background signals, which once were largely inconsequential to the voice-identification process. In the past, analog editing could be detected by telltale pops and clicks, which are absent on digitally altered tapes. Today, however, the rise of digital-editing methods has made the doctoring of audio far more difficult to detect. A PC with $300 software can distort formants, mix in confusing environmental noise, or add subtle chorusing effects. Experienced engineers have always been able to doctor tapes undetected, and to assume that Al Qaeda lacks access to such talent would be to underestimate the organization's resources—again.

This entire chart, with all its complex and degraded data, represents just 2.2 seconds of audiotape, perhaps the duration of two or three words. To authenticate this tape, the NSA sought out snippets of past Bin Laden recordings to be matched up with each tiny segment of the tape—an elongated *ehhh* here, an abridged *ahhh* there. But too few suitable clips could be found. The analysts supplemented their tests by consulting people familiar with Bin Laden's classical Arabic; reportedly some Al Qaeda detainees were polled, though their candor seems suspect. One hopes that the analysts, having strayed that far into subjective opinion, also considered the contextual evidence *against* the tape's authenticity: for example, its uncharacteristic mentions of U.S. allies such as Canada and Germany, and of Donald Rumsfeld and Dick Cheney. Why, for that matter, did an intact Bin Laden remain silent for so long, and then reemerge in audio only? To declare him alive on the basis of this or any such tape would be to judge rashly, but then this would seem to be a common mistake in Washington of late.

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at the New America
ndation and a con-
uting editor of* Wired.


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AJAX IS ALL ABOUT ATTACK

By Jim Shepard

The acoustics of empty stadiums were very beautiful. When a single bird called out, you heard it from wherever you were. In the early morning, or after matches, when the lights were out and the sky was black, you heard the wind in the grass. In the Dutch leagues then, the stadium superstructures were skeletal and intimate. The advertising panels were like old friends and smelled of wet wood. The empty balconies overhung the stands, so that stray papers blown from above were snared by seat backs below.

When you took a ball out to the middle of the pitch and struck it once, the thump filled the entire space. The thump seized something in your chest.



My name is Velibor Vasovic, and for eleven years I played football, first for Partizan Belgrade and my national team, and then for Ajax. For eleven years I played for money, I should say; football I played my entire life. My brother played with his friends, and when I was old enough to stand I started joining in. I began in goal but could never stay there, and was always running after the ball and upsetting everyone and ruining the game, and eventually they made someone else goalie. We played every day. This was just after the war. When it rained we played in the cowshed. The cow stood in the rain and watched. Six or so kids in four square meters: you learned precise passing.

We played with anything that was round. Mostly tennis balls; one boy's family had an old box of tennis balls. You developed great technique trying to dribble tennis balls.

At the 1954 World Cup in Switzerland, in the group matches my brother played against the immortal Hungarians with their bright red shirts—Puskas, Kocsis, Hidegkuti—the team that had humiliated England 6–3 and 7–1 just months before.

"What was it like?" we asked upon his return. We had followed the match on the radio, but the announcer had been at a loss to describe what he was seeing. Crowded around the countertop of the local bar, we'd been informed that Kocsis had entered the penalty area, and stopped, and turned. Then God had been invoked, at a high volume. Followed by a tinny roar. So when my brother returned, one of the heroes of our 2–8 loss, it was as if we had and hadn't been there; as if we did and didn't know what brilliant football was truly like.

After the game he'd traded shirts with Puskas. He showed the shirt around the bar. It passed from person to person like Achilles' shield. An

Jim Shepard's new novel, Project X, *will be published by Knopf next year. His last story for* Harper's Magazine, *"Love and Hydrogen," appeared in the December 2001 issue.*

Photograph by Jacko Vassilev

ing it.

We had to ask my brother our questions many times. Everyone had his own theories as to the secret of the Hungarians' game. Was it their skills? Their tactics? Their size? Their speed? And what was it like in the West?

I thought about his answers when I first came to Amsterdam and saw Johan Cruyff play a thirty-yard cross on a dead run so that the trajectory bent away from the stunned goalie's attempt at a deflection. The ball dropped lightly in front of the right-winger's boot. The right-winger put it in the back of the net as though he'd just happened by. This was in 1966. Ajax's coach and club president both had seen me score our only goal in Partizan's loss to Real Madrid in that May's European Cup final. I was to be the rock around which Ajax would build its defense.

Understand: it was quite a change from Zagubica to Amsterdam in 1966. What was rebelliousness in Zagubica then? Old farmers fondling their donkeys in public. Civil disobedience was refusing to roll out of the lane once you fell over drunk. I arrived in Amsterdam soon after their Liberation Day and thought on the ride in from the airport that there'd been a coup. A revolution. An invasion from space. Thousands of young people were surging about the center of town, arm in arm, singing and shouting something. My interpreter, the Yugoslav wife of a Dutchman, explained that they were shouting, "We want our Bolletjes!" Bolletjes turned out to be a breakfast snack. It was an advertising slogan. Why were they shouting this? They were bored, she told me. Thousands of young people chanting this absurdity! Groups shouted it back and forth to one another. The police stood by, polite, their hands clasped in front of them.

We were imprisoned by the sheer numbers in a large plaza called the Leidseplein. My interpreter apologized for not having anticipated this but seemed serene about the delay. The taxi driver rested his forearms on the wheel and every so often shouted something good-naturedly to those who stood on his car's bonnet. When our taxi was stopped, young girls pressed their cheeks to my window glass as if the car were an infant relative. Atop a statue of a civic leader, a man dressed as a shaman performed antismoking rituals—he crushed packs of cigarettes, or put cigarettes in his mouth and then broke them and threw them away with wild gestures—while the crowd chanted, "Bram bram! Ugga ugga! Bram bram!"

What did "Bram bram! Ugga ugga!" mean? I wanted to know.

My interpreter shrugged. "Bram bram. Ugga ugga," she said.

She identified a small man atop a flagpole as Johnny the Selfkicker, who talked himself into a trance and threw himself from high places. Many of the people in white, she explained, were the Provos, anarchists who looked upon playfulness as the key to a better world.

"Playfulness," I repeated, and she answered, with some defensiveness, "Well, you needn't say it like *that*."

Understand: I am not political. Everywhere I've gone, people have nodded when those words have emerged from my mouth, as though they understood. And then they've gone right on with plebiscite this and student movement that. "Vasovic doesn't give a rat's ass about anything," Michels, Ajax's coach, used to say to the reporters and my teammates. It was his highest praise. He meant other than football.

My interpreter that day had been proud of her adopted country. Her face suggested that I was like a visit from a backward relative. She asked about my hometown: what was life like in those hills? It all seemed so wild and remote.

"That was a quiet shithole," I told her. "This is a noisy shithole."

The taxi driver asked her a question, and she answered with the word for "welcome" in my language. "Welcome," he said to me.

"He's speaking to you," my interpreter told me. I lit a cigarette. I don't like being scolded.

"This is a time of great change in Holland," she told me, as if that should affect my smoking.

"Is the currency stable?" I asked.

After that she gave up on me. After a few minutes of silence, the taxi driver made a remark, and she a
swered in a way that
dently made him sad.

Johan Cruyff *was* political. The s
day I was introduced to Dutch poli
I was introduced to Dutch football. I
between the club president and my
terpreter and watched an Ajax h
game against PSV Eindhoven. I dr
many beers. I noticed their left-win
a blank-faced beanpole with end
stamina. He ran for ninety minutes
looked at the end as if he could h
run to Maastricht and back. And he
with *purpose*: he continually set
Ajax's offense, flew down the w
touched off chaos in PSV's pen
area, created space for himself and
teammates. He was envisioning wh
geometries while his opponents scur
about like moles. He was a Pythag
in shorts. I was told he was ninete
Then I was told I needn't worry ab
him, because left wing was the posit
of the club's best player, who wa
playing at the moment. I started
leave. I told the interpreter, "Tell t
president that if they have anyone b
ter than this guy, they don't need m
They caught up to me halfway to t
exit and returned me to my seat. I n
with Cruyff after the game.

He had the same blank expressi
while he toweled off. His teamma
were showering. His towel was t
size of a facecloth. At that point t
players still had to wash their o
kits and provide their own tow
and shampoo.

I heard the interpreter mention P
tizan Belgrade. Cruyff nodded. He l
me back out to the pitch, intercept
a ball boy heading in with a net full
balls, and lined them up at the eig
teen-yard mark from the goal. The
were nine of them. The interpreter a
club president trailed along behind
making remarks that he chose not
answer. While I watched, he tuck
his hair behind his ears and struck ea
of the first five balls in line precis
against the crossbar. Then he stepp
away. In my street shoes, I did the sa
with the four that were left. Blan
faced Cruyff smiled, and the interpre
and club president burst into applau

When they stopped, Cruyff turn
his attention to the club presiden
They talked, and I felt the need f

re beer. The interpreter explained
t Johan was always agitating for
ıething.
What's he want?" I asked.
Oh, you know," she said, embar-
sed. "It's always something."
Cruyff spoke to her in a low voice.
ey looked at each other.
'He wants me to tell you what
y're talking about," she said miser-
y.
t turned out he was asking why of-
ials were insured on foreign trips
l players weren't. Why coaches got
al money and players didn't. She
med aware that this was a poor strat-
for attracting me to change teams.
had what he called his List of
ievances, she confided.
His willingness to be a pain in the
appealed to me. And only the
ıtch had a short transfer period in
ose years, so they were my ticket to
e West.
The club president knew that as
ll, so after sitting around a rented
om for three days, I signed a con-
ıct for half the sum for which I'd
en asking.
The Dutch carried on like the Ser-
on on the Mount, but their hearts
ere ledger books. Merchants squeezed
ch guilder while giving change. Does
make you nostalgic? my brother
ote. It makes me feel like I'm home,
wrote back.
He worked twelve-hour days on one
the recently consolidated collective
rms to the south. His career had been
estroyed by a clumsy tackle.
That first morning out on the prac-
ce pitch with the rest of Ajax, long-
aired boys nodded greetings and in-
uded me in their loosening-up drills.
he sun warmed the little canals and
ows in the distance. When the coach
rrived and blew his whistle, the long-
aired boys formed two lines and pro-
laimed their objective with a little
oem:

Open game, open game
You can't afford to neglect the wing.

ınd then went back to what they were
oing. A hand-printed translation was
rovided for me on an index card. I
vas introduced. Practice began.
Few remember that before Ajax be-
ame Ajax, Holland's football record in
nternationals had been the equal of

ARUNDHATI ROY, WRITER

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[illegible] of thirty minutes that first day to realize that what we'd collected was a group of people who *thought* about space. The ultra-aggressive football in which players switched positions and rained attacks from every angle was worked through and worked out on that pitch over the next three years. It was a collective. During rest breaks we all talked. We all listened. Suppose we tried this? What happened when we tried that? We started letting midfielders and defenders join in attacks, and saw the ways in which forwards would have to support such flexibility by flowing back to cover. Position shifting came easily and provided opponents, once we started playing matches, with a chaos of movement and change with which to deal. The first Dutch word I really learned to speak was "switch."

We built our moves from the back; the goalkeeper only rarely kicked the ball long, instead clearing it to our defenders, and the team moved in set and improvisational patterns from there: if someone came back for a pass, someone else broke downfield. In possession we made the pitch as large as possible, spreading play to the wings and seeing everything as a way to increase and exploit space. If we lost the ball, the same thinking was used in reverse. We talked about space in a practical way. How could you play for ninety minutes and remain strong? If you were the left back and you ran seventy meters up the wing, it wasn't so good if you then had to run back to your starting position. If the midfielder took your place, it shortened the distances. Even then I could see that it was very Dutch to look for the simple solution. And to find the biggest thrill in the even simpler solution.

Cruyff was the genius at this. Good players always found ways of receiving the ball in space, but Cruyff *while playing* saw where *everyone* should be, or go. He was three moves ahead, and the moves were all about shaping space. From above—from up in the press box—it was a lesson in architecture.

When we spaced ourselves properly, it suddenly became very quiet. No noise. You heard only the wind. And the ball: the sound it made on the foot, the sound that made clear where it was going, how hard, how low, and how fast.

Suddenly football was not about kicking one another's legs anymore. Fans at our matches came away feeling they'd seen something they could see nowhere else on earth. *You guys really have something going*, my brother wrote back, after I wrote him about what was happening.

My parents: *they* were political. Their Partisan unit during the war had both an antitank rifle and a mimeograph machine, and my mother had lost two frostbitten fingers dragging it over some ridgelines in heavy snow to keep it from German hands. God forbid. The whole tide might have turned. They each produced for me a wry little smile when I came home, a wildly excited seventeen-year-old, to announce I'd be playing for Belgrade. I hadn't understood why until I realized that they were smiling at the PARTIZAN on my shirt.

When I was ten, I asked to be included in the confirmation classes that my uncle, a pastor, was going to conduct for my brother and two cousins. I think I believed that that, at last, would make me a part of the family, or at least a part of a common cause. My uncle agreed to interview me, to measure my suitability. The interview was held in the presence of my grandmother. I failed to answer a single question. My collapse caused my uncle and brother considerable amusement, and my grandmother none at all.

When the Germans came, my parents enlisted in the first Slovene brigade to be named after a poet, in their case, Cankar. ("The people will write their destiny alone/Without tuxedos, or the beads of priests.") They fought illiteracy by giving begging children pencils and paper instead of money or candy. They disseminated periodicals like "Death to Death!" and "Today's Woman." They lectured on the relation between spontaneity and ideology. They used doors for blackboards. They stayed frozen and hungry. They stopped at doorways from Stajerska to Koruska and sang the old Slovene songs to pry some bread out of the shuttered homesteads. Sometimes they were allowed to sleep in the barn.

My grandmother was my moth[illegible] mother. Her father had been a mi[illegible] railway official and had died of typh[illegible] Her mother had been widowed w[illegible] six children, my grandmother the [illegible] of the six. By the time I knew her, [illegible] had her little bit of jam each morn[illegible] in a spoon that had to be cleaned j[illegible] so the night before.

She described her son-in-law[illegible] someone with a good memory but[illegible] depth. Our father always smi[illegible] when she said so. It was hard for[illegible] to imagine him as having shot G[illegible] mans. He was pleasant and gentle[illegible] not always direct.

Before the war, he'd worked l[illegible] into the night, under a feeble lamp[illegible] enable imprisoned comrades to m[illegible] over the most recent literature and p[illegible] pare themselves for the battle outsi[illegible] My mother had made lists and tea a[illegible] helped him with the phrasing. Th[illegible] saw themselves as in battle with t[illegible] medieval darkness and fury in the so[illegible] of our backward peasants. They b[illegible] lieved the Party and the moveme[illegible] were very special, and that people wi[illegible] in the Party and the movement w[illegible] very special. They were convinced th[illegible] they had a scientific ideology. Mise[illegible] and despair were all around them, a[illegible] the more unbearable life became, t[illegible] closer they were to the new world. I[illegible] plementing decisions was not sufficie[illegible] Anyone could do that. They had [illegible] transform themselves so that at a[illegible] time all of their actions could be me[illegible] sured in terms of the interests of t[illegible] revolution. The role of history's [illegible] servers had seemed undignified on[illegible] history had pointed the way [illegible] final freedom and broth[illegible] hood among men.

A person about to leave pris[illegible] suddenly becomes loved by everyor[illegible] And he feels the same about those [illegible] is leaving behind. Quarrels and h[illegible] treds are forgotten and forgiven, a[illegible] he says goodbye warmly and direct[illegible] as if nothing had ever happened.

The night before my departure f[illegible] the West I wept and waited for t[illegible] dawn. While I made tea and watch[illegible] the sun rise, my mother and fath[illegible] brought my belongings—a suit and [illegible] few other things, packed and creas[illegible]

d smelling of mothballs—to the or. My lawyer came with me to get ›ig shot to sign the necessary final pers. In the corridor where we wait- there were several frantic young en. I registered little of the train trip the airport. Willows and alders along ear streams.

Colors and smells overwhelmed me hen I stepped off the plane at hiphol. Women in spring coats and its, strange fashions. My translator et me with a hug, though she was a etty young woman. I rode to the city a stupor. A far-off bridge, suspend- l on an invisible thread. A universi- . A square in front of it.

I was left in my new flat to tidy up ter my trip. I wandered to the back rden. A branch full of purple blos- ms hung over the wall, and from the indow of the house next door a young oman was shaking rugs. In my own nguage, I told her I was a persecuted udent. I asked if she would lend me rug to lie on. She smiled.

My eyes filled with tears for my father. What hadn't he thrown underfoot and crificed? He'd built himself a life that, r the sake of an idea, had buried itself. A life surrounded by spite in a godfor- aken, frightened little town. They nought they were doing it for us, and r our children. But this was the world f their imagination, and they'd pic- ured it falsely to us, and we at first hadn't wanted to believe things to be different.

Michels was the perfect coach or me. He required fantastic disci- line. Even with the assistant coach- s he was like an animal trainer. He old me I was his favorite player be- cause I couldn't ask him questions. He told us all that when we came to the stadium, we were the numbers on our backs. When we left, we be- came people and he could talk to us.

Each night I went home satisfied o my flat with its one chair. I never understood why you'd play a game in which you lost four kilos of your body weight for nothing. When you put on the shirt and laced up the boots, you had to win. Otherwise you might as well stay at home and watch the television.

With such an attitude I was very helpful to the Dutch, who were not naturally ferocious. If there was an art to defending, they were blind to it. They prized Technique and Tactics. Courage, will to win, speed, size: none of that aroused much interest.

So during training sessions Michels did all he could to develop aggression. We played games in which he acted as the referee from hell, calling the fouls with such enraging one-sidedness that our nickname for the matches became the Bloodbaths. He made sure we lived only football: he got our salaries raised, so that Cruyff could leave the printing works, Keizer the tobacco shop, Swart his haberdashery.

Understand, though: he never scored the goals. He did his part, and we did ours.

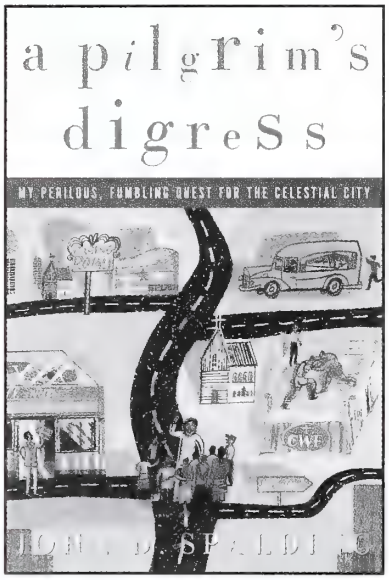
We couldn't believe, ourselves, what we held in our palms. Against MVV Maastricht in our first game we won 9–3 and I scored five goals. A defender! We scored 122 goals in the league season.

Johan Cruyff, Piet Keizer, Barry Hulshoff, Ruud Krol, Gerrie Mühren: they were all unleashed, with me, on Liverpool in the fog in the second round of the European Champions' Cup on the seventh of December, 1966. Together we remade the football globe. Liverpool barely deigned to look over at us during the warm-ups; the side was stuffed with demigods from their World Cup champion team of the previous summer. While we stretched, the fog rolled in, and the game was played in such a murk that the scoreboard operator, who sat near our bench, needed runners to let him know what was happening down at the ends of the field. He demanded confirmation when told we'd scored the first goal, and then confirmation when told we'd scored the second, and then, when the third went in, less than ten minutes into the match, he shouted at his runners, "Come on, boys, don't make up stories!" His words were reprinted in all the Dutch newspapers the next day. One front page, in letters large enough that there was room for nothing else, proclaimed: AJAX 5–1! Everywhere we went—shops, cinemas, schools, restaurants—those two numbers appeared.

When we traveled to Liverpool for the second leg, everyone said that now we had their attention. Their coach

Left turns on the righteous path

In *A Pilgrim's Digress,* Beliefnet.com's "Sick Soul" columnist John D. Spalding wanders America as a modern-day pilgrim seeking the Celestial City. Read Spalding's hilarious and thoughtful descriptions of how he got a little lost on a road that's neither as straight nor as narrow as it's cracked up to be.



"An insouciant collection . . . Spalding writes in the great theological tradition of Hunter S. Thompson, Woody Allen, and P. J. O'Rourke."
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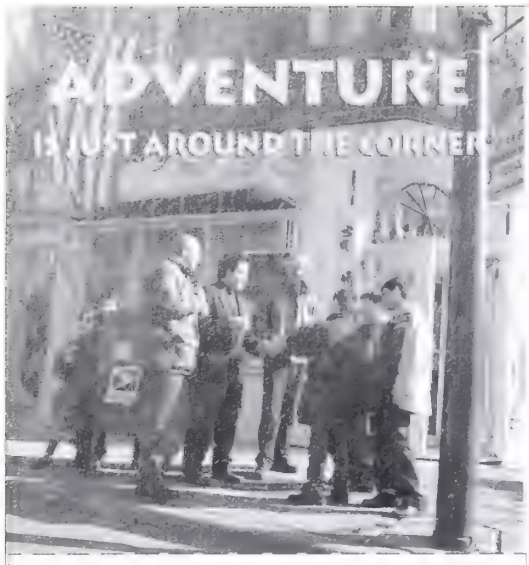
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predicted they'd win 7–0. We c
2–2. An Amsterdam headline r
AJAX WINS, 2–2.

Was there a connection betv
cultural and football revolutions
porters wanted our opinions. K
said no. Hulshoff said no. Krol said
Mühren said no. I said no. Michel
fused to answer. Cruyff said it wa
intriguing idea. He spent postgam
terviews talking about the Pro
White Plans. What did he thin
Luud Schimmelpennick's plan for
bikes all over the city? Poor Michel
in his office, his elbows on his
and his hair in his fists.

He came out every so often to th
a Provo out of the locker room. T
were easy to spot, all in white.
they loved Cruyff, who attracted
porters.

"What's he on about?" Mic
would ask someone standing nea
jabbing a thumb toward a Provo.

"He's saying that under N
Babylonic circumstances, the lust
aggression will be sublimated
the lust for playfulness," Cr
would explain.

"Oh, for Christ's sake," Mich
would say.

Cruyff didn't spout such stuff,
you could see he believed in parts
kept an eye on it. He was intrigue
his own uniqueness. Whenever w
foot on a pitch, he was interested
revolutionizing the game. The re
us were happy to settle for winnin

And yet at night, lying in my
and hearing my neighbor still shak
her rugs, I'd envision my parents' f
and wonder if this were in some str
way their gift to me: Partisan tact
Partisan strategies. In their war the
been no front or rear lines, and en
clements had emerged and dissol
fluidly on both sides; superiority
been achieved not by numer
strength but by tactical resource
ness. Survival as a Partisan had me
being creative about space.

"Fascinating," Michels had s
when I mentioned this to him.
brought it up on a bus when h
complained to me about Cruyff.
Dutch was by that point suffici
for semicomic conversation.

But all was well as long as we k
winning. We were becoming so
thing majestic and invincible. One

it we'd be marked by two defenders; next, completely free. One mo- it the pitch before us was crowded narrow; the next, huge and wide. brilliance of our passing was unas- ing: the white and black of the ball inst the blue of the sky. Against the en. Beautiful in its precision, and et and modest. No one danced or k off his shirt after such passes.

Bad weather or rotten pitches meant erent kinds of advantage. Keizer in vamp of a pitch produced a goal by bing a high ball into the thickest d where Turkish defenders, expect- a bounce, found themselves wrong- ted when the ball stuck. A Kuwaiti ir in the stands was so moved that af- the match he gave Keizer the gold tch from his wrist. Against Panathi- kos in a downpour we spent the tch playing passes into the areas of rest drainage, knowing the balls uld stop while the Greek defenders ntinued to overrun them.

Following Cruyff's lead, we built tles in the air, while he appeared ere most needed, always pointing, inting, pointing: you go there; you long here. He would have been ppy on a pitch two kilometers ng with no goals and nothing but autiful waves of movement, eaming up and streaming down.

Our perfection seemed to be auto- atic. Our instincts intimidating. e brought to bear on our oppo- nts calm minds, immaculate tech- que, and visionary passing. The auty of Ajax at its peak was like e beauty of thought.

Cruyff became the young Amster- mmers' hero. "Our John Lennon," eizer told me after a match. "Who's hn Lennon?" I asked him back.

I got furniture for my apartment. I nt money home. My brother was vice denied permission to visit.

Cruyff's opinion was consulted on ery conceivable subject: science, cul- ire, technology. The present, the fu- ire, even the past. Modern youth eeded to know what he thought of ie past. Two months before I'd ar- ved, Holland's princess had married German who'd served in the Wehrmacht. All of Amsterdam had ound this the end of the world. One fternoon I found Cruyff giving an in- erview about that. Who knows with whom. Should the protesters have carried out their threat to put LSD into the water supply? he was asked.

He turned to me. "What about it, Vasovic?" he asked. The reporter, bushy-haired with thick black glasses, turned with him, pen poised. "Should they have put LSD in the water supply?"

"No speak," I told him, and dropped my shorts to change.

The protests went on for much of the summer. You could watch on the television the Provos and student demonstrators, all in white, carrying their banners. And the police, all in black, waiting to beat them up.

Help me, my brother wrote. *Your brother's in need of help*, my father wrote. My brother had developed a romantic rivalry with a lawyer named Tasa who'd turned out to be UDBA. That's your brother, my father wrote. Cuckolding the civil secret police. In a bar, drunk, he had railed against Yugoslavia's silence in the face of the invasion of Hungary. It had been ten years ago, his nervous friends had counseled. He should let it rest. But my brother had mounted a table and balanced with his bad knee. The immortal Hungarians! Puskas in prison!

I was able to arrange a return trip only at the end of the season. I spent the night in Belgrade and walked to the train station during the following dawn. Mist hovered above the woods and in the golden treetops. I needed clean air. I snorted like a horse and felt the freshness.

I found my brother hiding in a town not far from our own. He was staying in a room with a metal worker from Bosnia, a poverty-stricken Muslim who'd moved in the hope of survival. The room was clean, with two beds, a woodstove, a small fir table, and a washstand. An alder shadowed the tiny back window.

The metal worker set out tea for us and then disappeared. We embraced.

Everyone liked my brother. He was an open, emotional man, so handsome that women turned to look at him in the street.

He told me he'd read about the Liverpool match. We smiled and talked about the old days and the cowshed.

WITHOUT AN ALPHABET, WITHOUT A FACE

Selected Poems of Saadi Youssef

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Saadi Youssef is one of the leading poets of the Arab world. Born in Basra, Iraq, he has published thirty volumes of poetry and seven books of prose. He left Iraq in 1979, and after many detours, he has recently settled in London.

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He asked me to get him out. I wanted to know his financial picture. He had no financial picture. Our parents were in a terrible state, he confided. He was testing their faith in the Party's infallibility. It caused him pain to be doing this. Could I get him out?

I told him I would try. Of course, I would try. We were silent, the fir table between us. He looked into my expression. It was as if I had said, What can I do?

I'd brought money, hidden, as well as other gifts. He accepted them all with a combination of apathy and good-natured fear. He'd never refused financial assistance.

At the airport check-through a commissioner asked why I was not playing in my homeland. I told him I was spreading the glory of Yugoslav football to the West. While he looked over my paperwork, he said, "And your father's an honest man."

"What makes you think I'm not?" I asked. Everyone around us looked up.

He was unembarrassed. "I was talking about your father," he said mildly, holding out my passport. "I don't even know you."

I wrote my brother upon my return to tell him how my attempts were proceeding. I heard nothing back. My father wrote a week or so later and mentioned nothing about it. He described instead how he'd felt during the Liberation: the muddle inside. The enormous happiness all around him—everyone on the street dancing and jumping—and he himself just walking through it all, feeling only a sort of heaviness.

The Dutch meanwhile, as always, went ahead drawing their straight lines into the future. They were unsatisfied to simply win; they were determined, as well, to proselytize their beauty and goodness to the world. Their football was to be like their foreign policy: a light unto all nations. The Provos unveiled a poster with Cruyff at its center and the motto BETTER LONGHAIRED THAN SHORTSIGHTED.

I felt accused by it. I avoided it. I avoided Cruyff. Then, before an exhibition, the trainer ran out of tape with the two of us still barefoot. He disappeared into the bowels of the stadium to search for more. Cruyff and I sat on facing tables, bobbing our feet at each other.

His hair was longer than ever. He picked at an ear. He studied me like someone else's chess problem. He asked, "What's happening to your country, Vasovic?"

"I don't know," I finally said, when able to speak.

"You just went back," he said.

"Yes," I said.

"To see your brother," he said.

"Yes," I said.

"He was in some sort of trouble," he said.

"Michels told you this?" I asked.

"He didn't return with you," he said.

"Is he here?" I asked. "Do you see him?"

He looked around. He resumed with his ear.

"He was a great player," he eventually remarked.

"What's wrong with you?" the trainer asked me, when he finally returned.

"He's been like that the whole time," Cruyff informed him.

I played the worst match of my life. Afterward I just lay on the pitch. Someone asked for my jersey.

Everything became less pleasurable for me. I had football intelligence, which had nothing to do with normal intelligence. The most difficult things in life were choices, as our trainer used to say. I tore a muscle in my thigh that would not heal. Running was now an application of fire. As the saint said, Pain was a holy angel, who showed treasures to men that otherwise remained forever hidden.

My parents had stopped writing. My brother had stopped writing. It happened to be the case that certain things remained unsaid in their country, while they were expressed in this one. There was no point in discussing which was the "right" way. Each involved different people who acted as they had been inwardly conditioned to act.

One sunny Sunday, soon after Queen's Day, which had been marked by mobs selling things on the street and drinking to excess, I took a throw-in at an exhibition game against Glasgow and caught the eye of a blonde girl with an overbite and tears in her eyes, and I stepped away from the ball and n
er kicked one again.

What had she conjured for
The young woman with the rug.
father. My brother. The overbite
boy who'd played with us in
cowshed. Who is it that goes f
when those he loves are not?

Michels tried to work with me
reason with me for a week or so
then gave up.

"Let him go," Cruyff said, with
to his final attempt.

I got a job sweeping the new C
Het Station, which seemed chi
and fantastical. The huge ble
spaces of the adjacent bus stati
rose out the mist beyond eve
morning as I pushed my broom.

On one occasion I even stepp
away from a ball that rolled tow
me from a nearby boys' game.

Wasn't it so that even when
were laughing we were sad. In
last letter I received from my bro
er, he wrote that he was writing fr
the saddest of all prisons: his heart

Good thoughts, bad thoughts, p
fect headers, crooked, dipping voll
from impossible angles, and envisio
geometries. Placid-faced neighbors
beer: all these become part of a gr
invisible sphere in which one liv
and about whose reality there was
doubt. Those spheres keep us cosse
from pain. We used to sing in one
our children's songs about the ang
"Two to cover me, two to wake m
and guardianship by the invisible p
ers was something grown-ups nee
no less than children.

Therefore, I wrote my parents, c
last time, *you must not think me unh*
py. What is happiness and unhappine
It depends on what happens inside. I
grateful every day for those spheres
side—that I have them, that I have yo
and that, all of that, makes me happy

**Answers to the March Quiz, "Fi
the Power"**

1 South Africa; 2 April 26; 3 The Penta
and the United Nations; 4 France; 5 The T
carora River; 6 Ten; 7 Their Jewish spo
were released from detention and exemp
from anti-Jewish policies; 8 Forming a hu
shield to guard the parliament building fr
Soviet forces; 9 President Ronald Reagan;
Ghana; 11 Refusal to pay a poll tax; 12 L
dite; 13 Truth; 14 Nonviolence.

NEW BOOKS

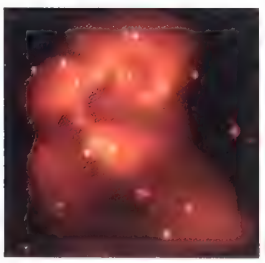
y John Leonard



What Don DeLillo does in his fiendish new novel COSMOPOLIS (Scribner, $25) reimagine Jason from the Golden eece, Siddhartha from the Buddhist *pitaka*, the Pilgrim from Bunyan's *ogress*, Sinbad the Sailor, the Lone nger, and the Flying Dutchman, and nbody all of them in a single twenty-ght-year-old Manhattan billionaire, no, in wasteland April of the year 00, is about to take an epic trek.

See asset manager Eric Packer de-end from his East Side penthouse plex to a white limousine that has en cork-lined (or "prousted") against eet noise and equipped with a liquor binet, a microwave, a heart monitor, d flat plasma screens so that Eric n read "medleys of data" and "all e flowing symbols and alpine charts" the Money Channel. He has like-ise equipped himself, wiring a cam-a inside his watch and videostream-g his image all over his personal ebsite. His "hypermaniacal" genius is see patterns and "cross-harmonies"





herever he looks, to find investment pportunities and "digital imperatives" tree rings, sunflower seeds, pulsars, grasshoppers, classical number sequences, and the superstitious flux of currencies and stocks. On his way across town to get a haircut, as if Leopold Bloom in Nighttown were to go for a ride in Bill Buckley's *Overdrive*, Eric intends to bring down the Japanese yen.

First, though, like every hero and pilgrim, he must hack his way through a thicket of obstructions. These include the president of the United States, whose motorcade gridlocks traffic; the making of a movie, for which 300 naked bodies clog the street; the sudden death of the Sufi rap star Brutha Fez, whose passing is mourned by a phalanx of breakdancers, bodyguards, media executives, and whirling dervishes; a riot by rat-tossing, bomb-throwing anarchists on skateboards, who proclaim that A SPECTER IS HAUNTING THE WORLD—THE SPECTER OF CAPITALISM; and such minor hurdles as a techno-rave, ZyloFlex body armor, and some stun-gun sex.

A fairy tale about late capitalism, *Cosmopolis* is also, of course, a DeLillo novel, which means it speaks in hybrid tongues (Sufi rap, for instance). For Eric—a prince of cyberspace, a free-market troubadour of high-speed hysteria, erotic vibes, and "mass convulsions"—DeLillo has invented a sinister bop prosody, a sort of *Wall Street Wired* equivalent of apostrophes and madrigals, of gnomic haikus and two-faced koans.

But Eric's real problem on his epic quest is an "asymmetrical" prostate, a lopsidedness in himself, and in the universe, that he never factored into any of his pattern recognitions. Perhaps this skew, or sheer, or swerve, or tilt explains how the yen eludes him, and why what he will find waiting for him in Hell's Kitchen is not his lost family but his nemesis—an assassin who actually asks the reader: "I'm ambivalent about killing him. Does this make me less interesting to you, or more?"

Another assassin strikes at the very start of CRABWALK (Harcourt, $25), the new Günter Grass novel and his most satisfying since *The Call of the Toad*. As if he's been reading W. G. Sebald on German suffering and silence during World War II, Grass remembers and imagines the hushed-up maritime disaster of the *Wilhelm Gustloff*, named after an assassinated Nazi Party recruiter and torpedoed by a Russian sub in the Baltic

Barriers 2 (Williamsburg Bridge)," 1998, installation photograph by Spencer Tunick/I-20 Gallery, ew York City (top right); Photograph of New York City skyline © Peter Marlow/Magnum Photos ottom left); X-ray image of two galaxies in collision © AFP/CORBIS (bottom right).



off the sinking ship upside down so that their legs stuck up out of their life jackets, while their heads were underwater. But again, no one is willing to accept responsibility for anything—not for the choices they made to further their careers, the amnesias they embraced to sleep at night, their indifference or abusiveness as parents, nor the neo-Nazi fantasies swilling through cyberspace.

Grass, a Bad Boy Grimmelshausen, a sarcastic seaport-street-talk social-democratic scourge, the Vistula's own Tin Drummine Martin Luther Magic Realist, is still furious at Germany's obscene forgetfulness. "History," he tells us, "or, to be more precise, the history we Germans have repeatedly mucked up, is a clogged toilet. We flush and flush, but the shit keeps rising."

History is personal for Paul Theroux. Where he is really coming in

(Houghton Mifflin, $28) is from the young man who first went to Africa as a Peace Corps volunteer in the sixties to someone who will be sixty himself when he reaches the end of this long disgruntlement. He is also, wonderfully, journeying from Naguib Mahfouz to Nadine Gordimer,

as if they were literary polar caps
though everything is so much w
than he remembers it, he never
less delights in the ram gods, sa
bulls, dead seas, burnt-out volcan
and mountains of the moon. He
loves telling us things we d
know—that, for instance, the w
for giraffe in Swahili is "*twiga*," or
a camel's hump is pure fat,
smooth and white as cheese

Readers of Theroux k
that on the road he is cra
This gives his travel books
seasoning. Here he's especi
vexed by those he calls "
agents of virtue": aid worl
mostly, white people usu
who are always driving aroun
Land Rovers and never gi
him a lift. But why should th
Hasn't he chosen to travel a
conveniently as possible,
nouncing airplanes, sniffing
cattle trucks and chicken
es? He prides himself on vagabon
and then complains about the f
the company, and his bowels.
though these donors, bankers, and
er "oafish self-dramatizing prigs"
have saved a few lives, they are
more than a maintenance crew
power trip." They infantilize
Africans, who will never amoun
anything unless they do it on t
own ("Only Africans were capabl
making a difference in Africa"), wh
is why Theroux approves of the re
to subsistence farming in the b
even as cities fall into squalor
politicians drown in vehemence.

Next to agents of virtue, he disl
tourists—for their silly clothes, gou
meals, luxury hotels, and four-star si
seeing. This disdain is as facile as
tiresome. If he would rather not sto
at Great Zimbabwe just because o
people want to, let him read the es
of Montaigne instead. But the w
is full of genius, grace, and awe,
not all of us have months to m
through it, nor several years to w
opinionated books about it, nor fri
at either end of it who happen to h
won Nobel Prizes. Anyway, someti
even this lonesome ranger permits H
self a four-star pamper. At least onc
the heart of darkness, Paul Ther
had the *New York Times* crossword
dle faxed to him.

STRANGED BROTHERS

econsidering Jewish history

y Daniel Lazare

cussed in this essay:

Pity of It All: A History of Jews in Germany, 1743–1933, by Amos Elon. Henry Holt, 2002. 446 pages. $30.

Tragedy of Zionism: How Its Revolutionary Past Haunts Israeli Democracy, by Bernard Avishai. Helios Press, 2002. 389 pages. $16.95.



Given the enormity of the event, it is perhaps unsurprising that the tendency since Auschwitz is been to view the history of the Jews rough the lens of the Holocaust—depict two thousand years of the Dipora as little more than a prelude to tastrophe, and to see events since 945 as a tale of renewal and demoatic progress via the state of Israel. wo Israeli writers, however, are chalnging the official mythology. In *The Pity of It All*, Amos Elon shows that the Diaspora was not the vale of tears of modern folklore but, in modern Germany at least, a period of dramatic breakthrough and progress. And in a new edition of *The Tragedy of Zionism*, Bernard Avishai argues that the Israeli state has betrayed Jewish aspirations rather than fulfilled them, promoting democracy for one ethnic group at the expense of another.

Most readers know that the "1933" in Elon's subtitle refers to Hitler's accession to power, but few will recognize the significance of 1743. It's the year that a fourteen-year-old Talmudic student named Moses Mendelssohn entered Berlin through the city gate reserved for Jews, cattle, and pigs. The boy must have been a sad sight—hunchbacked, ragged, nearly penniless, and, Elon surmises, probably barefoot as well, despite having just walked across a hundred miles of hilly countryside. Only a small number of rich Jews, plus the occasional scholar, were allowed to live in the Prussian capital, and the gatekeeper's job was to keep out all others without visible means of support. Accordingly, he questioned the boy as to what he wanted in Berlin. Mendelssohn's reply was succinct: "To learn."

The story is probably apocryphal, but it is nonetheless telling. Products of an Orthodox culture that was at once cerebral and anti-intellectual, devoted to one book (the Talmud) but hostile to all others, young Jews like Mendelssohn were starving men at a banquet. Trained in the life of the mind, they could see the Enlightenment, they fairly quivered in anticipation of all it had to offer, yet they could not get close enough to taste. Mendelssohn, who would go on to become one of Europe's most celebrated philosophers and littérateurs (as well as the grandfather of the even more celebrated Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, the composer), was determined to satisfy his intellectual cravings. Berlin's chief rabbi had accepted him as a pupil, and, although it was strictly forbidden, Mendelssohn managed during the next few years to sneak secular books up to his room and teach himself Latin, Greek, French, English, and even proper German. (Most German Jews spoke *Judendeutsch*, a combination of medieval German and Hebrew.) Later, as news of his intellectual abilities began to spread, a few of the more liberal members of the community offered assistance. One helped him with his Latin, another introduced him to mathematics, and a third lent him books by Leibniz and Locke. Eventually, a position as tutor to the son of a wealthy silk merchant provided Mendelssohn with money to buy books of his own; as a consequence, his reading extended to Spinoza, Cicero, Euclid, Aristotle, Plato, Newton, Montesquieu, Rousseau, and Voltaire. Instead of spending his life with his nose pressed to the windowpane,

aniel Lazare is writing a book about Juism, Christianity, and Islam. His last essay r Harper's Magazine, "False Testament," peared in the March 2002 issue.

Imstadtstrasse 43 (formerly *Grenadierstrasse* 7): Slide Projection of Former Hebrew ookstore, 1930," Berlin, 1992, chromogenic photograph and on-location installation Shimon Attie/Jack Shainman Gallery, New York City

His friend Salomon Maimon was not as lucky. Yet another young Jew who wanted nothing more than to "learn, learn, learn," as he would later write, he grew up poor and homeless in Poland and Lithuania, where he and his parents wandered the countryside "like the Israelites in the Arabian desert." Maimon was so outstanding a Talmudist that he was ordained a rabbi while still in his teens, yet the "Talmudic darkness"—his term for the medieval obscurantism still enveloping East European Jewry—was more than he could bear. Forced to marry at age eleven and a father by age fourteen, he grew tired of spending his hours in arid contemplation over "how many white hairs a red cow may have and still be a red cow," or whether the high priest must first "don his shirt and then his pants or vice versa." When he was twenty-two, Maimon deserted his family and took up the life of a mendicant scholar. He studied the cabala, Jewish mysticism, and magic, and briefly considered conversion to Christianity. He gained entry to Berlin (on only his second try) but was nearly chased out when the Jewish police discovered him with a forbidden text by Maimonides. Although Maimon survived the encounter and went on to write several well-received philosophical works as well as an autobiography (hailed by Goethe, Schiller, and Kant as a masterpiece), Elon notes that Maimon "spent his last years alone on the estate of a philosophically minded Prussian count, comforted only by his dog, Beline. He died at age forty-six of apparent alcoholism."

For Maimon, the "Talmudic darkness" proved inescapable. Yet, although filled with such stories, *The Pity of It All* is not just another lachrymose tale of Jewish suffering; it is, in fact, best read as an extended polemic against Daniel Goldhagen's feverish 1996 study, *Hitler's Willing Executioners*. The culmination of the "Diaspora as prelude to catastrophe" school of thought, Goldhagen's book argued that whereas other countries simply disliked the Jews, Germans by the early nineteenth century were intent on eliminating them altogether. Rather than conceiving and executing the Final Solution, the Nazis merely opened the door to passions that had been building for centuries. If so, Jews like Mendelssohn and Maimon were not heroic pioneers but victims of a monstrous fraud. They fooled themselves into believing that the Enlightenment offered an escape from prejudice, that the larger society was beginning to welcome them, and that Germany promised something other than their total destruction.

Fortunately, Elon rejects this tautological approach (in which Germans exterminate the Jews solely because Germans suffer from an "exterminationist" mind-set) for something a bit more nuanced. Instead of viewing German-Jewish history backward through the prism of 1933–45, Elon presents it from the perspective of the participants themselves. From their point of view, there was indeed reason for optimism.

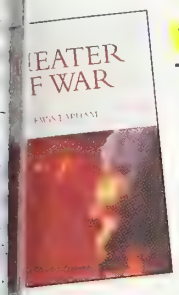
Mendelssohn's astonishing success reflected a growing acceptance of Jews in literary and scholarly circles and also seemed to be a harbinger of things to come. Early in his career, Mendelssohn had formed a strategic friendship with two Christian intellectuals: the playwright and journalist Gotthold Lessing and Friedrich Nicolai, a liberal publisher and bookseller. Nicolai published Mendelssohn's first book, *Philosophical Dialogues*, and Lessing adopted Mendelssohn as the model for his play *Nathan the Wise*, about a noble Jew during the Crusades who upholds the principle that Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are all of equal moral validity. With the 1767 publication of his third book, *Phaidon* (an adaptation of Plato's dialogue on immortality), Mendelssohn found that he was not only famous throughout Europe but *esteemed:* Catholic monks asked him for theological instruction, the Prussian Academy of Sciences elected him a member, and the duke of Brunswick offered him a ministerial post. Inspired by Mendelssohn, a Prussian civil servant named Christian von Dohm created a sensation in 1781 with a book calling for full emancipation of the Jews. When the Berlin National Theater performed Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice* a few years later, the lead actor went on stage before the curtain rose to remind the audience "that intelligent Berliners are now ginning to show a higher regard the coreligionists of the wise Mende sohn." Indeed, because of Mende sohn, German Judeophilia reache slightly ridiculous point when Goet coming across a book by a Polish-Je ish poet named Isachar Falkenso Behr, was astonished to find that verses inside were no more than or nary. A mediocre Jewish poet—w could imagine!

This is not to say that anti-Semiti was absent from the German lan scape—it was there, even for son one of Mendelssohn's stature. Pr sia's King Frederick II veto Mendelssohn's appointment to t Prussian Academy—the French ma ematician Pierre-Louis Maupert said that the only qualification lacked was "a foreskin"—and th balked at granting permanent re dency status to his wife and childr Despite his fame, Mendelssohn w charged the traditional Jewish c toms duty during a trip to Dresde although embarrassed local autho ties quickly restored the money w an apology, the incident still rankl

Indeed, German liberalism was m tenuous than most Jews realized. T French Revolution had granted ci equality to the Jews, a reform th Napoleon's troops had helped exte throughout Europe. But with N poleon's fall in 1815, medieval barri sprang up anew amid a spirit of r mantic nationalism that was func mentally hostile to a people it saw foreign interlopers. In 1819, "He Hep!" riots (from the Latin *Hieroso ma est perdita*—"Jerusalem is lost" the rallying cry of the Crusaders) eru ed from Bavaria in the south Hamburg in the north. Formerly hopeful, German Jews now had watch as mobs looted and demolish their homes and shops. The revoluti of 1848 ushered in an era of liber ism, but the financial crisis of 1873 se the pendulum back in the other dir tion, toward another era of prejudi and repression.

But then, as the recession subsid toward the end of the 1870s, Germ Jews found themselves in a "gold age" that, with the exception of a f years during World War I, would e dure until the Nazi seizure of power

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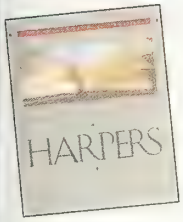
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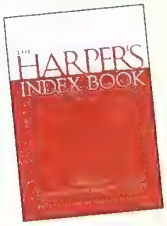


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[illegible] would be a serious exaggeration to say that Jews came to dominate German arts and sciences during this period, but, with Einstein, Paul Ehrlich, Walter Benjamin, Kurt Weill, and numerous others, Jews were remarkably well represented in German artistic and scientific ranks—disproportionately so, considering that they constituted less than one percent of the population. And, with Rosa Luxemburg, Eduard Bernstein, and Ferdinand Lassalle, they were similarly represented in political life, mainly on the liberal or radical side. (Elon recounts how, in 1891, the socialist leader August Bebel advised Engels that "'for decent company one must cultivate Jews.'" Although he was not enthusiastic about the idea, Engels nonetheless admitted "that Jews had more brains than 'others of the bourgeoisie.'")

German nationalism was still lurking in the background, ready to lash out at the first sign of political trouble. Yet German Jews lived in a country where the universities were open to them (compare this to the United States, where Harvard maintained a de facto Jewish quota until World War II) and where anti-Semitic mobs did not threaten to topple the government (unlike France during the Dreyfus Affair). As Elon points out, Germany's Jews were not merely grateful for an absence of restrictions but were positively drawn to a society whose values they deeply admired. If Jews were the People of the Book, Germans were *das Volk der Dichter und Denker*—the people of poets and thinkers. Heinrich Heine hailed Jews and Germans as Europe's two "ethical peoples" and even described the ancient Hebrews as "the Germans of the Orient." The poet Stefan George, noting that the German-Jewish relationship was often a troubled one, considered them "estranged brothers," and Kafka observed that they both "have a lot in common. They are ambitious, able, diligent, and thoroughly hated by others. Both are pariahs." Incredible as it may seem, Elon suggests that "before Hitler rose to power, other Europeans often feared, admired, envied, and ridiculed the Germans; only Jews seemed actually to have *loved* them."

What the Jews loved was not Germans per se but German high culture, a secular religion that for most Jews replaced the old religion of dietary restrictions, tribal ancestor worship, and the endless parsing of sacred texts. "With few exceptions," writes Elon, "the main thrust of [the Jews'] intellectual and political efforts—and of their reckless magnanimity—was a desperate but vain attempt to civilize German patriotism: to base citizenship not on blood but on law, to separate church and state, and to establish what would today be called an open, multicultural society."

Elon tells this story of "reckless magnanimity" extremely well; he has a cinematographer's sense of when to pull back for the long shot and when to tighten the lens for a close-up of some particularly outstanding personality—Mendelssohn, Maimon, Heine, the flamboyant financier and politician Walter Rathenau (assassinated by rightists in 1922), and, of course, Karl Marx, whose close-up is less forgiving. The most controversial of German Jews, Marx is acknowledged as "a serious thinker and social theorist" but also disparaged for founding "a world religion—with disastrous consequences."

Although the word "religion" is clearly meant here in a pejorative sense, the scope of Marx's ideas challenged the parochial confines of tradition and nation. From Mendelssohn to Einstein, many of Germany's Jews went beyond patriotism to embrace a form of universalism that Marx ultimately came to represent. Notwithstanding their regard for German high culture, the range of their thought was far wider. Judaism could not hold them, and neither could Germany, which is why Marx, despite his often intemperate language and the many failures of the socialist movement, continued to exert such an irresistible pull.

In the late nineteenth century, however, internationalist ideas failed to arrest the momentum of the Jewish nationalist movement. Although one might assume that the Zionists would have been the most realistic in their assessment of German nationalism and the dangers that it represented, Jewish nationalists and German nationalists shared a peculiar fascination for one another. Growing up as a German in Budapest, Theodor Herzl, the founder of modern Zionism, was, Elon writes, "deeply marked by the Jew[ish] love affair with Germany." His hero as a young man was Bismarck, he [be]longed to a dueling society in coll[ege] and he aspired to become a Prus[sian] nobleman. Rather than a democr[acy] he envisioned the Jewish state as [an] "aristocratic republic"—that is, [one] much like Germany or Austria in [the] 1890s (albeit financed by a board [of] capitalists in London). Indeed, H[erzl] conceived of the new Jewish hom[e]land as a kind of German colony:

> Life under the protectorate of this p[ow]erful, great, moral, splendidly admi[n]istered, firmly governed Germany [will] only have the most salutary effect[s] on the Jewish national character. . . . Str[ange] ways of destiny! Through Zionism [it] will again be possible for Jews to love [the] Germany to which our hearts remain attached despite everything.

Despite Wilhelm's well-kno[wn] anti-Semitism, Herzl struggled to [en]list the kaiser in the Zionist cau[se]. As the German monarch put it in a letter to a relative in 1898, there [was] no reason that Jewish nationalists and German anti-Semites could not work together:

> It would be a tremendous achievement for Germany if the world of the Jews looked up to me in gratitude. Moreover, Zionism could harness the creative energies of the tribe of Sem[ites] to better purpose than bloodsucking; for the Semites currently pursuing socialism in the East could engage in useful occupations.

The Tragedy of Zionism, or[iginally] nally published in 1985 [and] which Avishai has just reissued with a new prologue and epilogue, [car]ries forward the story of this strange offspring of German nationalism to the present. According to Avishai, not only is Israel a good deal less democratic than most Americans realize, but Zionism and democracy are mutually antagonistic concepts: rather than a government of, by, and for the people, Zionism entails a government of, by, and for a certain portion thereof. Although the 1948 Israeli declaration of independence promised to extend "complete equality of social and political rights to all . . . inhabitants, irrespective of religion, race or sex," it [has]

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st movement. But ideas from one
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alist self-sacrifice and Tolstoyan
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t was also an invitation to disaster.
e influx of Jewish settlers and Jew-
financial contributions generated
economic boom in the future Jew-
homeland. This led to an inflow of
bs eager to improve their own eco-
nic lot, which, in turn, caused them
un headlong into restrictive hiring
ctices that Jewish labor organizers
e busily enforcing. As both popu-
ons grew, so did the competition
ween them. (Despite Zionist claims
ut making the desert bloom,
ishai shows how Arab agricultural
duction between 1922 and 1938
e just as smartly.) Clashes between
vs and Arabs soon followed, and
e they began, it was impossible to
who was retaliating for what and
o was to blame at any given mo-
nt. As nationalist sentiment hard-
ed on both sides, the *Yishuv* (as the
tlement community was known)
ved further and further to the right.
though Israel managed to retain a certain socialist gloss for a number of years after independence, the Six-Day War, of 1967, would destroy whatever pretensions to egalitarianism were left.

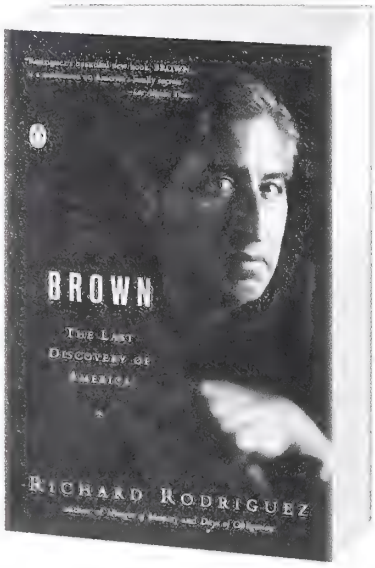
Indeed, the erosion of Israeli democracy that followed that war echoes the aftermath of the Franco-Prussian War a century before. Politically fragmented and economically backward, Germany was, in many ways, an unlikely victor in 1871. Yet any hope that the underdog's victory would lead to a stable balance of power between the two nations was profoundly mistaken; all it did was tip Germany in a more nationalist and militarist direction. And any hope that Israel would retreat to safe borders after 1967 and seek a modus vivendi with its Arab neighbors was mistaken as well. Instead of withdrawing from the Occupied Territories, the government moved to consolidate its hold on them, even though its new positions left Israel more vulnerable to guerrilla attack. Political command over the military gave way to the increasing militarization of Israeli politics. Before long, Moshe Dayan was delivering weirdly Teutonic speeches about the warrior ethic ("Death in combat is not the end of the fight but its *peak;* and since combat is a part, and at times the *sum total* of life, death, which is the peak of combat, is not the *destruction* of life, but its fullest, most powerful *expression*"*) and religious zealots were beginning to stream into the West Bank. Their numbers were small initially, but these "young men with gleaming eyes," as Avishai calls them, benefited from Zionism's inherent bias in favor of those striving to recapture every last inch of *Eretz Yisrael* for those proclaimed its rightful inhabitants. For Israel to say no to such expansionism, it would have had to challenge the fundamental tenets of Zionism, which no Israeli government, obviously, was prepared to do.

But this is precisely what Avishai says must now be done. Rather than a real democracy in which full political rights accrue to the population as a whole, Israel is what Meron Benvenisti, former deputy mayor of Jerusalem, calls a *Herrenvolk* democracy, in which full political rights

* *Emphasis in the original.*

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accrue only to a certain group. The situation is comparable to the United States before the Civil War, when white males carried their citizenship on their backs, so to speak, wherever they went: in the states, in the territories, or in disputed border regions like southern Texas. The arrangement not only permitted them to lord their political privilege over blacks, Indians, and Mexicans; it fairly encouraged them to do so in order to demonstrate that freedom was solely a white man's prerogative. Avishai observes how Israel's Jewish settlers similarly carry their citizenship on their backs into the Occupied Territories, where they, and they alone, vote in elections and benefit from extensive government subsidies. In what is supposedly the only real democracy in the Middle East, 97.5 percent of publicly held land in pre-1967 Israel is reserved exclusively for Jewish use; and a bizarre Law of Return allows any Jew immigrating to Israel from anywhere in the world to apply for a government-subsidized apartment in East Jerusalem, thereby displacing a Palestinian whose roots in the area go back generations. For Zionists, this is perfectly compatible with Yahweh's supposed promise to Abraham some four thousand years ago; but for anybody committed to democratic principles, it is perfectly perverse.

As befits a former technology editor of the *Harvard Business Review*, Avishai's blueprint for change is heavily technocratic. Impressed by Israel's role in the high-tech revolution of the 1990s, he believes that the future lies not with a Zionist state centered around Jerusalem but with a cosmopolitan, knowledge-driven "Hebrew democracy" centered around Tel Aviv. Instead of looking east toward Samaria and Judea, a post-Zionist society will look west to the Mediterranean. According to Avishai, it "will naturally expand along the coastal road and rail link that joins Herzliah, Netanya, and southern Haifa; it will become an international Hebrew-English megalopolis, anchoring the technological development of the whole region up to Turkey." This "megalopolis" would attract, no doubt, hundreds of thousands of Palestinian job-seekers from Israel proper, Gaza, the West Bank, and other points as well. But in a post-ethnic state, an influx of this sort would be no more problematic than Israeli, Russian, or Latin American immigration in multiethnic New York. The so-called demographic dilemma posed by high Palestinian birthrates would disappear, because it would no longer matter, at least not officially, whether Jews are a majority in such a state or merely a substantial minority. The only thing that would matter in this Singapore-on-the-Levant is that the economic machinery keep whirring.

Avishai's remedy is not without its problems. Now that the techno-boom has turned to bust and the country is suffering its worst economic downturn in fifty years, Israel's role in the high-tech revolution no longer seems so impressive. A Tel Aviv techno-elite could also have its ugly side as Ashkenazic Jews would turn against poorer, less educated Sephardim from North Africa and the Middle East. And, although a rising economic tide lifts some boats, it often—as Marx wo have pointed out—swamps others

Nevertheless, at least Avisha searching for some sort of solutio Israel does not jettison the *Herren* policies of the last half-century, outlook is clear: sectarian warfare continue to escalate and Israeli soc will continue its drift to the right. P er will continue to flow to religious natics, not only those in Jewish s tlements and besieged Palestin communities in Gaza and the W Bank but their equivalents in Riya Cairo, Karachi, and, for that mat the United States (where the allia among Jewish neoconservatives, thodox rabbis, and Christian fun mentalists is already in bloom). stead of a post-ethnic future, Israel retreat further into a tribalist past, the Talmudic darkness—this time forced by one of the world's most vanced military regimes—will beco all the more enveloping. The legac Mendelssohn, Maimon, and, yes, e Marx, will be expunged.

UNKNOWN MASTER

The fictions of Mavis Gallant

By Francine Prose

Discussed in this essay:

Paris Stories, by Mavis Gallant. New York Review of Books Classics, 2002. 4 pages. $14.95.

The question of why Mavis Gallant is not world famous—why, rather than being celebrated as one of our era's masters of the short story, she remains relatively obscure—has long puzzled her admirers, a devoted group composed mainly of other writers and of readers who discov-

Two books by Francine Prose will be published this spring, Sicilian Odyssey *(National Geographic Books) and* After *(Joanna Cotler/HarperCollins), a young-adult novel.*

ered her work during the deca (from the 1950s until the 199 when her fiction appeared regula in *The New Yorker*. Born in 1922, Montreal, Gallant has lived mos in Paris and for years made her liv as a journalist, a career hardly cal lated to assure maximum visibility this country. Even so, her bo have been highly acclaimed, and 1996, Random House published *Collected Stories of Mavis Gallant* handsome volume of almost 9

s. Bafflingly, the book was never
nted in paperback; her work
out of print. In twenty years of
ning, I included Gallant's stories
early every reading list, and I
ly ever met a student who knew
vork.
he New York Review of Books
s has now remedied this de-
ble situation by publishing two
ctions of Gallant's stories in its
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'clock, the hour of rain and no taxis.
All over Paris couples must be parting
orever, leaving like debris along the
urbs the shreds of canceled restaurant
dates, useless ballet tickets, hopeless explanations, and scraps of pride; and toward each of these disasters a taxi was pulling in, the only taxi for miles, the light on its roof already dimmed in anticipation to the twin dots that in Paris mean "occupied." But occupied by whom?

Or this portrayal of the way in which an American woman's deepening madness transforms and distorts her view of Paris.

> Flor was letting herself see in high, embossed relief, changing the focus of her eyes, even though she knew this was dangerous. Human cunning was keeping the ruins of Paris concealed. The ivy below Notre Dame had swelled through the city's painted crust: it was the tender covering of a ruin. The invasion of strangers resembled the busloads of tourists arriving at Pompeii. They were disoriented and out of place. Recording with their cameras, they tried not to live the day but to fix a day not their own. It had so little to do with the present that something she had suspected became clear: there was no present here, and the strangers were perfectly correct to record, to stare, to giggle, to display the unease a healthy visitor feels in a hospital—the vague fear that a buried illness might emerge, obliging one to remain.



Perhaps when people say "chilly," what they mean is dense. Line by line, word by word, no one writes more compactly or with more compression than Gallant. Great short stories are sometimes said to be as rich and as full as novels, but hers are as rich and full as encyclopedias—encyclopedias of her characters' lives. Each narrative offers an entire existence (you feel that if a story doesn't illuminate a whole life, Gallant is not interested in writing it) and a world, a milieu precisely situated in time and on the map of Europe. Another writer could make a separate story from each of the moments and incidents with which Gallant builds her fictions, and she has the nerve to include dramatic events that, as so often happens in life, turn out to have almost shockingly minor consequences. In one story, "Irina," the most important and devastating moment—an old man bursts into tears when he recalls a heartbreak in the distant past—is one that a child half glimpses and doesn't understand. On occasion, the most influential character in the story never appears, like the irascible dead husband—and famous writer—whose oversize personality fills the background of "Irina."

Few writers provide more concrete and factual information (details of personal and European history and politics, of family, employment; brushstrokes that establish a city, a subculture, or a domestic constellation) while at the same time making you feel as if you suddenly understand something large and momentous about human life. No one's characters (young and old, male and female) are more particular, more meticulously rendered—so much so that the fictional creations you'd always thought of as exquisitely individual (Emma Bovary, Julien Sorel) begin to seem like templates or types. The characters' extraordinary

ration by Joseph Adolphe

specificity effectively prevents the reader from "identifying" with them, another reason why Gallant's work may elude the sort of readers who require identification. But with a control of tone that allows her to locate the absolutely appropriate point on the continuum between engagement and detachment, and with a view of character at once scathing and endlessly tolerant and forgiving, Gallant displays, again and again, an almost preternatural gift for making readers care about, and be touched by, men and women and children whom they otherwise wouldn't have met and, for that matter, might not have chosen to know at all.

The title of *Paris Stories* is partly a misnomer, for the settings range from the French capital to the Ligurian Riviera, from Berlin to the Helsinki airport, from a small town in Switzerland to a grand hotel on the Côte d'Azur. Those details of geography and local culture are crucial in Gallant's work despite (or perhaps because of) the fact that so few of her characters come from, or feel at home in, the places in which they happen to find themselves. Quite a few are understandably astonished to have wound up poor and adrift in post–World War II Europe, inhabiting the inhospitable border between exile and expatriation, and covered with the almost visible film of desperation and faint squalor that clings to those who feel they have come down in the world and—in the absence of talent or vocation—must struggle for survival. Indeed, most of Gallant's motley assortment of refugees, fugitives, and travelers are displaced persons, scrambling on the margins of a society they will never belong to and that they regard with the same avid longing, curiosity, and clinical objectivity with which the beautifully drawn children in these tales observe the all but inscrutable adults around them.

A number of stories tally the costs of dislocation: In "August," Florence's descent into madness is accelerated by the conviction that her anguish is the result of a peripatetic childhood. In "The Remission," a terminally ill, impecunious Englishman brings his wife and three children to a decaying villa on the French-Italian border where he intends to die. Instead, he survives for three years, long enough for his family to have a series of experiences that will change them far more than his death and absence. "The Latehomecomer" concerns a young German returning to Berlin in 1950 from a term as a prisoner of war in France, a sentence unfairly protracted by a bureaucratic mistake. And in "Baum, Gabriel 1935–( )," a German-Jewish refugee orphaned by the Nazis supports himself by working as an extra in TV dramas filmed in Paris, a job that eventually obliges him to play a German soldier.

The Second World War and its aftermath shape or at least shadow a high percentage of these narratives. Acutely conscious of history and politics, Gallant creates and reflects a milieu very distant from that of contemporary American fiction, in which the make of a car or a song on the radio may be the only detail that locates the story in time. But Gallant is an artist, not a historian, and what's striking is how she never lets us forget that her subject is not politics, history, and war but rather the effect that politics, history, and war have on individual lives. What's painful for "The Latehomecomer" is not the memory of his postwar imprisonment so much as the discovery of the vast distance that his mother's life has traveled away from his own during his long absence. The opening of the sly, charming, and harrowing "Mlle. Dias de Corta"—"You moved into my apartment during the summer of the year before abortion became legal in France; that should fix it in past time for you, dear Mlle. Dias de Corta"—is not, as it turns out, principally a means of fixing the story in time but rather a double-edged sword meant to reopen the wounds suffered by the story's eponymous subject and by its simultaneously chilling and sympathetic narrator. So, too, in "The Moslem Wife," the horrors of the Occupation pale beside the dark, unfathomable currents of sexual thrall in which a woman is held by the handsome, shallow husband whom she has loved since were children.

Given that there is no "t cal" Gallant work, "The Wagon Going Down Street," the first selection in *I Stories*, could nonetheless be sai typify her themes, her style, strategies, her perspective. Evic throughout are her trademarks: prodigious specificity, the densit detail and incident, the hard-v control of language and tone, above all her gift for creating a ceptively comfortable distance tween the characters and the rea then suddenly and without warn narrowing that distance, with a fo that leaves the reader with a son emotional whiplash.

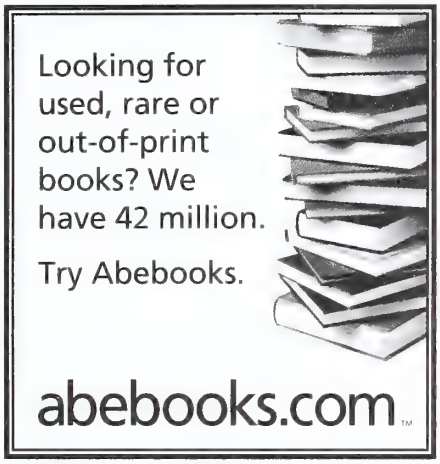
As "The Ice Wagon" begins, P and Sheilah Frazier, a down-on-th luck but proud and ferociously sty couple, have returned from Europ Peter's native Canada, where they camping out, with their two daught in the grim and cramped Toronto of Peter's sister. Peter is from a "go Canadian family ruined by finan scandal; Sheilah is a British bea from a decidedly lower caste. The p vasive and nefarious influence of m ey and class consciousness is as pow ful here as it is in all of Gallant's w The opening lines—the continen "peacocks" are lounging about o Sunday morning while Lucille, Pet "wren" of a Canadian sister, has tak the equally wrenlike daughters of church—tell us all we need to know think we need to know) about this b tle, self-deceptive folie à deux. Not how much of our information ab the Fraziers comes through delic grace notes—ironic word choi ("world affairs," "international thing the subtle manipulations of tone, grandiosity, mutual consolation, s congratulation, and faint recrimi tion that form the text and subtex the couple's conversation.

> Now that they are out of world aff and back where they started, Peter F zier's wife says, "Everybody else did w in the international thing except us
>
> "You have to be crooked," he t her.
>
> "Or smart. Pity we weren't."
>
> It is Sunday morning. They sit

kitchen, drinking their coffee, vly, remembering the past. They the names of people as if they e magic. Peter thinks, Agnes sen, but there are hundreds of er names. As a private married e, Peter and Sheilah wear the silk ssing gowns they bought in Hong ng. Each thinks the other a pea- k, rather splendid, but they pre- d the dressing gowns are silly and n in fun.

is a measure of Gallant's au- ty and nerve that the name s Brusen, dropped boldly and ut definition or explanation in tory's second expository para- n, will not reappear, or be re- d to again, until seven dense, n-filled pages later. Before s can make her formal appear- , we must follow the Fraziers on nominally fabulous but in fact ly sad trajectory through Eu- , as they struggle for position acceptance among all the other , social-climbing, ambitious g couples who have flocked to Continent in the aftermath of war as if it were a gold-rush n to be mined for excitement glamour. Nearly every impor- event takes place in retrospect. lthough things tend to proceed othly in Gallant's eventful narra- s, sooner or later it becomes e clear that she hasn't the slight- oyalty to conventional notions hronology. Consequently, the erience of reading her work as less like being shown how one nent proceeds from another and e like watching a hand pull back rtain until, inch by inch, every- ng is revealed. Partly as a result, fiction more stubbornly resists marization, perhaps another rea- why Gallant's reputation has ed to keep up with her talent. is difficult to write about, hard lescribe. Each story is "about" so ny things that it feels almost fu- to try to focus or to settle on one me or plot. "Ice Wagon" tracks Fraziers from Paris, where Peter s his nonexistent career during incident involving a party, a ver pot, and way too much drink. m then on, everything that hap- s to the Fraziers is either a fiasco,





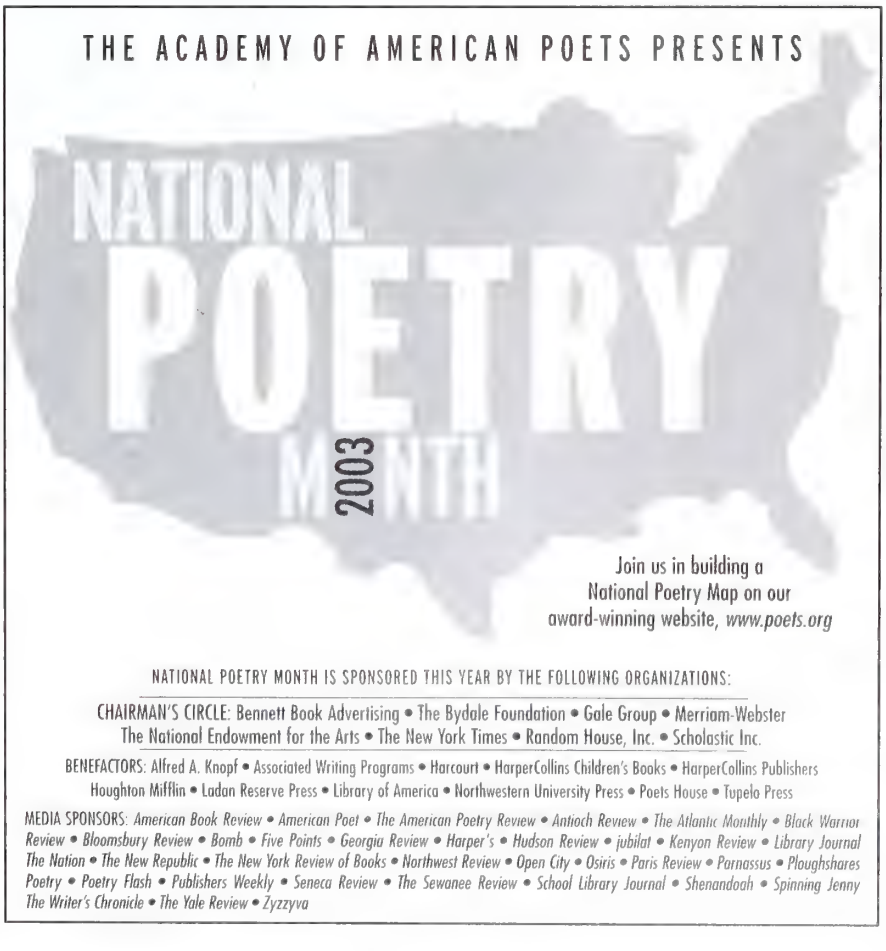
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a betrothal, a disappointment. The family moves to Geneva, where they live in conditions of increasing, painstakingly concealed squalor. ("The flat seemed damp as a cave. Peter remembers steam in the kitchen, pools under the sink, sweat on the pipes. Water streamed on him from the children's clothes, washed and dripping overhead.") Their one talismanic possession is Sheilah's black Balenciaga gown, a dream of elegance and style that they cling to in the way that a religious couple might clutch the family Bible. In Geneva, at least, Peter has a job. He works as a file clerk, cataloguing photos "in the information service of an international agency in the Palais des Nations" and sharing an office with yet another Canadian—a homely little martinet by the name of Agnes Brusen.

> In Geneva Peter worked for a woman—a girl. She was a Norwegian from a small town in Saskatchewan. . . . Soon after Agnes Brusen came to the office she hung her framed university degree on the wall. It was one of the gritty, prideful gestures that stand for push, toil, and family sacrifice. . . . The girl might have been twenty-three: no more. She wore a brown tweed suit with bone buttons, and a new silk scarf and new shoes. She clutched an unscratched brown purse. She seemed dressed in going-away presents. . . . He was courteous, hiding his disappointment. The people he worked with had told him a Scandinavian girl was arriving, and he had expected a stunner. Agnes was a mole.

Almost immediately, Agnes becomes involved in a triangulated relationship with the Fraziers—not a romantic triangle, or not apparently so, but rather an awful and awkward ballet, choreographed to include still more humiliations, letdowns, and misunderstandings. The Fraziers are appalled to learn that Agnes is a regular visitor at the home of a popular couple who have dropped Peter and Sheilah from their guest list for reasons having to do (or so Peter thinks) with Sheilah's lower-class background. Eager to know why Agnes has been admitted to the lost paradise from which they have been unfairly expelled, Peter and Sheilah invite Agnes to dinner—and to one of the most hilarious and excruciating social disasters in literature. At yet another unfortunate party, this time a costume ball, Agnes, who is a teetotaler, becomes so drunk that their hostess strong-arms Peter into taking her home. And that night, and the next day, something happens between Agnes and Peter. The something is not sex but instead an encounter just as profound and perhaps more likely even than sex to leave a man and a woman forever imprinted on each other—an experience of true connection and seamless communication, a moment in which all the artifice and painfully maintained pretense of Peter's life drops away. But precisely because sex is not at issue, Peter and Agnes—and the narrator—insist that "nothing happened."

> But what were they talking about that day, so quietly, such old friends? They talked about dying, about being ambitious, about being religious, about different kinds of love. What did she see when she looked at him—taking her knuckle slowly away from her mouth, bringing her hand down to the desk, letting it rest there? They were both Canadians, so they had this much together—the knowledge of the little you dare admit. Death, near death, the best thing, the wrong thing—God knows what they were telling each other. Anyway, nothing happened.

It would be necessary to read every word of this long, complicated story to get the full import—and to feel the full force—of its ending. It's as if the still eye of the hurricane has been hovering over Agnes and Peter, then over Peter and Sheilah, gathering momentum, until in its final paragraphs the story (to extend the storm metaphor) blows the roof off the house and does something no other story I've ever read has done.

Gallant's fiction displays and redefines the breadth of vision, the wit, the mystery, the ability, to make us feel that a work has found its ideal form, that somehow it has always existed in its present incarnation, that not one word could be changed—that is to say, all the qualities that we intuitively and gratefully recognize as attributes of great art. What can said with absolute certainty al her work is that it leaves an afte age that can always be conjured the way we can close our eyes see how Velázquez paints an egg, way we can hear the final chord Bach chorale resonate in the ca dral long after the choir has sto singing. And as unfortunate as that every serious reader is not ready intimately familiar with M Gallant's stories, the consolatio that there are legions of readers will now have the luck to exp ence, for the first time, her un and astonishing talent.

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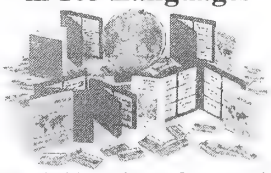
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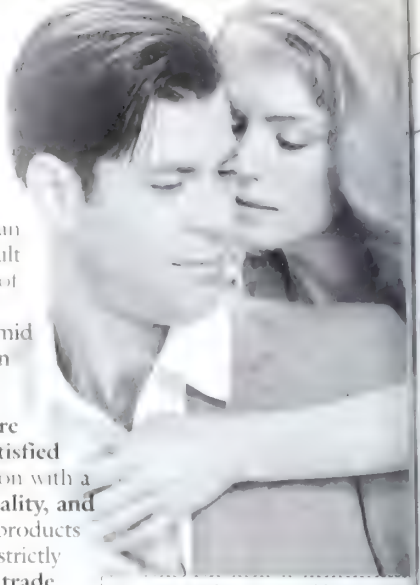
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T	A	M	B	O	W	A	N	G	O	R	A	O
S	K	E	E	T	S	O	T	S	G	E	L	D

NOTES FOR "SAMURAI LP'S AND PUMAS' LAIRS":

Puzzle editing by Dan Asimov.

Anagrams are indicated with an asterisk (*).

The unclued answers are anagrams of the names of marsupials, just as the two phrases in the title are anagrams of t word MARSUPIALS.

ACROSS: 1. TASMANIAN DEVIL; 15. rev.; 16. so(R.R.)y; 17. U-B(o)at, re 18. ri(pos[rev.])te; 19. OPOSSUM; 21. WALLABY; 23. *; 24. atel*-1-ER; 27. hidde 28. *; 31. *; 35. rev.; 36. BANDICOOT; 39. KOALA; 41. *; 43. se(a)-rum; 45. pu 47. fu(to)n; 48. WOMBAT; 49. KANGAROO; 50. t(iny)-eels; 51. hidden in re 52. gel(d.)s.

DOWN: 1. 1-rises; 2. nebula*-E.; 3. hidden; 4. *; 5. li(poi)d; 6. is-0-pod; 7. Do's, tw mngs.; 8 (p)arty; 9. two mngs.; 10. homophone; 11. st.-all; 12. Mad-Lib*; 13. palindrom 14. numb(er); 20. SN-itch; 22. homonym; 24. as-son-ant; 25. hidden; 26. *; 29. tw mngs.; 30. me-a sure; 31. ho(1)sts; 32. *; 33. hidden; 34. *; 37. homonym; 38. *; 4 hidden; 42. rev.; 44. rev.; 46. initials; 47. of(rev.)-g.

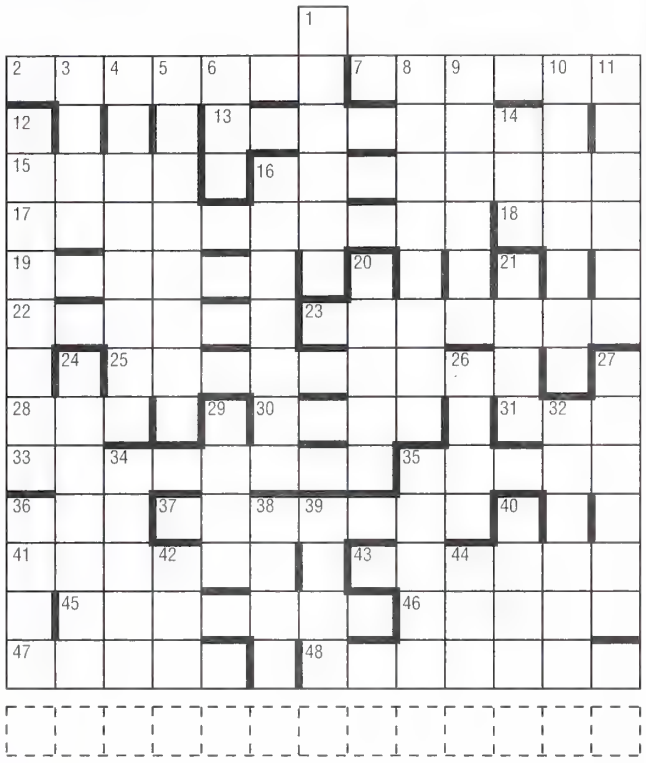
PUZZLE

Game

By Richard E. Maltby Jr.

To play the Game, start at 1 Down and fill in the diagram with clue answers. Fifteen clue answers will not fit and will have to be altered into new words before they can be entered. The first altered word will be crossed by another altered word, which will in turn be crossed by another altered word, creating a sequence following the logic of the Game. The progress should take you from polite to downcast writing. At the bottom of the diagram, several altered words will be too long to fit into the diagram. Place their extra protruding letters in the row of spaces below the diagram and these letters will spell out the name of the Game.

In order to conceal the location of the answers to be altered, word lengths are omitted. Clue answers include three proper names. One altered word is a proper name. As always, mental repunctuation of a clue is the key to its solution. The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 94.



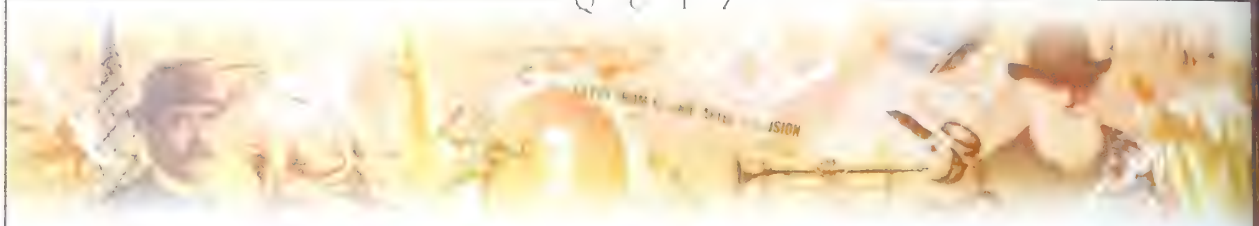
ACROSS

2. School members show a negative
7. Results make deliverers very popular
13. Train with energy, tear around a green . . .
15. . . . slice through, ending in sand traps
16. Small state, its resettling incorporated '99
17. Getting a charge out of making a celebrity faceless
18. A degree in compass setting otherwise overlooked
19. The same compass setting recalled endless sci-fi film
22. Inquiring how Yul Brynner first became famous?
23. Planes furniture for a porch
25. Ran in the Family, in the Woman's Edition
28. It could be one long time!
30. Ships something back in club car
31. Roling conceals identity of Hedwig
33. Knowing how bustle can be gathered up
35. Kind of white-gold Yale or Harvard, e.g., clasps
36. Employment in silent museum
37. Careful to express sadness outside, laugh inside
41. Mind senora in transit
43. Exact, financially sound bank
45. Is this "coming out" appealing
46. Filling in form, a visitor gives woman's name
47. Eyesore seen about 1:10—time to retire early
48. Kurdistan tobacco stores—cool!

DOWN

1. Losing a tail, run off up north, perhaps
3. State a word of welcome, in some circles
4. No female leads in raising relative to be a dwarf
5. Taking a position—it's a crime among reactionary Republicans
6. Face shows one spot
8. Monks' 'hood? It could be part of a record year
9. Did bad things raising a comical brat
10. Bed-sitters in different storeys
11. Butts out of the USS *Mobile*
12. A single man returned round head from Elgin Marbles
14. Catch up with X
16. Sideline guy who's been in the sun?
20. Gore and I have to be contracted, and quick
21. Work over Communist ring
24. Boards in U.S. shoe manufacturing
26. To commit a sin costs ambassador nothing!
27. Briefly, bystander details events that go over his head!
29. Dwarves refrain from speaking of crackers (two words)
32. Squeeze sounds out of jewelry
34. People in suits take bows for vocal performance
35. Emergency care types?
36. Makes money—I hear pots
38. Two articles in a collection of reminiscences
39. Get ripped off with the start of a fashion style
40. Soprano upset—that's keen
42. It's disgusting what people ask dogs to do
44. Tax Bin Laden with wine!

Contest Rules: Send completed diagram with name and address to "Game," *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Entries must be received by April 11. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive one-year subscriptions to *Harper's Magazine*. Winners' names will be printed in the June issue. Winners of the February puzzle, "Sixes and Sevens," are Douglas J. Buege, Madison, Wisconsin; Kelley Hayden, Reno, Nevada; and Little Petey Herrmann, San Francisco.



PITY THE FOOL

1. Until France's Charles IX imposed the Gregorian calendar, what event did medieval Europeans associate with April 1?

2. To what English statesman and author, later a saint, did Erasmus dedicate his sixteenth-century book *In Praise of Folly*?

3. What treatment for malaria did Protestant reformer Oliver Cromwell foolishly refuse in 1658, suspecting it to be "Jesuit poison"?

4. What were "Quaker's guns," and for what defensive military deception were they deployed during the Civil War?

5. What country successfully tricked its opponent by planting fake battle plans on a dead body dressed as an officer and floating it from a submarine?

6. An April 15, 1912, front-page headline in what New York City newspaper read "All Saved From Titanic After Collision"?

7. The editor of what U.S. newspaper fired Rudyard Kipling, explaining, "You just don't know how to use the English language"?

8. What European landmark did Czech con man Victor Lustig "sell" for scrap in the 1920s?

9. What single act, left undone in the planning stages, is blamed for NASA's loss of its $125 million Mars space probe in 1999?

10. A rebroadcast of what radio hoax inspired citizens of Quito, Ecuador, to burn down their local radio station in 1949?

11. In what year did the Pope recognize Charles Darwin's theory of evolution to be "more than a hypothesis"?

12. What U.S. presidential candidate asked, "Isn't it harder in politics to defeat a fool, say, than an abler man?"

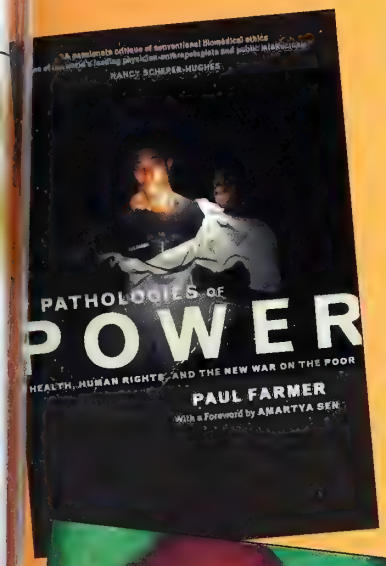
13. In 1932, what German physicist wrote, "There is not the slightest indication that energy will ever be attainable from the atom"?

14. What nineteenth-century American writer defined history as "an account, mostly false, of events, mostly unimportant, which are brought about by rulers, mostly knaves, and soldiers, mostly fools"?

Contest Rules. Send numbered answers with name and address to "Quiz," Harper's Magazine, 666 Broadway, New York, NY 10012. If you already subscri Harper's, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Entries must be received by April 14. The sender of the first correct set of answers opened at random receive a one-year subscription to Harper's Magazine. The winner's name will be printed in the June issue. The answers to last month's quiz, "Fight the Power," pear on page 80. The winner of the February Quiz, "Love's Labor," is Emilie Fillon, Chicago, Illinois.

Illustration by Ralph Kel

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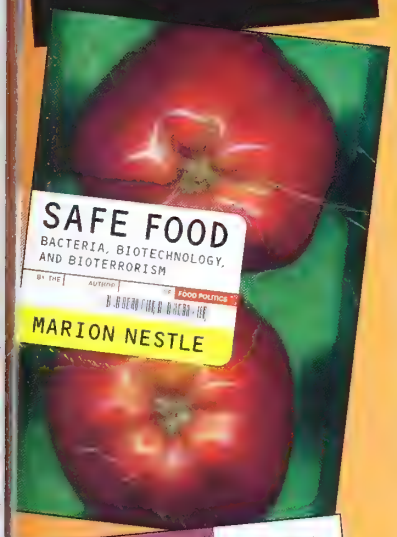
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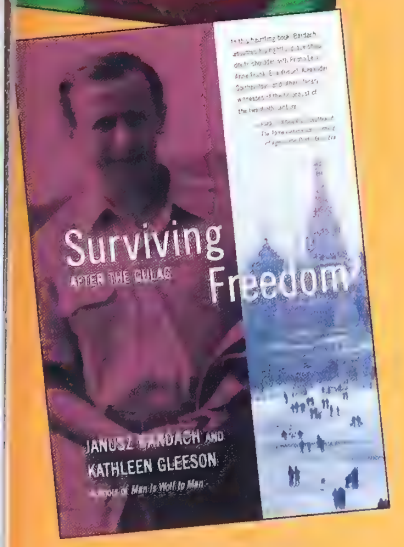
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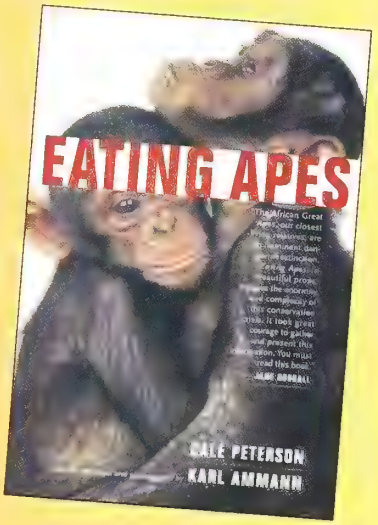


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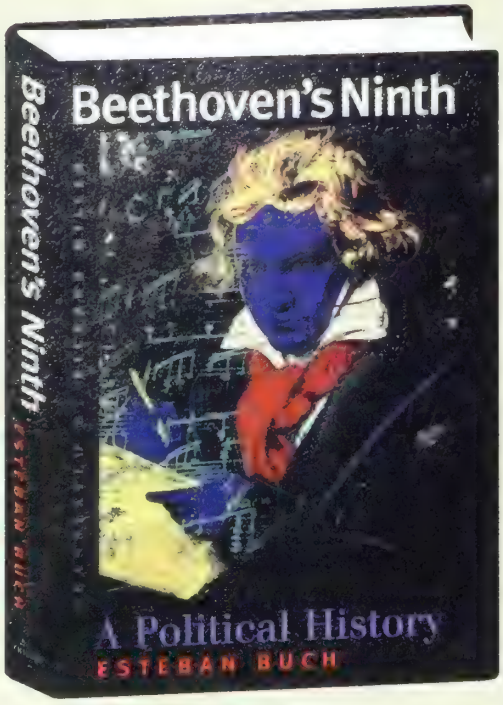
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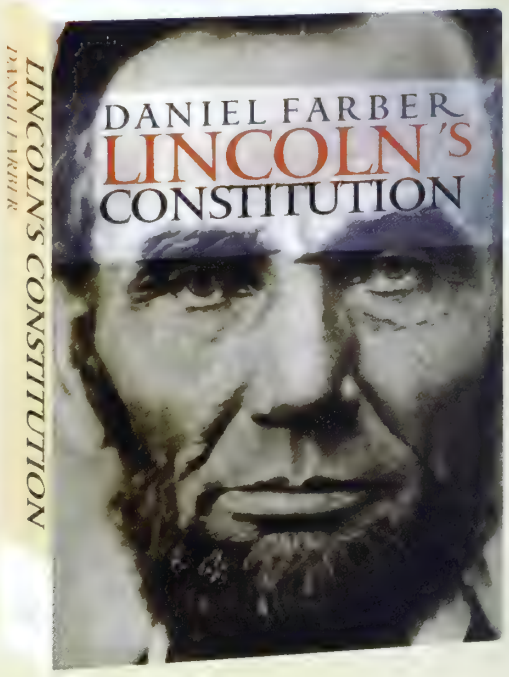
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LETTERS

Not an Endorsement

Lewis Lapham ["Light in the Window," Notebook, March] mistakes description for endorsement in my *New York Times Magazine* article on American empire. Instead of endorsing American empire, I pointed out that (a) an operation that installs an American general in Baghdad while failing to bring about a viable state for the Palestinians would increase the risk of a mass-casualty terrorist attack on the United States, and (b) no imperial project can stand against the power of modern nationalism, the desire of peoples to rule themselves free of foreign interference.

Michael Ignatieff
Cambridge, Mass.

I buy *Harper's Magazine* every month for the joy of reading Lewis Lapham's often brilliant reflections on the mind-set of the American ruling class. Alas, I found his Notebook on Michael Ignatieff disa pointing. Although not withou certain wit (empire described a fashion statement), Lapham's es struck me as uncharacteristica slovenly, especially the line "Ne having met Ignatieff or read books . . ."

In "foreign" countries such as E land and Canada, Michael Ignati is a well-known public intellectu though admittedly he is a newcon to Harvard Yard and so, no doubt, the U.S. East Coast network of *vue* intellectuals. Lapham too rea assumes that Ignatieff is just anot Defense Department advocate pop up in Cambridge, Massachuse This assumption is an example of t U.S. "imperial" state of mind and tragically narrow insularity.

Michael Dorland
Ottawa

I applaud Lewis Lapham's taki Michael Ignatieff to task for his a vocacy of current U.S. foreign po cy. Canadians have been subject for far too long to the pompous, sh low opinions of this self-styled le ing Canadian intellectual.

It is clear what has happened

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ral thought: people like Ignatieff e hijacked it and turned it into apology for the Bush Administra- n. Since September 11, 2001, Ig- ieff consistently has defended a vkish method of dealing with ter- ism and the regime in Iraq, and it neartening to see Lapham expose n for what he is—a conservative empting occasionally to sally forth ntly dressed in liberal garb. Would it the Canadian media would do Lapham has.

rtin Joldersma
tton, Ont., Canada

Lewis Lapham lists nine govern- ntal activities in which the Bush lministration has plans for "more vs limiting the rights of individu- , fewer laws restraining the rights property." He quotes Colin Pow- 's characterization of a failed state d argues that it applies just as well "Vice President Dick Cheney's vi- n of a reconfigured United States." an it be that there was, after all, a gnificant difference between the epublican and the Democratic can- dates in the 2000 election?

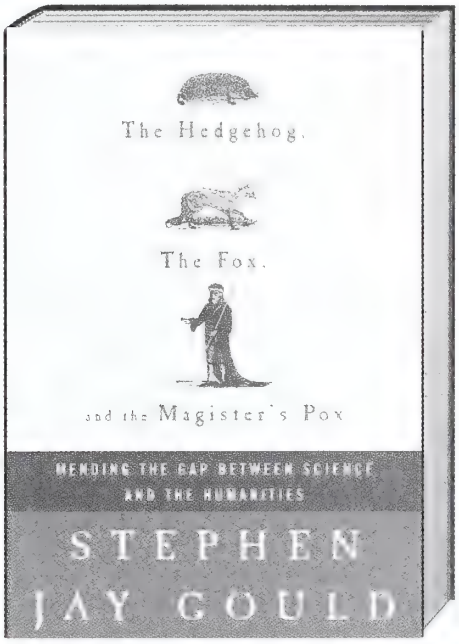
onald Adelman
os Angeles

Vhy Peace Is Futile

I want to share Jonathan Schell's onfidence that liberalism can pre- ent violence ["No More unto the reach: Part I, Why War Is Futile," larch], but I do not think that he as reckoned sufficiently with mod- rn history. The nonviolent depar- ure of the British from India would ever have happened had World Var II not lent its devastating assis- ance. Indeed, as George Orwell not- d, the British found Gandhi useful or a while, "since in every crisis he would exert himself to prevent vio- ence—which, from the British oint of view, meant preventing any ffective action whatever." It was nly after the blitzkrieg that Gan- hi's method of noncooperation be- ame efficacious.

Similarly, the "purely nonviolent" olitical revolution against Soviet Communism would not have been

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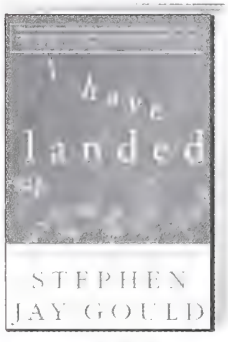


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Praise for Stephen Jay Gould

"A poet of Darwinism . . . brilliant and controversial."
*—Chicago Tribune**

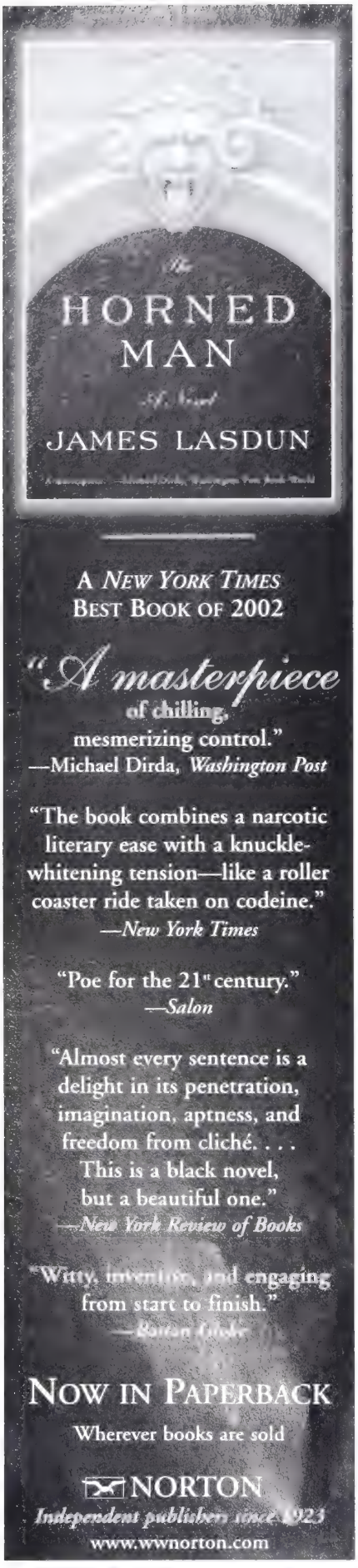
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successful without the two Great Powers' sordid and anti-democratic intrigues in the Third World: in Latin America, Africa, the Indonesian archipelago, Southeast and Central Asia, and the Middle East—the "other venues" that Schell mentions briefly. Schell's optimism depends on his downplaying this violence, and on his failing to accord due significance to the economic, political, and military exhaustion that it induced.

Furthermore, Schell's interpretation of recent events has caused him to understate the intellectual corruption of democratic liberalism typified by those who equate "free markets" with democracy. Václav Havel, often considered among the most trustworthy exponents of democracy, proclaimed that the revolution against Communism would not be complete until everything is privatized. One must be skeptical of the view, in these dark times, that the eclipse of the Soviet Union represented an unqualified moral and political victory.

Chris Ronk
Brooklyn

Jonathan Schell's argument that "war is futile" is all but irrelevant. Since World War II, war has been the result either of sub-state factional ethnic conflicts—as in Yugoslavia, Congo, and Kosovo—or of fanatical religious and ethnic violence, now called terrorism. None of these can be confronted by the same methods—mainly treaties and containment—used to restrict state-supported nuclear-weapons programs. It is clearly impossible to prevent such confrontations, but much could be done to reduce the weapons available to such factions, and to confront the nation-states that support or condone such violence. Anti-terrorism is not futile.

Lorna Salzman
Brooklyn

For Christ's Sake

I am encouraged that Jeffrey Sharlet ["Jesus Plus Nothing," March] has exposed the subversi fundamentalist movement. Ameri has a problem. In the eighties I w a fundamentalist Christian. I we to Bible college and was a dedicat foot soldier of the religious right met fundamentalist leaders such Jerry Falwell and Tim LaHaye one of Reagan's inaugural galas, ar I did some minor office work for th Moral Majority. I can therefore a test to Sharlet's portrayal of the power-hungry theocrats and to the self-image as righteous warriors.

Since leaving the movement, have been warning people of th danger to American freedom ar diversity all to no avail. Now ou current administration is dominate by fundamentalists.

Lee Carleton
Richmond, Va.

Jeffrey Sharlet provides ampl justification for the secrecy withi which the Family shrouds itsel The acquisition and exercise o worldly power, over men and soc eties, is consistent with the will God as documented in the Old Te tament. The purpose for which th power is wielded, not the individu acts, is what defines the boundar between good and evil. Histor demonstrates that a hierarchy ex ists. The best we can hope for that power will be concentrated i the hands of those chosen by Goc Revealing that the Family employ organizational strategies used b Hitler and Bin Laden is a chea rhetorical trick that diverts atten tion from a noble mission.

Keith Duff
Austin, Tex.

I thoroughly enjoyed Jeffre Sharlet's "exposé" of the theocrati cabal that threatens America democracy. Sharlet poses as a be liever in order to penetrate "th Family," where he is apparently wel comed without reservation. H furtively copies evangelistic pam phlets, which a member has happil lent him. And he claims to have

Continued on page 9

NOTEBOOK

Shock and awe

By Lewis H. Lapham

we go back to the beginning we shall ways find that ignorance and fear ve created gods; fancy, enthusiasm, deceit has adorned or disfigured em; weakness worships them; credulipreserves them in life; custom regards em and tyranny supports them in or-r to make the blindness of men serve own ends.

—Baron d'Holbach

Prior to the Third Infantry Divion's advance into the valley of the uphrates on March 21, I had occaon this past winter to travel freuently in Europe, twice in December nd then again in early January and ate February, and from one week to he next, in four countries and five anguages, I met with expressions of nti-American feeling that steadily ncreased in both their intensity and orce. The newspapers and television roadcasts never were at a loss for reorts of the failing diplomacy at the Jnited Nations, and whether in a Paris restaurant or a London park, on he train from Geneva to Zurich or at a hotel bar in Rome, it didn't matter where or how the conversation began. Once past the preliminary remarks about the traffic and the weather, I could count on the questions turning hostile. Was it the Iraqi oil fields that we wished to seize, or was it the Pentagon, keen to test a new, color-coordinated line of high explosives? Were the Americans serious in their intention to build in the Mesopotamian desert a Potemkin village of democracy? Was the White House policy being guided by the friends of Greater Israel? Did Colin Powell have a mind or principle of his own, or was he some sort of Christmas windup toy placed in front of a government microphone to broadcast prerecorded greetings of humanitarian concern? Was President Bush better understood as a clumsy thief or a pious thug?

The sarcasms fit the profile of the caricature long cherished by the standard-bearers of Europe's finest drawing-room opinion—the Americans seen as brute materialists, hardheaded and pragmatic, good with machinery but culturally illiterate, ferocious in our love of money and famous for our feats of gluttonous consumption, trusting only what we can count or eat, a nation of philistines blind to the distinctions between Beethoven and Molière but certain of the difference between a profit and a loss.

The European wits make the mistake of portraying us as a secular people enslaved to numbers and bound by facts, descendants of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, loyal in our allegiance to the scientific method and holding fast to Voltaire's "principle of universal reason." The caricature fails to account for the several varieties of American religious experience, and even the British choose not to notice that Jehovah is alive and well and often angry not only in Texas and Tennessee but also in the halls of Congress. Our national opinion polls report 46 percent of the respondents registering themselves—together with President George W. Bush—as evangelical Christians, twice born and therefore safe within the garden of redemption; 48 percent denying as heresy the theory of evolution, another 68 percent knowing that it has met or seen the Devil. More than 50 million readers buy the novels that tout the miracle of the Second Coming and borrow their plotlines from the Babylonian prophecies foretelling the Rapture and the Tribulation. Attorney General John Ashcroft asserts that in the United States "we have no king but Jesus," and Tom DeLay, the Republican majority leader in the House of Representatives, says that he has been assigned by God to promote "a biblical worldview" in American politics, that "only Christianity offers a way to live in response to the realities that we find in this world—only Christianity."

President Bush makes no secret of his devotion to the same creed, and when answering questions in London or Paris about the American purpose in Iraq (code name "Shock and Awe"), I usually found it necessary to begin with the distinction between a secular and a religious approach to foreign policy. A European electorate might not possess a thorough knowledge of a particular border or trade dispute, but everybody understands the dealing between nations as a dull and tiresome business, heavy with historical antecedent and unyielding in its financial details, encrusted with the familiar sores of ambiguity, hypocrisy, and spite. As Americans, we look for "moral clarity" and for a shuffling of interests more lively and cinematic—a war to end all wars, Darth Vader or the Angel Moroni hiding somewhere in the mountains, a shooting script complete with uplifting parables and the dialogue in the form of sermons in-variably laconic, weather-beaten, barely audible.

It was under the flags of a transcen-

of the horses and the guns. Horace [illegible] the [illegible] the [illegible] the Declaration of Independence. "These people must die out—there is no help for them. God has given this earth to those who will subdue and colonize it, and it is time to [illegible] [illegible]." President Woodrow Wilson enlisted the country in the first of the twentieth century's world wars under the banner of Christian crusade and took the trouble to write the Fourteen Points that he brought to the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 because "America had the infinite privilege of fulfilling her destiny and saving the world." Then as now, the Europeans were slow to grasp the American connection to divine Providence, and on first reading a draft of Wilson's manifesto, Georges Clemenceau, the French prime minister, looked up from the page and said, "Even the Lord Almighty limited Himself to Ten."

When President Bush appeared in the White House on the evening of March 6 to announce the imminent commencement of Iraq, it was a wonder that he didn't speak in tongues. His topic was geopolitical, but his message was religious, the blank expression engraved on his face disquietingly similar to the thousand-yard stare of the true believer, examined in the mirror of eternity. Reading first from a prophetic text, and then, for the better part of an hour, answering questions from the assembled scribes and pharisees, the president bore witness to a revelation mounted on four pillars of holy wrath:

1. America allies itself with Christ and goes to war to rid the world of evil.

2. Iraq is Sodom, or possibly Gomorrah.

3. Saddam is the Devil's pawn.

4. Any nation that refuses to join the "coalition of the willing" deserves to perish in the deserts of disbelief.

The president knows himself allied with the thrones of Christian virtue, and from the mouths of his brother-

phers the adoring phrases pour forth as if from Solomon's well of living waters, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense. "[illegible]," "[illegible] serenity," "casting his mission and that of the country in the grand vision of God's master plan," "humble leader of a great country," "impervious to doubt," "brother in Christ." Left to his own or his speechwriters' devices in front of an open microphone, the president seldom misses a chance to restate the good news in the language of the Bible.

"The liberty we prize is not America's gift to the world, it is God's gift to humanity."

"We do not claim to know all the ways of Providence, yet we can trust in them, placing our confidence in the loving God behind all of life, and all of history."

"Events aren't moved by blind change and chance . . . [but] by the hand of a just and faithful God."

"The crew of the shuttle *Columbia* did not return safely to earth. Yet we can pray that all are safely home."

"We will export death and violence to the four corners of the earth in defense of our great nation."

I don't doubt that somewhere on a road in Texas or a pond in Maine, the president beheld a great light, but I find as little sense in what he says as I find in the rustling of leaves or the pattering of rain. The failure in translation I attribute to my early education, which was entirely secular in its character and curriculum. On hearing my first Sunday sermon, at the age of thirteen in the white and gold chapel of a New England boarding school, I responded with the firm applause that I'd been taught was owed to a commencement or a campaign speech. Brought up to admire the founders of the American republic as men defined by the entirety of their intellect and the courage of their experiments, for the last fifty years I've been content to regard the bows that politicians make to tradition or caress as courtesy that reason pays to superstition. The candidate has come in search of votes, and he doesn't wish to slight the native handicrafts or walk in the wrong direction around the totem poles.

President Ronald Reagan's wearing of religion on his sleeve I could understand as a compliment to the ch[illegible] but unless I took President Bush at [illegible] literal, messianic word, I didn't kn[illegible] how else to explain to various Eu[illegible] pean bystanders how it had come [illegible] pass that America meant to fight [illegible] battle of Armageddon in Iraq. Beca[illegible] the crowd at the café table invaria[illegible] assumed that I must be joking, I fou[illegible] myself at some pains to draw the c[illegible] nection between the evangelist's dre[illegible] of Heaven and the politician's bl[illegible] print of Utopia. Both real estate sp[illegible] ulations speak to our American wish [illegible] believe in what isn't there: Sadd[illegible] Hussein's store of thermonucl[illegible] weapons, the Vietnamese army w[illegible] ing ashore at Waikiki, the perfect [illegible] gasm made to order by Christina Ag[illegible] era. The foreign observers who deple[illegible] the rapaciousness of our appetite [illegible] the goods and services of a spendthr[illegible] economy miss the point of the ent[illegible] prise. The material objects serve as te[illegible] timonials to the desired states of [illegible] maternity—not what the money bu[illegible] but what the money says about [illegible] rank and standing in the company [illegible] the saved. Eager to behold visions [illegible] the wilderness, captivated by the po[illegible] er of metaphor and the promise of tra[illegible] scendence, we're suckers for any sa[illegible] promotion designed to rescue us fr[illegible] the wreck of time. Our fondness f[illegible] the immaterial and invisible, for t[illegible] name of the thing instead of the thi[illegible] itself, is what sells the sports utility v[illegible] hicle or the soap; entire vocabularies [illegible] meaningless jargon—temporal as we[illegible] as spiritual, literary, scientific, poli[illegible] cal, and economic—describe enti[illegible] kingdoms of nonexistent thought. T[illegible] most successful prophets of sexual ha[illegible] piness and social transformation d[illegible] cover that the less they know abo[illegible] the subject in question, the more ea[illegible] ily they can escape the mortal coil of i[illegible] convenient fact and so float effortles[illegible] ly upward into the spheres [illegible] radiant abstraction.

If my revisionist portrait of the tr[illegible] American as a born poet and natur[illegible] metaphysician wasn't deemed cred[illegible] ble in Italy, Switzerland, France, ar[illegible] England, it was because the othe[illegible] people in the room didn't wish to b[illegible] lieve that America had come so dar[illegible] gerously loose from its moorings in th[illegible] eighteenth-century Enlightenmen[illegible]

ir angry objections to our pre-
tive strike at Iraq followed from a
e of loss and disillusion. What had
ened to the story told by Thomas
e, or to the hope of a democratic
blic founded on the laws of na-
and the rule of reason? Where was
wisdom of Abraham Lincoln, or
umanitarian idealism of Franklin
oosevelt?

he questions don't lend them-
es to reassuring answers. The sight
resident George Bush shaking the
f righteousness at the Four Horse-
n of the Apocalypse doesn't bring
ind the political theory of James
lison; I think instead of Jonathan
ards preaching a furious sermon to
ngregation of sinners in colonial
ssachusetts ("The bow of God's
th is bent, and the arrow made
ly on the string, and justice bends
arrow at your heart . . ."), or pos-
y of Al-Hajjaj, who assumed the
ernorship of Baghdad in the year
, and greeted the inhabitants with
essage meant to administer shock
l inspire awe: "O people of Iraq . . .
God, I shall strip you like bark, I
ll truss you like a bundle of twigs,
all beat you like stray camels. . . .
God, what I promise, I fulfill; what
I purpose, I accomplish;
what I measure, I cut off."

The makers of America's liberties
re discoverers of new plants and
w stars, delighting in what Thomas
ferson called "the inimitable free-
m of the human mind," bringing
their studies of science and philos-
hy the excitement of explorers
apping the headwaters of the Mis-
uri River or measuring the transit
Venus—Benjamin Franklin (au-
or, printer, inventor, statesman),
illiam Bartram (botanist), Thomas
ine (essayist, engineer), Benjamin
ush (physician, chemist), Thomas
fferson (author, architect, diplo-
at, agronomist). They didn't have
uch use for priests, and they insist-
l on the separation of church and
ate, not because they feared the
ower of the state to harm religion
ut because they feared, more sensi-
y, the power of religion to harm the
ate. Mindful of the religious wars in
urope, of the St. Bartholomew's
ay Massacre, the fires of the
Catholic Inquisition, and the blood-soaked cross of the medieval Crusades, Jefferson associated the power of religion with a tyranny that "has been severely felt by mankind, and has filled the history of ten or twelve centuries with too many atrocities not to merit a proscription from meddling with government."

Tirelessly curious about all things great and small, the inventors of the American idea pursued what they took to be the proper study of mankind in as many spheres of reference as they could crowd into a Philadelphia library company or a Boston philosophical society, always with the hope of constructing a government on the blueprint of universal reason despite, again in Voltaire's words, "all the passions which struggle against it; despite the tyrants who wish to drown it in blood; despite the imposters who would employ superstition to bring it to naught."

President Bush speaks for an earlier period in American history, from a pulpit in the Puritan forest before it received the gift of books. If his biographers can be trusted, we now have in the White House a president so secure in his belief that the course of human events rests in "the hand of a just and faithful God" that he counts his ignorance as a virtue and regards his lack of curiosity as a sign of moral strength. A similarly primitive way of thinking (fearful, intolerant, fond of magic) darkens the mind of the shamans drawing up the Pentagon's plans for the conquest of evil and accounts for the punitive reign of virtue currently being imposed upon the American body politic by the Justice Department, the Congress, and the Supreme Court. The collective retreat into the mist of a simplified past speaks to the exhaustion of the mentality that framed the Constitution and for two centuries carried forward the American experiment with freedom. Our Washington geopoliticians like to imagine their war on terrorism as "a clash of civilizations." They flatter themselves with the high-toned noun; what they have incompetently in hand is a clash of superstitions, and when I listen to them talk I hear the rattle of feathered drums and the echo of bronze and braying horns. ■

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—Arthur Golden

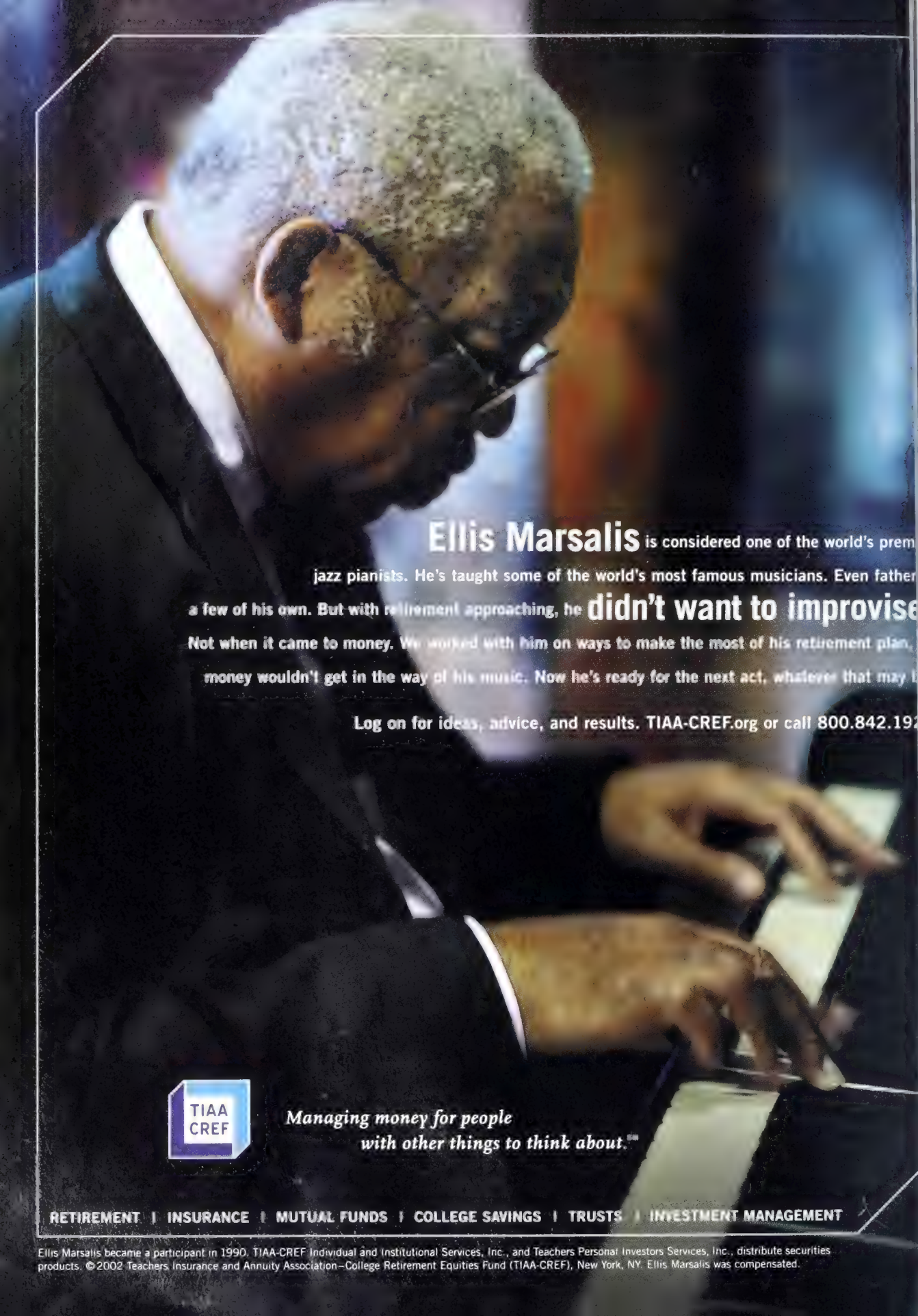
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HARPER'S INDEX

Last calendar year in which the Dow Jones Industrial Average gained in value : 1999
Last period in which the Dow declined for four consecutive years : 1929–1932
Percentage change since 1968 in the real value of the U.S. federal minimum wage : –37
Factor by which Americans' total debt to private lenders for college tuition has increased since 1995 : 4
Factor by which industry funding for university biomedical research has increased since 1980 : 22
ercentage change since 1988 in the average subscription price of a U.S. scientific, medical, or technical journal : +250
Number of words that the *New York Times* has devoted to February's shuttle accident per resulting death : 28,500
Number of words that the *Times* devoted to 1998's U.S. Embassy bombings in Africa per resulting death : 163
ercentage of Americans who believed in early March that Saddam Hussein was involved in the September 11 attacks : 45
Weeks before this poll was taken that President Bush said that he "can't make [the] claim" of such a link : 5
Ratio of the price of a barrel of oil in March to the price of a body bag from the U.S. military's supplier : 1:1
imated percentage by which the average U.S. gasoline price would rise if costs of securing oil were recouped with a tax : 29
Minimum number of hydrogen-car fueling stations currently under construction in Tokyo : 4
Ratio of the number of Volkswagens sold in China last year to the number sold in the United States : 4:3
Ratio of the average garment-worker wage in China to that in Mexico : 1:3
Percentage of Mexicans who believe that the U.S. Southwest rightfully belongs to Mexico : 58
Number of new Indonesian islands discovered by satellite analysis in February : 1,000
Chance that a male human worldwide is a direct patrilineal descendant of Genghis Khan : 1 in 200
ances that a thoroughbred stallion is a patrilineal descendant of the Darley Arabian, a seventeenth-century horse : 19 in 20
Price for a fifteen-child sleepover in the Bronx Zoo's Congo Gorilla Forest exhibit : $4,500
Per capita GDP of the Republic of Congo : $900
Estimated number of bird species that have declined because of Oregon logging since 1968 : 23
Estimated number that have increased because of logging : 2
Average number of days an oiled seabird survives in the wild after cleaning and release : 6
Average number of industrial compounds and pollutants that can be found in an American's blood and urine : 91
Average factor by which levels of uranium in the urine of Afghan test subjects last fall exceeded normal : 25
Pounds of steel discovered to have been eaten away from the head of an Ohio nuclear reactor in February 2002 : 70
Thickness in inches of the warped stainless steel that remained to prevent the reactor from rupturing into the air : ⅜
Grant that the Department of Energy gave a U.S. company last November to create a new living organism : $3,000,000
Percentage, respectively, of the U.S. fathers and mothers responsible for child support who do not pay it : 26, 36
Percentage of employed U.S. mothers who think full-time mothers look down on them : 66
Percentage of full-time mothers who think employed mothers look down on them : 73
Number of Japanese children who refused to attend school last year, according to Japan's government : 138,722
Fine that Britain's education minister has proposed levying on parents whose children are chronic truants : $3,900
Chance that a British military reservist called up since January has asked to be excused from duty : 1 in 8
Number of U.S. soldiers who faced disciplinary action between 1998 and 2000 for refusing an anthrax vaccine : 441
Number of U.S. doctors per pharmaceutical-sales representative in 1995 and last year, respectively : 19, 9
Estimated number of audience cell-phone calls that constituted a "telesymphony" performed last year in Austria : 5,000
rojected duration in years of John Cage's "As Slow as Possible," whose performance began last February in Germany : 639
Projected duration in months of the piece's opening three-note arpeggio : 18

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READINGS

[Proposal]

NOUS SOMMES TOUS AMERICAINS

By Régis Debray, from the January/February issue of the New Left Review. *This piece was adapted from Debray's* L'Édit de Caracalla ou plaidoyer pour des États-Unis d'Occident, *published in March 2002 by Fayard. Translated from the French by John Howe.*

My dear Debray,

THE DEED IS DONE! I am a U.S. citizen. You'll be pleased to hear that I passed the language and history tests with flying colours and without impugning the reputations of our ambassador's predecessors here in Washington. The vow of allegiance was sworn in the somewhat sombre surroundings of the Immigration Office; we stood before the Star-Spangled Banner, hand on heart. Knowing me as you do, however, you will understand that this was no act of petty opportunism on my part but a prelude to a vaster scheme.

Naturally, I don't expect to convince you; but who could not attempt to persuade his oldest friend of a project which may prove the only safeguard—however temporary—of the civilization that has formed them both? In A.D. 212 the emperor Caracalla, mindful of the barbarian hordes at his borders and the growing burden of military expenditures, took the revolutionary step of declaring every freeman of the Roman Empire—from the banks of the Tigris to the Atlantic Ocean—a citizen of Rome. In a trice, the faltering superpower was reinforced by millions of new taxpayers, talents, and recruits. The edifice endured for another two hundred years.

Today, does not Western civilization—in the hands of a mere 15 percent of the world's population and, thanks to globalisation, as visible to the other 85 percent as the contents of a Hermès shopwindow—demand a similarly unified power? Shared goals unite Europe and the U.S., but our wealth attracts resentment and around us there surges a rising tide of the hungry and the dispossessed.

Our civilization demands its own encompassing political institution: the United States of the West. The European response to September 11—"*Nous sommes tous américains!*"—was heartwarming in its way, but shared sentiments without unity of command are good for nothing but after-dinner speeches. Less poetry, please, and more logic! Kennedy's *Ich bin ein Berliner* was a strategy, not a spasm of emotion. A new century lies before us. What role will Europe settle for in America's march across Asia: Staffing a first-aid post on the Afghan frontier? Patrolling the Gulf in a paddleboat? My friend, the only way to escape protectorate status is to move up from Zone Two into Zone One. Is it just, is it democratic, that the inhabitants of the fifty states alone should vote for the American president, whose thumbs-down determines the fate not just of a couple of gladiators but of millions of lives?

The resemblance between the pioneers of

the Tiber and the apprentices of the Potomac is striking: On both sides, one finds the same pragmatic refusal of abstraction, historical optimism, inaptitude for melancholy; chicanery everywhere, from the Operations Room to the marriage bed. Both offer a welcome for strangers and a respect for all gods. In both, the conquered—Latinos, Japanese—are granted citizens' rights.

The first step is to instruct our international-law specialists to draw up a conversion plan, transforming a region of common values into one of shared sovereignty. Territorial discontinuity will be no problem: think of Hawaii, let alone Martinique or Guadeloupe. The Atlantic will be to the U.S.W. as the Mediterranean was to Rome—*mare nostrum*. Paris and Los Angeles are equidistant from the Hudson. What use the irrational multiplication of foreign ministries, intelligence services, surveillance satellites, in pursuit of an identical set of interests?

Here, perhaps, my long years of service to the French state may be of use in drafting an advisory brief for the advocates of both sides. How, first of all, should Europe's spokesmen put the case for the U.S.W. if granted an audience in the Oval Office? I would suggest six basic points.

1. Your superpower is no empty boast, Mr. President, but you are overextended. You cannot cover the planet all by yourself. See how many danger zones already escape your grasp. North Korea still unsubdued, the president of Afghanistan unable to leave his capital. Rubber dinghies blast holes in your warships in the Gulf. U.S. businessmen can scarcely travel abroad without threat of kidnapping or worse.

Through their ballooning birthrates, the armies of the least dependable nations will become ever more dangerous; those of the whites, though better equipped, will run short of recruits and already lack enthusiasm for the sacrifice. Your population's attachment to the things of this world—so important in sustaining our mutual quality of life—is not a problem as long as superior firepower allows you to dominate from 30,000 feet. The universal support you enjoyed in the immediate aftermath of September 11, you will have noticed, has been on the wane. Our electorates, too, can read a map and do their sums. Confucius plus Allah equals 70 percent of oil reserves and nearly two thirds of the global population. China is with you now, but if in the future it were to see its interests in a Sino-Pakistan-Saudi axis, Europe might feel its centre of gravity start to shift. One day, your troops will have to step down into the mud. United in one great transatlantic federation, however, our masses will be freshly inspired to fight alongside—or even in advance of—their new compatriots.

2. Consider the demographics. In 1900, the West had a third of the world's population and, through its colonial system and the illiteracy of its subject peoples, dominated half the globe. In 2025, Westerners will be a mere 10 percent, and our literacy rates are on the decline. Grouping ourselves into a single federation might not end our demographic stagnation, but it would at least temper one flow of immigrants with another. You will bring your millions of Latinos into the United States of the West, and we our Muslims.

Indeed, with our millions of North Africans and Turks, we know your enemies better than you do. Your ideas are too simple for the complexities of an Islamic world with which you lack common frontiers and shared memories. Hence your clumsy counteroffensives, ill-matched alliances, crude analysis.

More important still, Mr. President, the incorporation of Europe will mean a WASP replenishment of your population on a massive scale. The demographic effect of two or three hundred million ethnic Europeans, fair-skinned relations of your Pilgrim Fathers, is a factor you will not want to ignore.

3. The economic argument is equally compelling. Consider the advantages of encompassing nearly 60 percent of world GDP within one sovereign state. There will be no more anxieties about foreign investors' willingness to sustain your current account deficit. They will have no choice. What could better restore the shaken faith of your investors in their post-Enron corporate culture than the solidity and long-standing relationships of our Rhenish model? And what better way to invigorate our stagnating industries than the shock therapy of Texas or Manhattan? Working together, Big Government and Big Business will forge the optimised superhighway of the future. Can you achieve it alone, Mr. President?

4. Culture, I know, is not your first concern; I will be brief. Within the U.S.W., your entertainment industry will no longer be the target of our envious professionals. Our contributions in this field will give you a quality label to silence any such carping. Globalisation will no longer be disparaged as Americanisation. Hamburger plus chateaubriand, soap opera plus Visconti, Coca-Cola plus Château Pétrus, Disneyland plus the Louvre—the complement of quantity plus quality will enable the U.S.W. to conquer on two fronts: the right to happiness plus spiritual elevation. Mass audiences and cultural refinement, big budgets and experimental art—who then will dare to talk about dumbing down, wall-to-wall vulgarity, brain candy? Our common culture will no longer be synonymous with materialism and



COURTESY KLOTZ/SIRMON GALLERY, NEW YORK CITY

"Field of Boxes," by Jan Staller, was on display in March at Klotz/Sirmon Gallery, in New York City.

exhibitionism—the products of your Military-Industrial-Entertainment Complex—but with culture *tout court*, from top to bottom of the range. Alone, you are omnipresent. Together, we will be irreproachable.

5. The present sharing of the military burden places too much of it on you. A time will come when defence expenditure will exceed the limits acceptable to your domestic opinion. Your hundreds of millions of new taxpayers will at last allow you to stop "externalising" the costs—already a hefty percentage of your federal budget—of that immense military apparatus. What's more, granting citizenship to your oldest allies will swamp the siren voices of isolationist withdrawal with enthusiastic supporters of humanitarian war.

6. You fear the opinion polls: "America for the Americans!" Yet your analysts already describe Israel as the fifty-first state, Taiwan as the fifty-second, and Turkey as the fifty-third without Midwest complaint. A marketing campaign will soon persuade the nervous: Infinite Justice, America on the March, Unending Adventure, Happiness Unbounded! We will co-finance it. Reassure your patriots and militias that the demographic doubling, the influx of fresh money, the extension of Americanness,

will double the glory of your country and its protective power. Remind them of the gain in strategic depth—your enemies pushed outside a reassuring cordon of buffer states.

It is for the reasons all too briefly summarized here that we ask you, in all humility, to grant us the rights of the City. My respects, Mr. President.

And now for the Old World. How best to present the case to a president of the European Commission? East-bank hierarchs, don't forget, are thinner skinned. The eminent zero will require gentle handling.

1. Europe's heart is willing: that is the main thing. "Happy Birthday to You" has supplanted "*Bon anniversaire, nos voeux les plus sincères,*" as Harry Potter has replaced *Le Petit Prince* and Mickey Mouse upstaged Spirou. While transatlantic citizenship remains a right to be acquired, Americanness is an established fact. The first will crown the second, a roof placed on the walls of a house that has risen almost imperceptibly, day by day.

For Europeans the biotope is already American. Your stock exchanges are tuned to Wall Street, your bankers to Alan Greenspan, your scientific reviews to *Nature*, your prime-time TV to our comedy shows, your criticism to *The New York Review of Books*. Your managers, your tools, the buzzwords you fetishise, are all imported from here. Your future CEOs and finance ministers are trained in our business schools. Your presidential hopefuls scramble to be filmed with the commander in chief on the White House lawn or, better still, at the ranch.

It is futile to protest: happiness was French in the eighteenth century; today it is American. Thomas Jefferson was in the habit of saying that a civilised man would place his own country first and France second. The motto has been inverted by your young technocrats. All that the French, Germans, and Italians know about their neighbours now is transmitted via those of their works that enjoy transatlantic approval. Since the U.S. fixes the standards and norms of law, beauty, finance, intelligence, and justice, all cultural exchanges pass through here. Gastronomy excepted, all certificates of authenticity and proper functioning—whether of your telephones, your movies, or your governments—are American stamped.

2. For all the efforts of your legal and administrative experts, the European state will never leave the drawing board. A good citizen would have to memorise a schema—annually updated—more complex than an oil refinery's plan: the Commission, the Council, the Parliament, the Court, scores of abbreviations and acronyms, the key to current compensation scales. The good American just needs to watch TV: flag, Wall Street, weather. U.S.W. citizenship will result in an enviable simplification of your people's daily lives.

Your depoliticised populations naturally lack faith in your electoral process. Under the E.U.'s

[Test]

THE EDUCATION OF LITTLE TREE

From "Learning All About Court with B.J.," an activity book for Native American children going to federal or tribal court published by the United States Department of Justice.

Take this silly test to see if you can guess everyone's job.

The Prosecutor's job is to:
A. Tend the animals.
B. Ride a pony.
C. Ask questions that will help you tell what you know or saw about a crime.

A Witness's job is to:
A. Tell what they know or saw about a case.
B. Go to a powwow.
C. Tell funny stories to their dog.

The Court Reporter's job is to:
A. Write down everything that is said in the courtroom.
B. Tend cornfields.
C. Make pottery.

The Judge's job is to:
A. Paint a picture of a pickup truck.
B. Make sure the rules of court are followed.
C. Weave a rug.

The Court Clerk's job is to:
A. Play the drums.
B. Ask witnesses to promise to tell the truth.
C. Weave a basket.

A Victims' Advocate's job is to:
A. Go to the trading post.
B. Play jump rope with the dog.
C. Help you feel okay about going to court.

The Defense Attorney's job is to:
A. Play basketball.
B. Help the defendant.
C. Build a tepee.

unique brand of enlightened despotism, the real power centres—the Central Bank, the Commission, the Directorates—are utterly undemocratic, while democratic structures have no power. Your elected deputies, presidents, and prime ministers gesticulate grandly on an empty stage. War and peace, trade policy, budget, currency, major technological choices, are out of their hands—hence that faraway look in their eyes. As they cast their ballots for the U.S.W. president, European electorates will feel proud to have some influence again.

3. At last, your voice will be heard. Your men of influence will expatiate in newspapers that matter. You will have access to the real decision makers. Of what use a French or British Security Council veto that has not been used in thirty years? You grumble now about our foreign-policy motives, but you will see our slogan—"Multilateral when we can, unilateral when we must"—in a new light, once all this is yours. On 19 November 1996, the Security Council voted fourteen to one—the U.S. dissenting—to re-elect Boutros Boutros-Ghali as secretary general. A fortnight later our candidate Kofi Annan was appointed. That's the kind of multilateralism you will grow to enjoy. You complain that the American administration goes back on its word—Kyoto, land mines, International Criminal Court. Wait till you, too, can overturn a treaty retrospectively through federal law. Only through the U.S.W. will Europe have the means to say something to the world again and—more importantly—to make it listen.

As for your public opinion: recent experience has shown the unreliability of the referendum process, so no need to make too much fuss. Three extra initials on the passport, some flags to run up, bilingual messages to be played on internal flights—the necessary adjustments will hardly be noticed. Your signature here, please, at the bottom of the page.

And as for you and your anti-imperialist friends, my dear Debray, you may think the game is up. On the contrary—this will be just the beginning. From now on, your critiques will no longer be treated as crude anti-Americanism but as democratic civic protest. Cheer up! I see you now, marching on Washington, arm in arm with your fellow dissidents, Chomsky, Mailer, Sontag, Vidal.

See you later!

Your
Xavier

*Xavier de C***'s letter, mailed from Washington days before he left on a mission for his new government, arrived too late for Régis Debray to reply with his own, very different future for Europe, as he explains in an epitaph for the former French diplomat:*

*"For a man like C***, the thought that the genius of the West had fled across the Atlantic would be reason enough to follow it with arms and baggage. But C*** paid a high price. A Transoxanian specialist—he spoke fluent Turkmen, Karakalpak, Uzbek, and Tajiki—man of action, and strategic analyst, his talents had long been of service to the French state. They were now at the Americans' disposal.*

*"Shortly after posting his letter to me, C*** was dispatched by the Pentagon to Turkmenistan. He was killed one icy evening in November 2001, along with most of his men. They had advanced towards the Afghan frontier by Balkh, without encountering any resistance, when a cluster bomb, dropped wide of target by a B-52, exploded over them."*

[Interview]

WE DECIDE, YOU SHUT UP

From a February 4 interview on The O'Reilly Factor, *a Fox News program. Jeremy Glick, whose father was killed in the World Trade Center on September 11, reported that after the interview O'Reilly said to him, "Get out of my studio before I tear you to fucking pieces."*

BILL O'REILLY: In the "Personal Stories" segment tonight, we were surprised to find out that an American who lost his father in the World Trade Center attack had signed an antiwar advertisement that accused the U.S.A. itself of terrorism. The offending passage read, "We too watched with shock the horrific events of September 11 . . . we too mourned the thousands of innocent dead and shook our heads at the terrible scenes of carnage—even as we recalled similar scenes in Baghdad, Panama City, and, a generation ago, Vietnam." With us now is Jeremy Glick, whose father, Barry, was a Port Authority worker at the Trade Center. Mr. Glick is a co-author of the book *Another World Is Possible*.

I'm surprised you signed this. You were the only one of all of the families who signed.

JEREMY GLICK: Well, actually, that's not true.

O'REILLY: Who signed the advertisement?

GLICK: Peaceful Tomorrow, which represents 9/11 families, was also involved.

O'REILLY: Hold it, hold it, hold it, Jeremy. You're the only one who signed this advertisement.

GLICK: As an individual.

O'REILLY: Yes, as—with your name. You were the only one. I was surprised, and the reason I was surprised is that this ad equates the United States with the terrorists. And I was offended by that.

GLICK: I'm actually shocked that you're surprised. Our current president inherited a political legacy from his father that's responsible for training militarily, and economically, and situating geopolitically the parties involved in the murder of my father and countless thousands of others. So I don't see why it's surprising—

O'REILLY: All right. Now let me stop you here. So—

GLICK: —that I would come back and want to support—

O'REILLY: It is surprising, and I'll tell you why. I'll tell you why it's surprising.

GLICK: —escalating—

O'REILLY: You are mouthing a far-left position that is a marginal position in this society, which you're entitled to.

GLICK: It's marginal—right.

O'REILLY: You're entitled to it, all right, but you're—you see, even—I'm sure your beliefs are sincere, but what upsets me is I don't think your father would be approving of this.

GLICK: Well, actually, my father thought that Bush's presidency was illegitimate.

O'REILLY: Maybe he did, but—

GLICK: I also didn't think that Bush—

O'REILLY: —I don't think he'd be equating this country as a terrorist nation, as you are.

GLICK: Well, I wasn't saying that it was necessarily like that.

O'REILLY: Yes, you are. You signed—

GLICK: What I'm saying is—

O'REILLY: —this, and that absolutely said that.

GLICK: —is that six months before the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan, starting in the Carter Administration and continuing and escalating while Bush's father was head of the CIA, we recruited a hundred thousand radical mujahedeen to combat a democratic government in Afghanistan, the Turaki government.

O'REILLY: All right. I don't want to—

GLICK: Maybe—

O'REILLY: I don't want to debate world politics with you.

GLICK: Well, why not? This is about world politics.

O'REILLY: Because number one, I don't really care what you think.

GLICK: Well, okay.

O'REILLY: You're— I want to—

GLICK: But you do care because you—

O'REILLY: No, no. Look—

GLICK: The reason why you care is because you evoke 9/11—

O'REILLY: Here's why I care.

GLICK: —to rationalize—

O'REILLY: Here's why I care—

GLICK: Let me finish. You evoke 9/11 to rationalize everything from domestic plunder to imperialistic aggression worldwide.

O'REILLY: Okay. That's a bunch—

GLICK: You evoke sympathy with the 9/11 families.

O'REILLY: That's a bunch of crap. I've done more for the 9/11 families by their own admission—I've done more for them than you will ever hope to do.

GLICK: Okay.

O'REILLY: So you keep your mouth shut when you sit here exploiting those people.

GLICK: Well, you're not representing me.

O'REILLY: And I'd never represent you. You know why?

GLICK: Why?

O'REILLY: Because you have a warped view of this world and a warped view of this country.

GLICK: Okay.

O'REILLY: Here's the record. You didn't support the action against Afghanistan to remove the Taliban. You were against it. Okay?

GLICK: Why would I want to brutalize and further punish the people in Afghanistan?

O'REILLY: Who killed your father!

GLICK: The people in Afghanistan—

O'REILLY: Who killed your father.

GLICK: —didn't kill my father.

O'REILLY: Sure they did. The Al Qaeda people were trained there.

GLICK: The Al Qaeda people? What about the Afghan people?

O'REILLY: See, I'm more angry about it than you are!

GLICK: So what about George Bush—

O'REILLY: What about George Bush? He had nothing to do with it.

GLICK: —Senior, as director of the CIA.

O'REILLY: He had nothing to do with it.

GLICK: So the people that trained a hundred thousand mujahedeen who were—

O'REILLY: Man, I hope your mom isn't watching this.

GLICK: Well, I hope she is.

O'REILLY: I hope your mother is not watching this because you— That's it. I'm not going to say anymore.

GLICK: Okay.

O'REILLY: In respect for your father—

GLICK: On September 14, do you want to know what I'm doing?

O'REILLY: Shut up. Shut up.

GLICK: Oh, please don't tell me to shut up.

O'REILLY: As respect—as respect—in respect for your father, who was a Port Authority worker, a fine American, who got killed unnecessarily by barbarians—

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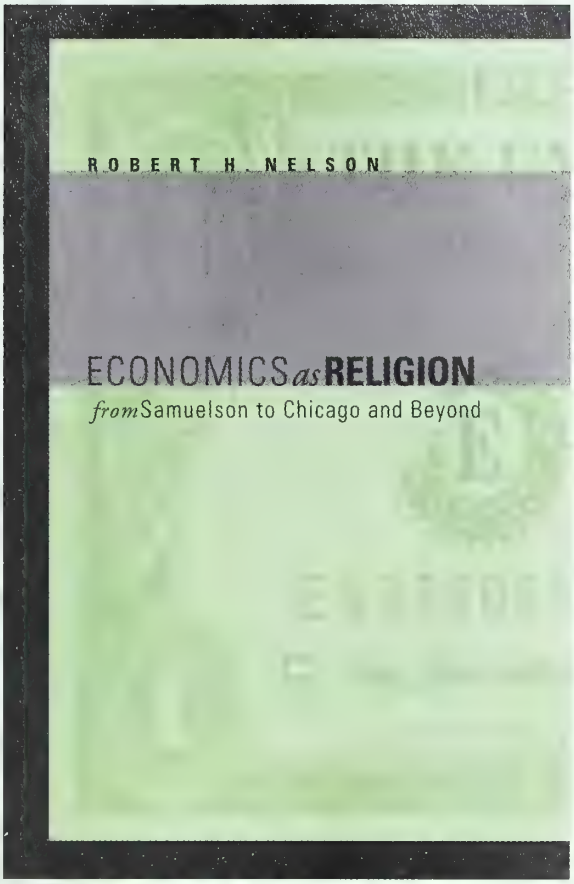
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GLICK: By radical extremists who were trained by this government—
O'REILLY: Out of respect for him—
GLICK: —not the people of America.
O'REILLY: —I'm not going to—
GLICK: —the people of the ruling class, the small minority.
O'REILLY: Cut his mike. I'm not going to dress you down anymore, out of respect for your father.
GLICK: That means we're done?
O'REILLY: We're done.

[Types]

DIE ANOTHER WAY

From a set of new mortality classifications released by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in August 2002.

Asphyxia, asphyxiation
- by
  - chemical in terrorism
  - fumes in terrorism (chemical weapons)
  - fumes in war operations (chemical weapons)
  - gas (see also Table of drugs and chemicals)
    - in terrorism (chemical weapons)
    - in war operations (chemical weapons)
- from
  - fire (see also Exposure, fire)
    - in terrorism
    - in war operations

Burn, burned, burning (by) (from) (on)
- chemical (external) (internal)
  - in terrorism (chemical weapons)
  - in war operations (chemical weapons)
- in terrorism (from fire-producing device)
  - nuclear explosion
  - petrol bomb

Collapse
- building
  - burning (uncontrolled fire)
    - in terrorism
- structure
  - burning (uncontrolled fire)
    - in terrorism

Crash
- aircraft (powered)
  - in terrorism
  - in war operations

Crushed
- between objects (moving) (stationary and moving)
- by, in
  - falling
    - aircraft
      - in terrorism
      - in war operations

Explosion (in) (of) (on) (with secondary fire)
- terrorism
- war operations (see also War operations, explosion)

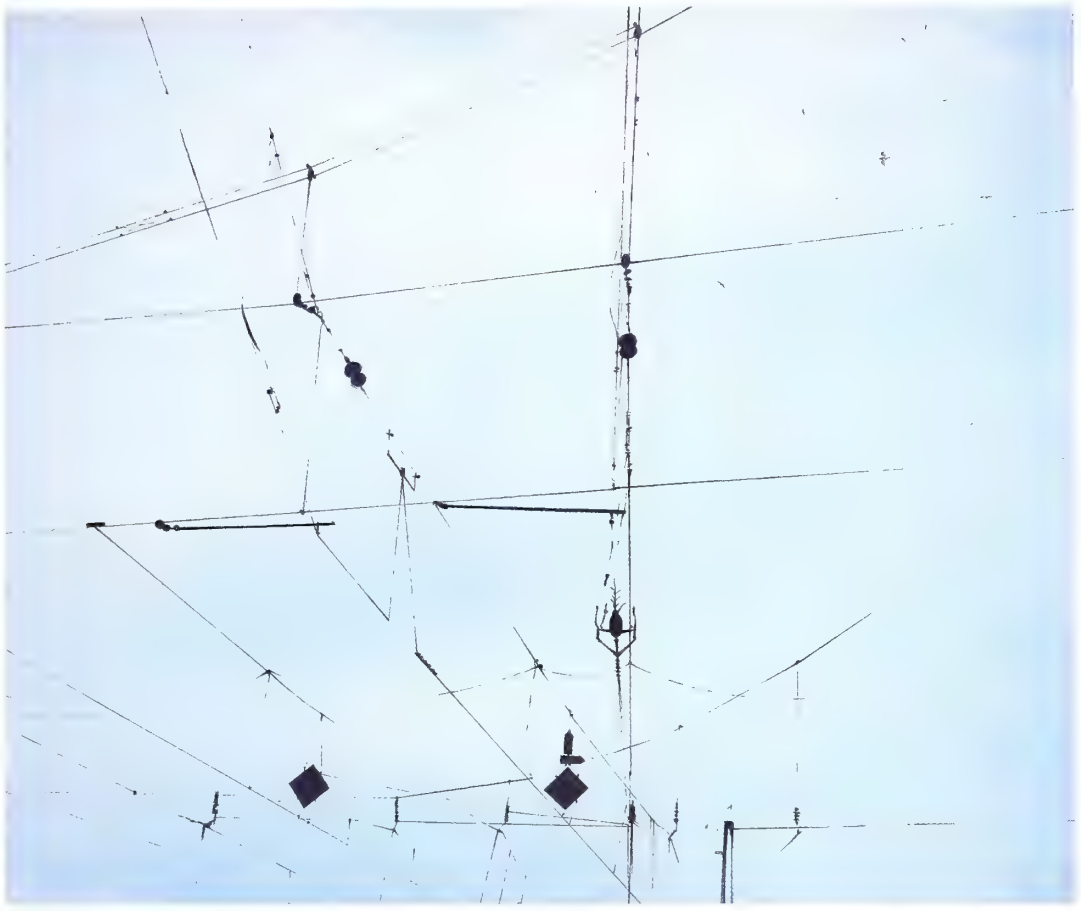
Exposure to
- fire (with exposure to smoke or fumes or causing burns, or secondary explosion)
  - in, of, on, starting in
    - terrorism (by fire-producing device)
      - fittings or furniture (burning building) (uncontrolled fire)
      - from nuclear explosion

Fall, falling
- from, off
  - building
    - burning (uncontrolled fire)
      - in terrorism
  - structure
    - burning (uncontrolled fire)
      - in terrorism

Jumped, jumping
- from
  - building (see also Jumped, from, high place)
    - burning (uncontrolled fire)
      - in terrorism
  - structure (see also Jumped, from, high place)
    - burning (uncontrolled fire)
      - in terrorism

Struck by
- bullet (see also Discharge, by type of firearm)
  - in terrorism
  - in war operations
- missile
  - in terrorism—see Terrorism, missile
- object
  - falling
    - from, in, on
      - building
        - burning (uncontrolled fire)
          - in terrorism

Suicide, suicidal (attempted) (by)
- in terrorism
- explosive(s) (material)
  - in terrorism



COURTESY ARTEMIS GREENBERG VAN DOREN GALLERY, NEW YORK CITY

Overhead (3), *by Elizabeth Magill, was on display last winter at Artemis Greenberg Van Doren Gallery, in New York City.*

[Endgame]

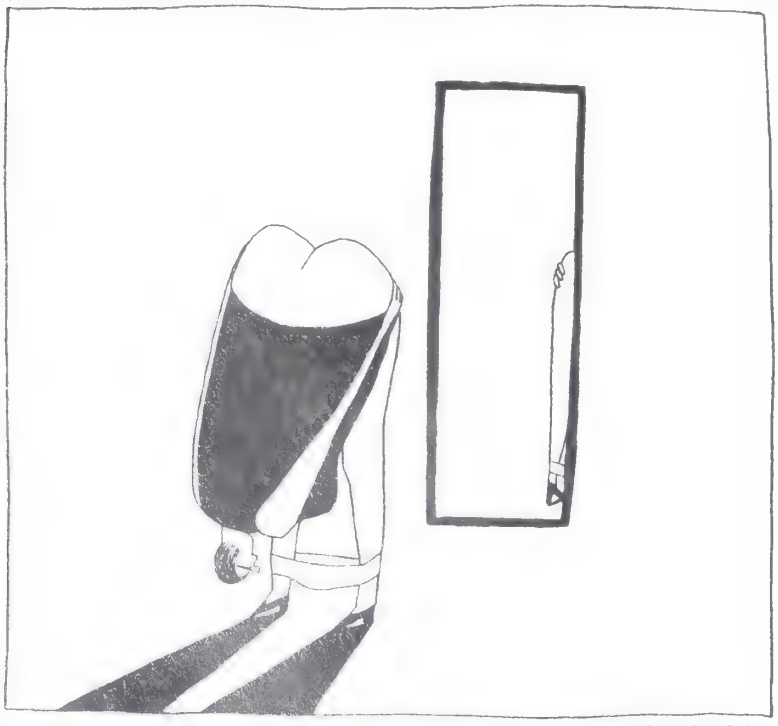
I TOLD U I WAS HARDCORE

From a January 12 Internet Relay Chat session during which twenty-one-year-old Brandon Vedas ("ripper") of Phoenix, Arizona, ingested large doses of several drugs, including Klonopin, methadone, Restoril, Inderal, marijuana, and rum, until he passed out and died. The whole scene was broadcast live on Vedas's webcam.

[ripper] I got a grip of drugs
[grphish] show us ripper
[%Pnutbot] ripper is a gangster!!!
[Smoke2k] what do you have
[ripper] tune in
[ripper] watch
[grphish] give us url
[grphish] rippercam
[%Pnutbot] rippercam is functioning
[@phalaris] amaze
[ripper] http://www.klonopinz.com/webcam.html
[@phalaris] !rippercam
[grphish] oh dear
[grphish] thats a lot of klonopin
[grphish] along with shrooms or pot
[%Pnutbot] shrooms are inevitable.
[grphish] yay ripper!
[ripper] methadone 80mg
[grphish] you lucky fux0r
[grphish] TAKE ONE CAPSULE
[grphish] takea thousant!
[yoda] whats the fuckin bottles
[%Pnutbot] bottles is kind of coffin shaped too
[ripper] tonight is a ogod night fellas
[yoda] will u jerk it for me
[grphish] so whaty do you have all together
[ripper] klono, methadone, restoril, inderal, weed, kb
[ripper] bottoms up fells
[ripper] 8000mg equivalent of oxy-contin
[grphish] i bet that tasted like shit

[ripper] whao thats alot
[ripper] jesus
[%Pnutbot] Jesus healed the lame! With cannabis oil!
[ripper] I'm all fucked up
[ripper] motheruke
[@phalaris] attempted suicide #84
[grphish] did you smoke bud as well?
[ripper] yeah
[grphish] ripper: how much methadone did you take?
[@phalaris] keep that respirator hady
[ripper] I'm gonna take some klonos
[ripper] watch 80mg
[%Pnutbot] 80mg is alot of ritalin though
[grphish] how much is a regular dose?
[ripper] they start [eolpe who shoot at 20-30mg
[@phalaris] do you take this much nightly?
[grphish] dont OD on us ripper
[ripper] ufusls pillz
[grphish] did the methadone kick in aqlready
[ripper] oh yeah
[ripper] I'm fcuk
[@phalaris] i wonder if we'll see ripper ever again
[grphish] what are you on right now ripper
[ripper] aalot of drugs
[ripper] 80mg methadone 8mg klonopin 120mg resotril 1.5 grams KB 110 mg inderal
[@phalaris] you're making drugs up!
[ripper] and 2 vicodan
[grphish] you ever done this much before
[ripper] thats it
[Smoke2k] eat more
[Smoke2k] thats not much
[@phalaris] man. 2 vicodin would do me in
[grphish] don't overdose on us ripper :[
[Smoke2k] I eat that every morning
[ripper] did u not see my bag of drugs
[ripper] look
[Smoke2k] you pussy eat more
[grphish] id take the methadone over all of that
[ripper] don't talk to me about doing enough drugs
[ripper] thats my pesonal stash
[ripper] all the goods for a weekend of fun those benzos
[ripper] fuck yeah
[grphish] you're not going to overdose on us are you?
[ripper] bottosms up
[ripper] cheers and righty hoe
[Smoke2k] hell yea eat more
[Smoke2k] eat more you pussy
[ripper] I havent taken inderal
[ripper] mmmmMM
[Smoke2k] damn if you die you fucking bitch I am going to feel so bad
[Smoke2k] eat more
[grphish] dude anyone knows rippers address?
[grphish] someone call the paramedics on him
[ripper] there we go
[ripper] I should be set
[Smoke2k] I suggest he just doesn't eat anymore
[ripper] these are good pillz u know
[ripper] I am having a wonderful evening
[grphish] you ever done this much before?
[ripper] this is usual weekend behaviour
[ripper] I told u fucks
[Smoke2k] how many have you eaten before
[ripper] my mom is in the next room doing crozzwordz
[ripper] watcht this bitch
[Smoke2k] damn I gotta get this fucking web cam

A CLOSED CAPTION HAND-SIGNER PRACTICING IN FRONT OF A MIRROR FOR A TELEVISED PANEL DISCUSSION ON HOW INDISPENSABLE THE FCC IS TO THE DISSEMINATION OF USEFUL INFORMATION AND MEANINGFUL ART.



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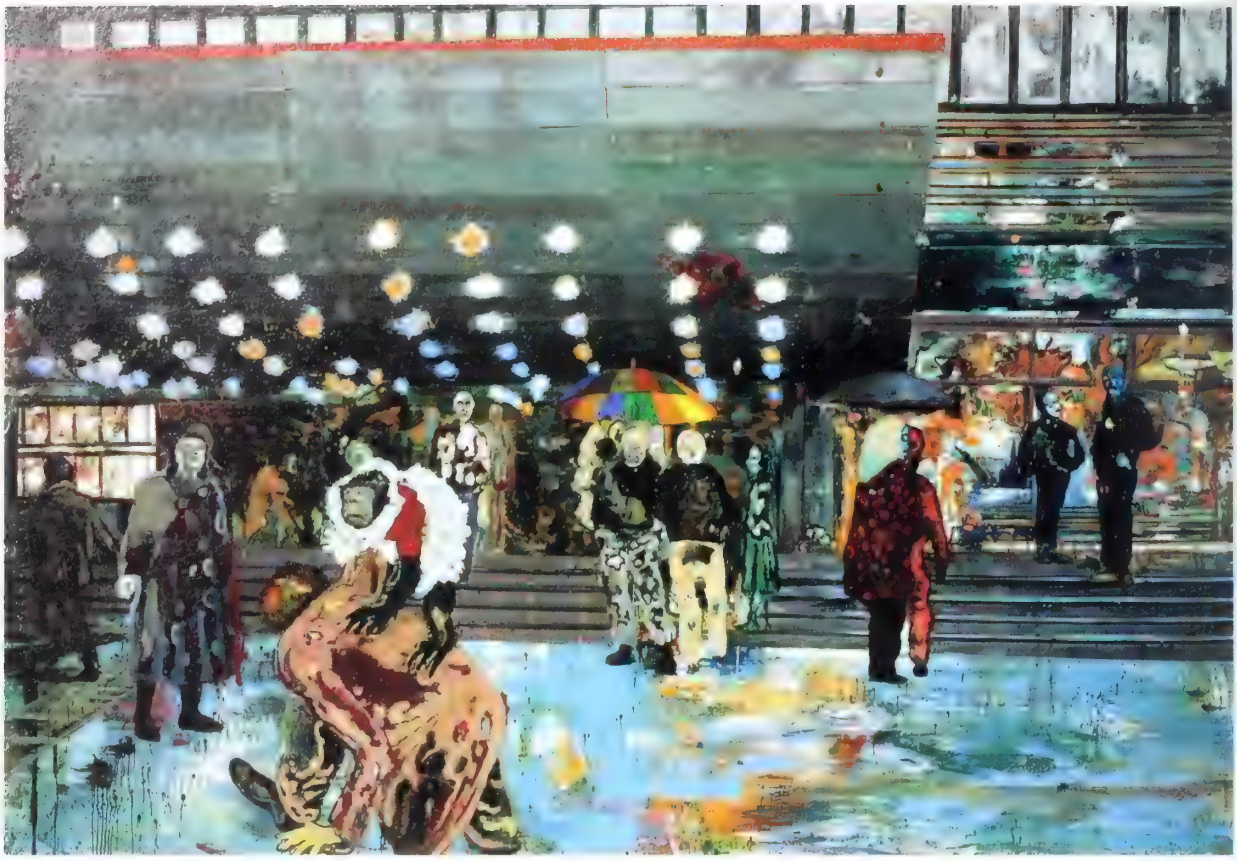
[grphish] if ripper doesn't die he's going to have a great time
[ripper] whoa I am high
[%Pnutbot] Ripper is a gangster!!!
[Oea] ur ded
[ripper] I just ate about 160mg inderal
[Smoke2k] we seen him eat alot
[ripper] and I smoked 1.5 grams kb
[Smoke2k] he said hes got a big tolerance
[ripper] and 5 grams normal pot
[Smoke2k] you better stay on web cam all night
[ripper] and I drank some 151
[Smoke2k] I wanna see if you survive or if you just black out
[Oea] don't die motherfucker
[Smoke2k] I told him he was a pussy a minute ago as a joke and then he ate more
[Oea] that's a lot of downers
[Oea] you'd better not go to sleep
[Oea] breathe
[@phalaris] ripper . . . you should try as best to pass out in front of the cam
[grphish] i hope ripper doens't die or anyhting
[%Pnutbot] ripper is a gangster!!!
[ripper] ripper has perished
[Smoke2k] did you just flash us
[ripper] I got some more drugs here somewhere
[grphish] no ripper don't
[Oea] RIPPER
[%Pnutbot] RIPPER is a gangster!!!
[Oea] NO
[ripper] I haven't finished going through my bag
[Oea] no more
[grphish] CUT IT OUT
[@phalaris] just smoke some weed
[Smoke2k] fucking eat it
[Smoke2k] fucking eat it
[grphish] STOP IT
[Smoke2k] fucking eat it
[grphish] STOP IT
[grphish] STOP IT
[Smoke2k] ripper knows what hes doing
[grphish] STOP IT i dont care, stop it :(
[%Pnutbot] Ripper is a gangster!!!
[grphish] nth
[grphish] degree
[%Pnutbot] degree is ALT-248
[@phalaris] stick the pillz up yer noz
[ripper] alright there we go
[Oea] do you want to die or what?
[ripper] nah its safe
[ripper] I know what I'm doing
[Oea] When you stop breathing!
[Smoke2k] cram the pill up your ass
[ripper] listen
[@phalaris] Haven't you heard of "Rationing"
[grphish] phalaris make him not die :[
[Smoke2k] no more drugs for now
[ripper] u guys getting good frma rate
[Smoke2k] not unless you cram it up your ass
[Oea] who's calling the cops when he passes out?
[@phalaris] call his mom
[Smoke2k] I will call his mom
[Oea] okay
[ripper] call if I look dead
[ripper] I'm getting kinda board
[Oea] if you DIE
[Oea] I WILL MURDER YOU
[ripper] am talking to smoke
[Oea] don't make me tape this video stream and ebay it later
[ripper] everyting is ok
[ripper] smoke will report
[@phalaris] how slurred is his speach?

[Argot]

GOBLET OF JAM MADNESS

The following "street terms" for marijuana can be found on the website of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy.

Airplane
Assassin of youth
Astroturf
Baby
Bammy
Bo
Bo-bo
Bone
Boo
Boo boo bama
Boom
Broccoli
Butter
Canceled stick
Catnip
Christmas tree
Chunky
Climb
Cripple
Dank
Dew
Ding
Dinkie dow
Ditch
Earth
Elephant
Feeling
Finger
Gash
Goblet of jam
Goody-goody
Haircut
Indian boy
Jive
Joystick
Kate Bush
Killer
Loaf
Log
Machinery
Mother
Muggles
Number
Ozone
Poke
Prescription
Queen Ann's lace
Rope
Salt and pepper
Scissors
Stick
Straw
Tea
Tex-mex
Thirteen
Thumb



Zurberes, 2000, by Daniel Richter. His work is currently on display at Neuer Berliner Kunstverein, in Berlin.

[hast] just call 911
[Smoke2k] hes so slurred
[hast] they'll fix you up
[hast] so here's what you do
[hast] call the pheonix police
[hast] tell them what's going on
[grphish] call the hospital
[Oea] How do they know where to find him?
[hast] i'm damn sure not getting involved with the authorities
[grphish] noone is hast :(
[Oea] Stay anonymous
[@phalaris] ripper needs to puke
[grphish] i can probably make like a 2 day stash from his puke
[@phalaris] you'd die on his puke
[grphish] id gelcap it
[hast] what he needs to do
[hast] is call a fucking doctor
[grphish] call poison control, they wont send authoritis and shit
[grphish] they'll just help you
[grphish] someone fnd the number
[hast] i cant because i'm wicked out of my mind
[ripper] tonight is a good night
[Oea] Give me a list
[Oea] of all he's done
[Oea] and i'll call poison control
[hast] step 1 might be to STOP EATING the shit
[Smoke2k] he is going to drink another bottle
[grphish] NO
[grphish] DUDE
[grphish] NO
[theKat] ripper is fakking hardcore
[ripper] llook
[ripper] 320mg methadone
[ripper] jesus
[%Pnutbot] Jesus healed the lame! With Cannabis Oil!!!
[theKat] BUNCHA POOSIES
[grphish] ripper: did you drink mre methadone?
[Smoke2k] ripper is either hardcore or ungodly or crazy or one hell of a poser
[Oea] if he is telling the truth
[Oea] he is dead
[grphish] he's gone
[ripper] pls all the other stuff
[grphish] ripper
[%Pnutbot] ripper is a gangster!!!

[grphish] i really love you man
[Oea] ripper i love you
[%Pnutbot] ripper is a gangster!!!
[grphish] its sad to see you die like this
[ripper] I told u I was hardcore
[grphish] GO CALL RTHE UCKING
[grphish] POISON CONTROL CENTER
[grphish] ripper: we knew that already
[ripper] fuck u
[ripper] pusys
[ripper] u are so fucking stupid
[grphish] we're not the ones about to fucking die
[@phalaris] he thinks you are a pussy for thinking he has no strength now
[hast] poison control 1-800-222-1222
[Smoke2k] he cann't figure out how to dial my home phone number
[Oea] Smoke2k
[Oea] you not on the phone with him anymore?
[Smoke2k] hes fuckin not responding
[Smoke2k] walls keep shiftionmg
[Oea] he's passed out
[Oea] look at the cam
[Oea] someone call someone
[Oea] shit
[%Pnutbot] shit is going to hit the fan soon
[@phalaris] looks like his mouth is moving
[Smoke2k] i am talking to him
[grphish] he moved
[@phalaris] Ripper: get up and move around!
[Smoke2k] i am trying to talk him into dancing for us
[Oea] fuck
[grphish] hes talking on the phone
[hast] oh look he isn't dead
[hast] how bout that
[grphish] yay
[Oea] He's gone
[Smoke2k] hes fuckin crazy
[hast] er
[%Pnutbot] er is for pussy
[hast] whatever dude
[grphish] you mean
[hast] call the hospital
[hast] thats that i'm out
[Oea] Hey
[Oea] If ripper dies
[Oea] i got tabs
[Oea] on hsi drugs
[Smoke2k] for my personal benefit
[Oea] Get his address
[ripper] ~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~shoa
[ripper] I'm fukcin
[Oea] ripper
[%Pnutbot] ripper is a gangster!!!
[Oea] are you alright?
[Smoke2k] hes on phone
[Smoke2k] hes severely fucked up I guess but coherent enough to do computer tasks
[Smoke2k] he ceases to amaze me
[Smoke2k] I don't know he just mumbled into phone something like fuck that and hung up
[Oea] he hung up??
[Smoke2k] hes prolly goin to black out again or something
[Oea] if he blacks out
[Oea] he will cease to breath autonomically
[Smoke2k] what does he list his last name as?
[@JaP] is ripper dead?
[Oea] yeah
[Oea] just about
[Oea] CALL
[Oea] THE
[Oea] FUCKING
[grphish] :((((
[Oea] COPS
[%Pnutbot] COPS are blind followers
[grphish] poison control
[%Pnutbot] 1-800-222-1222
[grphish] poison control
[%Pnutbot] 1-800-222-1222
[grphish] NOW
[Smoke2k] what did yall put his last name as
[Smoke2k] I got brandon something with a v for his last name
[Oea] call him
[Smoke2k] fuck that
[Smoke2k] I am tired and about to get off
[@JaP] it's the same image every time
[grphish] he left
[grphish] there he is
[grphish] ripper
[%Pnutbot] ripper is a gangster!!!
[grphish] whats up
[Oea] Brandon Vitas I think???
[Oea] whitepages
[Smoke2k] someone call him
[Oea] I have been trying
[theKat] leave him alone
[Oea] his phone is off
[theKat] hes fine
[Smoke2k] well man I am fucking tired
[Oea] he's not responding
[Smoke2k] its been fun watching this stunt
[Smoke2k] I suggest you call poison control on his ass
[Smoke2k] thats fucking crazy what he did
[Oea] why would he stop the cam?
[Oea] i need his las name
[Oea] i will call the phone company
[Oea] what provider is it?
[grphish] no dude
[grphish] THE HOSPITAL
[Oea] poison control
[%Pnutbot] 1-800-222-1222
[Oea] fuck you
[Oea] i cam calling poison control
[Smoke2k] good
[Smoke2k] that dumb fuck is going to die
[Smoke2k] he just passed out awhile ago

[Smoke2k] he prolly just did it again
[%Pnutbot] do is such a futuuuristic word
[Smoke2k] Oea what is poison control saying
[Oea] they said
[Oea] call 911 right now
[Oea] and he is almost assured dead
[Oea] if we dont'
[Oea] Where does he live?
[Smoke2k] damn this is insane
[Oea] WHAT CITY?
[Smoke2k] fucking phoenix i am pretty sure
[Oea] okay
[Smoke2k] might not want to do that
[Smoke2k] but then again I don't know
[Smoke2k] he might just be fucked up and not have stuff straight
[Smoke2k] you could fucking get him arrested
[Smoke2k] damn this is hard call
[Smoke2k] yall make it
[Smoke2k] good night
[Oea] i am on line with 911
[Oea] is this the right choice?
[theKat] NO
[grphish] mayb
[grphish] probably is
[grphish] or somehting
[theKat] NO NO NO no no no no no NO
[Oea] okay
[Oea] i talked my way out of it
[Oea] didn't give them any info
[theKat] fuck it . . .
[Oea] 360mg is a LETHAL OVERDOSE
[Oea] just so you know
[Oea] they siad there's nothing they can do
[Oea] with just a cell phon enumber
[Oea] RIP ripper
[Oea] he's gone
[hast] heleft?
[Oea] he stopped responding
[hast] did anyone call poison control
[grphish] i went to eat and now im back
[Oea] yeah and they said there's nothing they can do
[Oea] with just the cell #
[grphish] those who trully get high, never come back
[theKat] you will never know if he died unless he get back on here
[grphish] i know
[grphish] thats kinda freaky
[hast] yeah
[theKat] oh well
[hast] then all the logs get to be analyzed
[daba] hello
[daba] anyone awake?
[hast] yes
[grphish] oh shit
[%Pnutbot] shit is going to hit the fan soon

[FAQ]

PAYING THROUGH THE NOSE

The following "frequently asked questions" are posted on the Kansas Department of Revenue website.

Who is liable for the drug tax?
An individual is classified as a drug dealer and is liable for the payment of drug taxes if he/she manufactures, produces, ships, transports, or imports into Kansas or possesses: more than 28 grams of marijuana (processed or plants), or 1 gram or 10 or more dosage units of a controlled substance.

Why tax illegal drugs?
Taxing the Underground Economy: The fact that the business of dealing marijuana and controlled substances is illegal does not exempt it from taxation. Legitimate business transactions are taxed. Dealing drugs is a large part of a previously untaxed underground economy.

Providing a Source of Revenue: 25 percent of drug-tax collections are allocated to the state's General Fund.

How is the tax paid?
Drug dealers are required by law to purchase tax stamps from the Business Tax Bureau. In order to protect against self-incrimination, a dealer is not required to give his/her name or address when purchasing stamps, and the Bureau is prohibited from sharing any information with law enforcement.

The stamps must be affixed to the drugs when they are seized to prevent tax liability. Payment of the drug tax is due immediately upon acquisition or possession by the dealer. The stamps are valid for three months from the date of issuance. If drugs are seized without stamps or the stamps that are affixed have expired, the possessor is liable for payment of the tax as well as a penalty of 100 percent of the assessment.

How much do drug-tax stamps cost?
Drug-tax stamps can be purchased in multiples of $10, $50, $100, $500, and $1,000.

What is the minimum purchase required for drug-tax stamps?
$100.

What are the tax rates for marijuana?
Processed, $3.50 per gram; wet plant, $0.40 per gram; dry plant, $0.90 per gram.

What are the tax rates for controlled substances?
If customarily sold by weight (cocaine, methamphetamine, etc.), $200 per gram. If customarily

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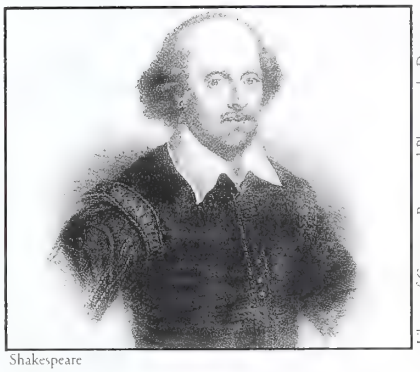
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32: *King Lear*—Wisdom Through Suffering
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[Cutbacks]

THE LAST DAYS OF DISCO

From a list of goods and merchants that the Department of Education prohibits its employees from buying or patronizing using their government-issued credit cards.

Alimony and Child Support
Ambulance Services
Antique Shops
Aquariums and Dolphinariums
Artificial-Limbs Stores
Betting
Bicycle Shops
Boat Rentals and Leases
Bowling Alleys
Cigar Stores and Stands
Circuses and Carnivals
Concrete Work Contractors
Cruise Lines
Dance Halls
Dating and Escort Services
Discos
Drinking Places
Duty-Free Stores
Electric-Razor Stores
Farm Equipment
Fast-Food Restaurants
Fireplace Screens and Accessories Stores
Food Stamps
Funeral Service and Crematories
Furriers and Fur Shops
Jewelry and Silverware Stores
Massage Parlors
Meat Provisioners
Mobile-Home Dealers
Money Orders
Motorcycle Dealers
Pawn Shops
Petroleum Products
Precious Stones and Metals
Public Golf Courses
Religious-Goods Stores
Riding-Apparel Stores
Shoe Stores
Snowmobile Dealers
Swimming Pools
Tax Payments
Utilities: Electricity, Gas, Water
Video-Game Arcades
Women's Ready-to-Wear Stores
Wig and Toupee Shops

sold by dosage unit (pills, etc.), $2,000 per 50 units.

Does the drug dealer have an opportunity to be heard?
Yes. The drug dealer has fifteen days from the date of assessment to request a hearing before the Director of Taxation to determine the validity of the assessment.

Can I purchase drug-tax stamps through the mail?
Yes. The purchaser will need to provide a mailing address in order for the Department to send the drug-tax stamps.

Can I reuse my stamps?
No.

[Feedback]

BARELY LEGAL

The following comments were sent to Women Behind Bars, an organization that sells the names and addresses of women in prison.

I wrote for and received the addresses of four ladies. I wrote letters to all four of them and received responses from all four. One in particular was, in my opinion, very nice looking and considerably younger, so I didn't really expect her to write back to me. I just felt I was out of her league. However she did write back and said she was "very interested" in me. She also enclosed a photograph of herself, a different one than the picture on her site, and she just looked so gorgeous. I couldn't believe it. It made me feel really good, that such a beautiful young woman was taking such delight in just getting to know me.

I requested 6 addresses and only wrote to 5. Out of the 5, I heard back from 4 and only 1 got thru. However the one that got through is the only one I was really interested in and my first choice. I can hardly tell you how excited I was to get her letter. I have visited her 4 times already. I hope that you Guys out there who are skeptical will give it a chance. I did and I found my Ideal, 100% soulmate and we have decided to get married. Dreams can come true, you just have to make the effort.

I wanted to write as I had read your "Warning" post. I have met a wonderful lady. I have visited her a couple of times & feel she has been 100% honest with me! The honesty issue is as follows: 1. She has never asked for money! I sent two $10 money orders for stamps &



Partial Set of Nine Pins, *a watercolor by Selma Sandler. The piece was created for the Index of American Design, a WPA program created to provide work for unemployed artists while cataloguing American designs. Works from the Index were on display last winter at the National Gallery of Art, in Washington, D.C.*

snacks & she asked me not to do that, as she is not a user. 2. I sent her a pair of jeans as hers looked trashed on my first visit. They were returned as the wrong kind? (flairs) I sent the right kind & she wore them on my second visit! She never asked for that. 3. She gave me the phone for her lawyer! He spent a good amount of time with me to explain her case. She had not lied!!

This is a super lady!! Please do not do what the guards do & batch them all in one box!

I just wanted to drop you a note as to how I made out with the three ladies' addresses I received from you. These three I picked are in serious trouble, yet one has already left prison so I can't say how she felt. Through it all, the other two have tried to be open and neither asked for any money out and out, but one did explain that she had no one and was unable to continue with her humble hobby of sewing without funds for material and thread. I sent her the small amount not to send money, yet to provide a moment's relaxation for someone, just as you or anyone would want to help someone in need. Since I lost my one inmate I will want another from you, and I really am impressed with the prisoners in general. MOST are not stupid. They have made a VERY bad decision, but the one woman had 3/4 of a PHD at her incarceration date. Thank you for assembling this service.

I received nine names and address from you. I got response from four of these ladies. All of the ladies are so nice I am going to have a very tough time trying to decide on which one I would like to have a seriously relationship with. A very happy customer, Michael

I want to thank you. I think I have found my one and only through your service. :-) I wrote to seven of your ladies and got five responses back, but after some time, I'm down to two ladies. So far, I got to meet one of them and spend some

time with her, not only once but twice. :-) I'm in love with her, she's supposed to get out soon and is coming to live with me. But only one problem: I don't know how to tell the other one goodbye yet and it kills me to hurt her. :-(HELP . . . got any suggestions????

I just wanted to say thanks for introducing me to such fine woman. I chose nine woman to write to on my first order, and five of them have replied. I'm still waiting for my second order, which I placed on Sunday, but I hope I will have those addresses so I can meet some more of these interesting woman. I do have one question. One of the addresses I ordered was not good. My letter to this woman came back to me because she was released and there was not a forwarding address. Do you give credit when this happens??? Please reply and let me know if I can have a credit for one address, and when I will be getting my second order. Thanks. I think this is great to help these woman find friends and to help us lonely guys find woman.

[Makeover]

MAIDENHEAD REVISITED

From the instruction manual for the "Jade Lady Membrane Man Made Hymen," a hymen repair kit marketed in China. Translated from the Mandarin by Valerie Jaffee.

For the female sex, the value of the hymen (virgin membrane) cannot be overestimated. But the rapid rise in modern women's social status combined with the relentless increase in the pace of our daily lives means that more and more hymens are accidentally damaged or even broken by vigorous activity. This can cast a heavy shadow over a woman's preparations for entry into the blissful state of matrimony and can cause unbearable emotional stress for a newly married couple. Thus, many women are willing to spend thousands of yuan on hymen-repair surgery, thereby placing a burden on both their bodies and their finances.

Through high-tech expert research, Wan Li Hong Corporation has brought its "Man-Made Hymen" products to the market. We have adapted the technology of the most fashionable American products to the biological and psychological characteristics of the women of our own nation, so that any woman may reclaim her lost hopes of living a full and happy life.

DESCRIPTION

A colorless, transparent outer wrapper, with blood-colored powder inside. The device may be folded up to form a plug and may be used to repair a broken hymen. It will also kill bacteria and eliminate infections. This device is safe and reliable. It will not stain clothing.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE

The device should be inserted into the vagina. Secretions will cause it to dissolve into an adhesive substance that will then proceed to seal up the mouth of the vagina. When the male member enters and spreads apart the sealed edges of the vagina, the blood-colored ingredients will be released and will quickly mix with natural fluids, creating a liquid that resembles blood. Because the woman will experience no pain when this device is used, it is recommended that she increase the product's efficacy by accompanying its rupture with the moans and groans that typically accompany the rupture of a real hymen. The sexual act may begin 20–30 minutes after this device has been inserted. If the device does not break on its own, the woman may discreetly use her hands to break it open.

SELECTED CUSTOMER TESTIMONY

A twenty-five-year-old woman says: When I was twenty, a pimp tricked me into working as an escort. Before long I was selling my body; both my flesh and my spirit suffered horribly. Eventually I was rescued and set free. One day I happened to meet a university student, and the two of us got along very well. But I wasn't brave enough to tell him what had happened to me. For the sake of everybody's peace of mind, I bought this product after a friend told me about it. It worked perfectly. Since I got married, my life has been wonderful. In fact, I now have a healthy baby son.

A twenty-three-year-old woman says: I got my first boyfriend when I was eighteen. Soon, I realized that I couldn't control myself or the sexual relationship that was developing between us. After four years together, we broke up. Recently, I found a new boyfriend. He and I get along much better, and we are planning to get married. I didn't want my man to have any misgivings, so I thought about getting hymen-repair surgery. But when I asked at the hospital I learned that the price was unbelievably high, more than I could afford, and that it would be painful. I heard a friend say that you could buy man-made hymens at sexual-products stores. Absolutely thrilled, I went

out and bought one. Now I'm just waiting for the perfect opportunity to use it, before or after the wedding!

[Oration]

THE PROCLAMATION OF BAGHDAD

The following proclamation was issued to the inhabitants of Baghdad on March 19, 1917, by Lieutenant General Sir Stanley Maude shortly after the occupation of the city by British forces.

To the People of Baghdad Vilayet:

In the name of my King, and in the name of the peoples over whom he rules, I address you as follows:—

Our military operations have as their object the defeat of the enemy, and the driving of him from these territories. In order to complete this task, I am charged with absolute and supreme control of all regions in which British troops operate; but our armies do not come into your cities and lands as conquerors or enemies, but as liberators.

Since the days of Halaka your city and your lands have been subject to the tyranny of strangers, your palaces have fallen into ruins, your gardens have sunk in desolation, and your forefathers and yourselves have groaned in bondage. Your sons have been carried off to wars not of your seeking, your wealth has been stripped from you by unjust men and squandered in distant places.

Since the days of Midhat, the Turks have talked of reforms, yet do not the ruins and wastes of to-day testify the vanity of those promises?

It is the wish not only of my King and his peoples, but it is also the wish of the great nations with whom he is in alliance, that you should prosper even as in the past, when your lands were fertile, when your ancestors gave to the world literature, science, and art, and when Baghdad city was one of the wonders of the world.

Between your people and the dominions of my King there has been a close bond of interest. For 200 years have the merchants of Baghdad and Great Britain traded together in mutual profit and friendship. On the other hand, the Germans and the Turks, who have despoiled you and yours, have for twenty years made Baghdad a centre of power from which to assail the power of the British and the Allies of the British in Persia and Arabia. Therefore the British Government cannot remain indifferent as to what takes place in your country now or in the future, for in duty to the interests of the British people and their Allies, the British Government cannot risk that being done in Baghdad again which has been done by the Turks and Germans during the war.

But you people of Baghdad, whose commercial prosperity and whose safety from oppression and invasion must ever be a matter of the closest concern to the British Government, are not to understand that it is the wish of the British Government to impose upon you alien institutions. It is the hope of the British Government that the aspirations of your philosophers and writers shall be realised and that once again the people of Baghdad shall flourish, enjoying their wealth and substance under institutions which are in consonance with their sacred laws and their racial ideals. In Hedjaz the Arabs have expelled the Turks and Germans who oppressed them and proclaimed the Sherif Hussein as their King, and his Lordship rules in independence and freedom, and is the ally of the nations who are fighting against the power of Turkey and Germany; so, indeed, are the noble Arabs, the Lords of Koweyt, Nejd, and Asir.

Many noble Arabs have perished in the cause of Arab freedom, at the hands of those alien rulers, the Turks, who oppressed them. It is the determination of the Government of Great Britain and the great Powers allied to Great Britain that these noble Arabs shall not have suffered in vain. It is the hope and desire of the British people and the nations in alliance with them that the Arab race may rise once more to greatness and renown among the peoples of the earth, and that it shall bind itself together to this end in unity and concord.

O people of Baghdad remember that for twenty-six generations you have suffered under strange tyrants who have ever endeavoured to set one Arab house against another in order that they might profit by your dissensions. This policy is abhorrent to Great Britain and her Allies, for there can be neither peace nor prosperity where there is enmity and misgovernment. Therefore I am commanded to invite you, through your nobles and elders and representatives, to participate in the management of your civil affairs in collaboration with the political representatives of Great Britain who accompany the British Army, so that you may be united with your kinsmen in North, East, South, and West in realising the aspirations of your race.



cowboy 1–4, notthinkingstraightteenager 1–4, *and* astronaut 1–4, *from "Crushed," a series of paintings by Doug Smithenry. The paintings were on display last winter at the Aron Packer Gallery, in Chicago.*

Courtesy of the Doug Smithenry and Aron Packer Gallery, Chicago

ARROW AND WOUND

The art of almost dying

By Mark Slouka

Five years before his death in 1986, Jaroslav Seifert, the unofficial poet laureate of Prague (and official Nobel laureate of Stockholm), published *Všecky krásy světa* (*All the Beauties of the Earth*), a book that was neither autobiography nor history nor fiction, precisely, but all of these and more: a gallery of small, precise portraits, each characteristically anchored in the mind's eye by a single, telling anecdote: a peddler's cart, picturesque with eight decades' worth of well-turned stories and three o'clock in the morning, second-bottle speculations; a collection of madeleines (or, rather, small Bohemian pastries), summoning a past both personal and, inevitably, cultural. In short, a celebration and a leave-taking: tender, spendthrift, large. A visitor to Tolstoy's Yasnaya Polyana recalled seeing the count, then in his last years, scoop a double handful of violets from the wet earth, breathe in their aroma with a kind of ecstasy, then let them fall carelessly at his feet. That gesture, captured on paper, is Seifert's book.

But this is not about *Všecky krásy světa*, exactly, nor is it about Tolstoy. It is about a curious little section near the book's center, in which Seifert—no decadent after all, no Baudelaire—admits to having once been jealous of another writer's near-death experience. That other writer was Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky.

The incident at Semenovsky Square that winter morning of December 22, 1849, when Dostoevsky and his fellow subversives were led before the firing squad in a mock execution, then pardoned at the last moment in

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WHAT REALLY HAPPENS IN THOSE FINAL FEW MOMENTS? DOES THE WORLD TAPER DOWN TO SOME SMALL PERFECTION? OR DOES IT SIMPLY GROW MUTE?

order to impress upon them the full magnitude of the czar's mercy, is we known; like Byron's incestuous relationship with his half-sister, say, c Wilde's self-aided lynching, it has passed out of literary biography an joined that select company of events the generally literate misremembe with confidence. Still, the narrative of those hours, progressing like a me dieval passion play from suffering to near-death to something like resur rection, remains compelling. Reconstituted in the willing imagination, can stab us, suddenly, unexpectedly, with the quickening thought of ou own extinction—a nectar not to be indulged in too often, lest it become self-indulgence, an obscenity.

Imagine it, then. The sounds of voices and carriages in the priso courtyard that morning. The church bells, uncharacteristically diminishe by the sound of cell doors opening down the corridor—the sudden, irre pressible, dizzying thought of freedom. You are given your clothes—th ones you were arrested in eight months ago—and told to remember to pu on your socks, for the morning is cold. You must hurry. No one answer your questions.

Dawn. You are led into the snowy yard. A line of carriages stands wait ing, flanked by mounted police. Your comrades are there; you see Spesh nev, peering out of a shaggy mat of tangled hair and matted beard, an then you are in the carriage. The windows are covered with frost. Perhap you scratch at the pane with a fingernail. Perhaps the guard sitting next t you lets you. You want to see the world. God in heaven, you say to your self, it's over. A day, a week, a month, whatever it takes for the process t run its course, and it will be over. You'll see your brother again. You'll b able to release the stories burgeoning in your mind, threatening to burs your skull. You'll be free.

The line of carriages comes to a stop. Semenovsky Square lies under foot of snow. The sun appears and disappears behind the mist. Soldier stand around the perimeter of the square. A small crowd has gathered or the far end. You wait around in the snow, talking excitedly with your old comrades. No one knows what is happening. A four-sided wooden scaf folding, draped in black crepe, stands in the center of the square. Probably you will be sentenced to some time of penal servitude, lectured on you presumption and ingratitude. There are worse things.

It is then, maybe, that you first notice the row of head-high stakes, like great, fat nails holding down the field of snow.

Or do you? In the sudden shock of knowing (which instantly reshape the minutes remaining into a strange, circumscribed eternity, an ocean disappearing down a drain), can a person think at all, much less in metaphor? What really happens in those final few moments? Does the world, under the pressure of extinction, blossom into tropes as never be fore, madly, ferociously, birthing stakes like Christic nails, or crosses sym bolically shorn of the horizontal, or huge, ironic exclamation points? Does it, instead, taper down to some small perfection—the godhead glimpsed in a drop of sweat, freezing to a pearl? Or does the world simply bend its head and grow mute, and you with it? And if it does, isn't it possible that, should you be miraculously delivered out of that silence by the czar's par don, you would emerge with a voice that could speak the truths of this world with a clarity unavailable to others? That you would be repaid for your suffering—as is sometimes the case, after all—in the coin of wisdom?

It would be nice to think so. Which brings us back to Seifert, who did. "Though fully aware of the impossibility of drawing a comparison between us," he writes, self-effacingly, "I envied Dostoevsky . . . that singular expe rience: to be sentenced to death, to know the moment when you must, of necessity, say goodbye to life, accept that unappeasable fact, and then taste again the certainty and sweetness of life, and save yourself." The no tion compelled him, fascinated him. "To experience those few, horrifying minutes when time is quickly dragging you to your erasure," he continues, "and then to look again upon the broad expanse of time that stretches out

ore you like a gorgeous landscape. What a drama it must be, which
ys itself out in a man during those few instants! What does an experi-
e like that mean, for anyone, but particularly for a writer, who has the
lity to articulate it?"*

Seifert had been able to answer that question for himself. Saturday,
y 5, 1945, found him, then forty-four years old, in the Lidové building
Hybernská Street in Prague, laboring, along with a small crew of fellow
rnalists, to bring out the next edition of the newly decriminalized
wspaper *Rudé právo*. Outside their windows, the stylus of history had
gun to move, inscribing another bloody paragraph. After six years of oc-
pation, the fingers of the Reich had begun suddenly to loosen. In a fren-
of rage and joy, Czechs of all ages began demolishing German business-
lighting fires, erecting barricades. The Prague uprising had begun.

It would take its measure of lives before it was done. The Germans, as Seifert
d his companions soon learned, had taken a stand in the Anglobank
ilding just down the way. The concussion of cannon and the staccato pat-
ring of small-arms fire filled the streets;
ndows shattered; the Masaryk train sta-
on was in flames. Seeking safety from the
oss fire, the entire staff, along with a group
citizens who had taken shelter with them,
oved down to the basement, then lower
ill, into the paper-storage rooms, and con-
nued writing. Days passed. They barely ate.
omehow, incredibly, the presses continued
roll.

And then, as Seifert tells it, things turned.
uickly. The Germans retook the train sta-
on. From there, they captured the building
n the corner of Hybernská and Havlíčková
reets and entered the system of passage-
ays connecting the buildings' cellars. And
ddenly Seifert and his comrades were be-
ng marched to the train station, where, they
ere informed, they would be executed. Just
ke that. In the station, their shoes sticky
ith blood, they stood by a heap of dead
Czechs while the Germans worked to dis-
atch a train filled with tier upon tier of their
wn wounded. They waited. A young boy,
ound with an antique bayonet under his
oat, was shot in the back of the neck.

When the train didn't leave, they were led
ack out, two by two. Buildings were burning.
The heat was immense. They were lined up
against a wall, presently, and told they would
e shot in the courtyard behind them as soon as it was empty of German fam-
lies preparing to flee. And again they waited.

So what did Seifert do, those ostensibly last few minutes of his life?
What did he think? This was it, after all—the experience he had envied
Dostoevsky. This was consciousness in the crucible, distilled to its
essence. Did the heat of those minutes crystallize his understanding into
some new, unbreakable alloy? Re-order his life?

Apparently not. Standing against the wall next to his friend Píša, wait-
ing to be shot, Seifert discovered a piece of bread and some cheese, no
longer quite fresh, in his pocket. The two ate it hungrily. For a few moments,
he tells us, he thought about his family. He knew they were relatively safe.

JAROSLAV SEIFERT AND HIS COMRADES WERE MARCHED TO THE TRAIN STATION, WHERE, THEY WERE INFORMED, THEY WOULD BE EXECUTED. JUST LIKE THAT



* *All Seifert translations are by the author.*

"Conversation with an Owl," by Keith Carter © 2000 Arena Editions, from *Keith Carter: Holding Venus*

WE DON'T WANT TO BE LIKE AN OLD HORSE LED TO THE SLAUGHTER. WE WANT AWARENESS. OUR CONSCIOUSNESS SHOULD TAKE THE IMPRINT OF GREAT EVENTS

The thought that he might never see them again did not occur to him. He looked at the buildings across the street. All the windows were closed. Now and then a corner of a curtain lifted slightly and a face appeared. Then, far off, he spotted the public toilet by the Karlín viaduct and suddenly recalled how, when he was a boy, someone had drawn a wonderfully obscene picture of a woman on one of its walls, and how he and his friends would walk kilometers just to look at it. How it had aroused and disturbed them. Then he looked again at the buildings across the street. Smoke rose languidly out of the chimneys. He found himself wondering what the people inside, who didn't have to stand with their backs against a wall, were making for lunch.

Then, after twenty minutes or half an hour had passed, he and the others were informed that they could go.

And that was that, claims Seifert. The condemned scattered in all directions. And when, soon afterward, the city's radios announced that Nazi Germany had officially capitulated and that the war in Europe was effectively over, they forgot all about what had just passed. Seifert himself never thought of it. Decades later, finding himself in that same district of the city, he actually passed by the very wall he had stood against that fateful day and never even realized it until after he'd arrived home and was sitting down to dinner.

So much for Semenovsky Square. So much for the romance of almost dying. Pushed to the wall, given ample time to consider his situation, to breathe, to weep, Seifert had eaten lunch. No epiphany. No prophetic voice, rising out of the silence. Nothing.

Compare and contrast. Standing in the snow in Semenovsky Square, Dostoevsky experienced a kind of "mystic terror," a strange and fearful exaltation. "*Nous serons avec le Christ*" ("We shall be with Christ"), he supposedly whispered to Speshnev, quoting Victor Hugo's *Le dernier jour d'un condamné*. Seifert just looked at the ugly buildings across the street. From the moment the roll of the drums signaled to him that his life would be spared, Dostoevsky's life had shifted course, surging like a river around an insurmountable obstacle, toward the kind of tortured religiosity we now associate with his greatest work. Seifert? Seifert was untouched. Life went on. Thirty-five years later, writing about the hour he had expected to be his last, he recalled (not without some small, remembered pleasure) a picture of a spread-eagled woman drawn with a piece of coal on the side of a public toilet.



Whose version do we believe? I suspect that the romantics among us (as well as the more conventionally and narrowly devout) side with Dostoevsky. And perhaps the rest of us do as well. How could a person not be touched, altered, by such an experience? We don't want to be like an old horse led to the slaughter. We want awareness, insight. We want to believe that our consciousness, like putty, will take the imprint of great events. Suffer, and ye shall be rewarded with, if nothing else, the memory of your suffering. No, when it comes to the art of almost dying, Dostoevsky is our man.

Literature backs us up. "And anything that happened me afterwards, I never felt the same about again," concludes the narrator of Frank O'Connor's

"Jet Trails over Paris," by Keith Carter © 2000 Arena Editions, from *Keith Carter: Holding Venus*

t short story "Guests of the Nation," looking back on the day when the encies of war forced him to kill two men who had become his friends. "They not to lose it," intones Faulkner, referring to the witnesses of Joe Christ-'s murder in *Light in August*, "in whatever peaceful valleys, beside what-placid and reassuring streams of old age, in the mirroring faces of what-r children they will contemplate old disasters and newer hopes." Yes, eed, we say. Just so. And although we recognize the fact that O'Connor's Faulkner's narrators, unlike Dostoevsky, contemplated their own ex-tion only by proxy, as it were, they still flatter our sense of the gravity of thing, our notion of what it *ought* to be like. Death is a big deal, after all. frightens us, it *ought* to be large.

What of Seifert, then? Do we write off his amnesia as denial, debunk with a pinch of Freud? Do we see his parable of the bread and the blic toilet for what it is: a re-presentation of events, an attempt to im-e a shape, nearly thirty-six years afterward, on a harrowing, unmanage-e experience—in sum, a fiction? Do we classify it, perhaps, as an absur-and in many ways classically Czech response to trauma? Do we pat author on the head and leave him to carve his figures in the tranquil-of old age?

think not. To do so, it seems to me, would be to assume that con-ousness can be teased apart from its retelling, which it cannot. To see stoevsky's experience as essentially truthful, and Seifert's as some form artifice, is to limit the dominion of fiction, which, from the moment we ke to the power of language, rules our lives with czarist authority and reach. It is also to forget a more intriguing and complicated truth: that we in some measure shape the events that befall us just as surely as we are shaped by them.

There is no point in being coy; I am indulging in these kinds of d-time speculations because I, too, was once given the "singular experi-ce" of believing that I had arrived at the terminus of my life, of seeing yself dragged to the brink of my own erasure, only to be pardoned at the st minute by some combination of arrangement and accident. Like ifert and Dostoevsky (in this way if in no other), I was given the oppor-nity to know my last minutes on earth. I didn't care for it.

My case was different, of course. Apolitical, ahistorical—set, above all, the New World wilderness rather than in a European square—it lacked th the cruelty of Dostoevsky's mock execution and the context of rou-ne and unimaginable suffering that backlights Seifert's ordeal. My expe-ence, in short, was smaller. No one's life was at stake besides my own d that of the woman who was to become my wife. I suppose that in the irit of charity I might add the life of the man who seemed to have de-ded to take our lives along with his own. That makes three. That morn-g, it seemed enough.

Quickly, then. The year was 1985. My wife and I (to see her as anything ut my wife now seems like an affectation) had just crossed the spine of ne Sierras. We were in our late twenties. That July morning, we were itchhiking back to the San Joaquin Valley. I knew the area, a harsh and erpendicular landscape of considerable beauty, from some years earlier, hen I had worked with a crew doing trail maintenance in the backcoun-y. I knew, therefore, that there were two roads to the western side of the ierra Nevada: a highway looping around the foot of the range, and a arely taken shortcut through the town of Lake Isabella.

We started out at first light, eager to avoid as much of the desert heat as ossible, joking in the coolness. Our first three rides were uneventful. We aw the fourth from far off, a large white car, approaching the highway at n oblique angle on a ruler-straight road, raising a wall of dust. It was oming very quickly. Perhaps a quarter mile behind us, the car came to a top, then gunned out onto the highway. It never crossed my mind that it would stop for us. I would have bet everything I had against it.

I, TOO, WAS ONCE GIVEN THE "SINGULAR EXPERIENCE" OF BELIEVING THAT I HAD ARRIVED AT THE TERMINUS OF MY LIFE. I DIDN'T CARE FOR IT

SO WHAT DID I THINK OF THOSE THIRTY MINUTES OR SO? NOTHING VERY ORIGINAL, I'M AFRAID. I REMEMBER REALIZING, DIMLY, THAT THIS WAS IT

I remember him getting out of his car—thick, steak-fed body, sun-re face, not unkind—and asking us if we wanted to put our things in his trun "Give you kids some room," he said. He called us kids. I remember him a ranging and re-arranging our battered packs, closing the trunk carefully t avoid damaging something. I remember the blue jacket on the passeng seat with its "Kern County Fire Department" insignia; he drove casually, thick right arm around the seat next to him as though around an invisib companion. We made small talk—hitchhiking etiquette. He asked whe we were headed. We told him. He was going to Bakersfield, too, he sai We were in luck. We asked if he lived there. No, he lived in the Owe Valley. My wife asked politely what took him to Bakersfield. He laughe "Well, it's like this," he said. "My mother had a massive heart attack 10:15 this morning. They're trying to keep her alive until I get there."

Somewhere inside, an alarm went off. A small herd of questions, lik panicked horses, stampeded across the landscape. Why would a man ra ing to his mother's deathbed stop to pick up two hitchhikers? Why wou he take five minutes to arrange their packs in his trunk? Why would he b so calm, so level, so apparently undisturbed?

And yet, on the surface, everything seemed fine. He was driving we enough—a bit casually, perhaps, a bit faster than necessary, but well with in the normal range. When we expressed our condolences, he thanked politely. The minutes passed. No further warnings came. For a few m ments, I considered asking him to let us out in the town of Lake Isabel on some pretext, but, stymied by my inability to think of a good excuse well as, more damnably, by my own sense of politeness (the man was d ing us a favor, after all), I said nothing.

In retrospect, my own inertia staggers me. I knew what lay ahead: twenty-mile stretch of unimproved canyon road running, at times, a fu 150 feet above the Kern River. A road so narrow that the few cars th did take it would invariably stop at every turn and honk to make sure n one was approaching from the other direction. A road without walls guardrails of any kind. I had taken it twice, years before, to save the fo hours, and driven it, each time, at barely over walking speed.

He stopped at the cattle guard where the canyon road began and turne half around over his right shoulder. He was smiling, but he looked as thoug he were about to cry. "Don't forget those seat belts, kids," h said, like a television announcer on the verge of a nervo breakdown. That same instant he stomped on the gas.

Let me dispense with the rational right off: This was not, for e ample, a superb if reckless driver testing his skill, or some variety of loc daredevil, intimately familiar with the landscape, out to terrify the colleg kids. This was something entirely different. This was a man in such pai that he no longer cared to live; a man calmly holding a revolver to h temple and, with four chambers empty, two to go, pulling the trigger. Th was a man making a bet with God—or lunging at him. It's quite possib that he himself had no idea why he had picked us up. In some essenti way, we were beside the point.

What followed was madness. We skidded blindly into turn after tur fishtailed wildly down the straights. Again and again we sideswiped th wall, with a sickening screech of metal, and bounced toward the edg Once, twice, three times, I felt the right rear wheel actually begin to dro felt the car begin to lighten, sickeningly, sensed the pull of the canyon a below us.

So what did I think of, those thirty minutes or so? Nothing very orig nal, I'm afraid. I remember realizing, dimly, with a mixture of rage an disbelief, that this was it. That my life, our life, was somehow, impossibl over. I remember my mind racing madly, searching for options. Hit th crazy bastard? Unthinkable. There was no margin. We were over the ma gin already. Try to say something, calm him somehow? Impossible. He w

ewhere now. And I knew, as surely as I've ever known anything, that if aid even one word, he would turn around to look at me and simply turn e wheel into the empty air.

I'll confess that I did not believe we would live. I knew the road we re on. We had nearly gone over a half dozen times already, and there re sixteen or seventeen miles of curves still ahead. My wife, a genuinely ave woman, had buried her face in my shirt.

But here's the thing: Although I knew we weren't going to make it, my ind, divided against itself, stupidly refused to accept that fact. And so, ver a religious man, I did the only thing I could: I willed that car to stay the road. Irrational? Absurd? Of course. And yet that is what I did. As ough it were possible. As though, like those sad individuals forever try- g to bend forks with their minds, I could simply force the physical rld's attention. As though reality were that malleable. And the mind at crude a weapon. I willed that car not to go over, to hold. I fought for ery inch. Rigid with fear, I drove those twenty miles like a ghost inside s body, wrestling for the wheel, turning the skid, forcing us, again and gain, back to the wall.

But enough of that. We lived. When we emerged from the canyon, he owed, and when I asked him, as soon as I was able to speak, to please let s out, he pulled over on the shoulder. I could barely get out of the car. I was aked in sweat, clenched tight as a fist. He ulled away, leaving us standing by our packs the desert heat.

For a minute, as though embarrassed by mething, we didn't speak. Then we slipped n our packs and walked across the road to a store of some kind, where we treated ourselves to a cold soda. It was over.

It's not the *experience* that interests me ere. The event itself, after all, was almost ba- al: two kids catch the proverbial bad ride, nd don't die. So what? What interests me is he aftermath, the effect.

For almost twenty years, you see, I didn't now there was an effect. We went on. We inished our soda, married, had children. Along the way, I began to write. We didn't orget, à la Seifert, what had happened to us—far from it. We told the tale again and again. For twenty years we regaled new friends with it, tricked it up like a pet poodle and made it dance about, bored each other silly with it. In time, it came to have nothing to do with us. Although all the essential details were still there (altered just enough to spare ourselves the pain of an identical retelling), it had became a pose, a self-dramatizing tic, an amusing story recounted over dinner ("And that's when he turned to me—by the way, what do you think of this wine?—and said . . .").

What I didn't realize was that the thing itself had gone underground. And although it surfaced periodically, sometimes in ways almost laughably obvious, I remained oblivious to it. In a recurrent nightmare that visited me perhaps once a year—to take just one, particularly humiliating, example—I would be behind the wheel of a car, my wife beside me, when it plunged over the side of some impossible height: wind whistling against the steel, and a realization that there was nothing to be done, no way to

THE EVENT WAS ALMOST BANAL: WE CAUGHT THE PROVERBIAL BAD RIDE, AND DIDN'T DIE. SO WHAT? WHAT INTERESTS ME IS THE AFTERMATH, THE EFFECT



"Tattieboggle," by Keith Carter © 2000 Arena Editions, from *Keith Carter: Holding Venus*

WHAT OUR INADVERTENT SELF-PORTRAIT REVEALS IS THAT OUR CONSCIOUSNESS, RATHER THAN BEING SHAPED BY A PARTICULAR EVENT, PREDATED IT

live. And yet, through all those years, I swear I did not make the connec tion. I assumed, for some reason, that I had always had this particula dream. My blindness, at times, was comical. When the melodramatic end ing of *Thelma & Louise* made me almost physically ill, I wrote it off as token neurosis—my little burden—and thought nothing more of it.

The lid did not come off the pot for seventeen years—until the day found myself, so to speak, walking past the wall where I had expected to die. Unlike Seifert, however, I knew precisely where I was and what I was there for. Turning up the road from Lake Isabella, my wife beside me and our children in the back seat, I stopped at the cattle guard, then drove the road again. Slowly. By the time we emerged from the shadow of the canyon walls, I understood (no blare of trumpets here, no flash of revelation) the genesis of all those years of dreams and knew, as well, that I was shut of them forever.

Time makes liars of us all. The moment passes; our words alone are left us. An obvious truth. That our character can prefigure an event as well as be shaped by one, that reality and consciousness are mutually dependent, is, perhaps, less obvious. Did the twenty-eight-year-old Dostoevsky really quote Hugo while waiting to be tied to a stake and shot, as his comrade F. N. Lvov remembered a decade later? Did Jaroslav Seifert really remember a picture on a public toilet, then wonder idly what the people across the way were making for lunch? Should we see the letter Dostoevsky wrote to his brother immediately after the ordeal as an accurate representation of his thoughts those last few minutes in Semenovsky Square or read the famous mock-execution scene in *The Idiot*, written some twenty years later, as the truest depiction of what he endured that December morning? Should you, finally, believe my retelling of the ride we caught that summer day in 1985, or accept my recollections of what went through my mind those few minutes? Should I?

Yes and no. Every retelling is inevitably a distortion, but that does not mean it is without value. We can't help but tell the truth. Although we will never know what Dostoevsky experienced that December morning in Semenovsky Square, we can, from his retelling, with its particular fingerprint of stresses and omissions, learn a great deal about him. Although we will never know what Jaroslav Seifert really thought or felt standing against that wall (although he himself may no longer know—indeed, may never have known), we can see, with perfect clarity, what he wants us to believe he thought or felt. Nothing reveals us as clearly as our attempt to shape the past. Retrospection is, by definition, reflexive.

What our inadvertent self-portrait reveals, if we study it closely enough, is that our consciousness, rather than being shaped by a particular event, predated it. That we were, in a sense, anticipating it. That, to recall Kafka's haunting insight, "the arrows fit exactly in the wounds" for which they were intended. Dostoevsky experienced what he did in Semenovsky Square because he was Dostoevsky. Because he already carried inside him, like a patient wound, the "cursed questions" he would seek to answer the rest of his life. Seifert, the poet of the quotidian and the small, thought about the things he did because he was Jaroslav Seifert, the man who, thirty-five years later, would write a book called *All the Beauties of the Earth*. Because, like Tolstoy at Yasnaya Polyana, he gathered the things of this life, and let them fall at his feet. The experience, in other words, was already prepared for him by the time he got there. As it is, to some extent, for all of us.

As for me, I had been driving that canyon road all my life. In all my work, in all my deepest imaginings, tragedy had always been invited, played with, then sent on its way. How appropriate, then, how predictable, that it would do the same for me.

There's the event, waiting for us. And we fit it as perfectly as the arrow fits its wound. ■

THE ECONOMICS OF EMPIRE

Notes on the Washington Consensus

By William Finnegan

In early March, President Bush, on the verge of declaring war on Iraq, was asked at a press conference why he thought "so many people around the world take a different view of the threat that Saddam Hussein poses than you and your allies." Mr. Bush replied, "I've seen all kinds of protests since I've been the president. I remember the protests against trade. There was a lot of people who didn't feel like free trade was good for the world. I completely disagree. I think free trade is good for both wealthy and impoverished nations. That didn't change my opinion about trade."



"PROTEST AGAINST TRADE," GENOA

Mr. Bush's "opinion about trade" tends to pop up in unlikely places. Shortly after September 11, 2001, he declared, "The terrorists attacked the World Trade Center, and we will defeat them by expanding and encouraging world trade." This was an odd conflation, and the *New York Times*, reporting his words, felt obliged to flag the president's confusion with a delicate addendum—"seeming to imply that trade was among the concerns of terrorists who brought down the towers." The United States trade representative, Robert B. Zoellick, was less delicate when he suggested in a speech around the same time that opponents of corporate-led globalization might have "intellectual connections with" the terrorists. The September 11 attacks were perpetrated, of course, by a genocidal death cult, not by unusually determined proponents of economic democracy.

But what the Bush Administration is signaling in these muddled formulations (and in many less muddled statements—and, for that matter, in many major policy initiatives) is its transcendent commitment to a set of fixed ideas about international trade, finance, politics, and economic development. These ideas form a dogma—George Soros calls it "market fundamentalism"—that, as dogmas do, purports to explain everything, to fold every event into itself.

Sometimes known as the Washington Consensus,* other times simply as "free trade," this gospel has been the main American ideological

* *The term was coined in 1989 by John Williamson, of the Institute for International Economics, to describe the conventional wisdom at the U.S. Treasury Department, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund on policy reforms that would aid development in Latin America. Williamson later expressed dismay at the "populist definition," as he called it, of the term that had taken hold in public debate, where the Washington Consensus became synonymous with market fundamentalism, globally applied.*

William Finnegan is the author of Cold New World. *This article elaborates on ideas in an essay that will appear in* The Fight Is for Democracy, *a collection of original essays by nine writers to be published by HarperCollins in September.*

Photograph © AP/Wide World Photos

[illegible] It is promulgated directly through U.S. foreign policy and indirectly through multilateral institutions such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Trade Organization. Its core tenets are deregulation, privatization, "openness" (to foreign investment, to imports), unrestricted movement of capital, and lower taxes. Presented with special force to developing countries as a formula for economic management, it is also, in its fullness, a theory of how the world should be run, under American supervision. Attacking America is, therefore, attacking the theory, and attacking the theory is attacking America.

The possibility that the Marines and high-altitude bombers might need to be involved in spreading the good news about free trade does not, in context, seem far-fetched. Consider "The National Security Strategy of the United States," issued by the White House in September 2002. Presidents are required to submit a security strategy periodically to Congress, but the Bush edition received an unusual amount of attention because of its unprecedented assertion of an American right to strike U.S. enemies preemptively, as well as its vow to maintain American military supremacy over all rivals indefinitely. Just as notable, however, in another way, was the repeated, incongruous insertion of fundamentalist free-trade precepts. The Strategy claims to have discovered "a single sustainable model for national success"—the Washington Consensus. There is, in its authors' view, simply no other way. History has validated this messianic vision, and the American role in leading the world to its realization on this earth. "We will actively work to bring the hope of democracy, development, free markets, and free trade to every corner of the world," the Strategy avows. It even provides a list of policy particulars, such as "lower marginal tax rates" and "pro-growth legal and regulatory policies" (read: weaker environmental and labor laws), that it believes every country should adopt.

THAT THE MARINES MIGHT NEED TO BE INVOLVED IN SPREADING THE GOOD NEWS ABOUT FREE TRADE DOES NOT SEEM FAR-FETCHED

National-security strategy outlines are written by committee, are full of boilerplate, and cannot be expected to withstand close literary inspection. Still, the Bush strategy's attempt to articulate a worldview is worth quoting in full: "The concept of 'free trade' arose as a moral principle even before it became a pillar of economics. If you can make something that others value, you should be able to sell it to them. If others make something that you value, you should be able to buy it. This is real freedom, the freedo for a person—or a nation—to make a livin This formulation makes vulgar Marxism loo subtle and humane. The only "real freedom" commercial freedom. Free speech, a free pre religious freedom, political freedom—all the are secondary at best. There is a lockstep log here, an airbrushed history, that suggest a close intellectual system—the capitalist equivalen perhaps, of Maoism or Wahhabism.

But beyond the triumphalist theory—and ca italism obviously has much to be triumph about—there is the practice. The Washingto Consensus has been around long enough no that results are in from many countries, includin from some of the most diligent followers of its po icy prescriptions. These results are less than en couraging. Argentina, for instance, did ever thing it was told to do by Washington throughou the 1990s—privatization, deregulation, trade lib eralization, tax reform—and found itself a much touted example of the virtues of *neoliberalism* until shortly before its collapse in 2001. Toda Argentina is suffering through the worst ec nomic crisis in its history. Yet even major failure seem not to shake the faith of the true believe in the Bush Administration, who include th president. Like other fundamentalisms, mark fundamentalism seems impervious to argument o inconvenient facts. Inside the muscular church o laissez-faire, broad-brush ideas—all of them e timable in the abstract—get rolled togethe into a mesmerizing, internally coherent mantra

But vulgarity and obtuseness should not be mi taken for sincerity. Not only is the case for Pres ident Bush's "opinion" that "free trade is good fo both wealthy and impoverished nations" empi ically feeble; there is plenty of evidence that ric countries, starting with the United States, hav no intention of playing by the trade rules an strictures they foist on poorer, weaker countries a "a single sustainable model." We practice fre trade selectively, which is to say not at all, and when it suits our commercial purposes, we ac tively prevent poor countries from exploiting thei few advantages on the world market. While Pres ident Bush extols a simple, sweeping, unexcep tionable creed at every opportunity, however in appropriate, his administration, guided by figure such as Trade Representative Zoellick, pursues far more complex and sophisticated agenda. Their is not an ideology of freedom or democracy. It i a system of control. It is an economic of empire.

I was in Bolivia not long ago, and I noticed how every conversation there seemed to turn, in exorably, toward the topics of development and exploitation. Angel Villagomez, a retired state road inspector, told me, "It's very sad. Here in

livia we are sitting on a chair of gold—oil, s, minerals—and yet all the wealth goes to eigners." Villagomez was sitting outside his use, a simple adobe structure, on a chair of astic. A vigorous, engaging man, he lives in a sty *barrio marginal* near the Andean city of ochabamba.

He was right about Bolivia. Although rich in atural resources, it is the poorest country in outh America. Landlocked and thinly populat-, it offers a less operatic example, perhaps, of a ountry struggling with neoliberalism than its eighbor, Argentina, but, in its deep-running nderdevelopment and obscurity, a more typi- l one.

In the early 1980s, Bolivia emerged from many ears of military rule in an economically impos- ble position. It had been looted by the generals. s foreign debt was overwhelming. In 1985, in- ation reached a surreal annual rate of 24,000 ercent. The country had no choice but to con- ent to radical treatment. Advised by Jeffrey Sachs, ne young American economist who later became nown for designing "shock therapy" plans for ountries emerging from Communism, the re- ormers in Bolivia were led by the minister of lanning (later president), Gonzalo Sánchez de ozada. To halt the inflationary death swoop, hey drastically devalued the currency, abolished he minimum wage, and cut state spending to the one. These measures plunged the economy into evere recession. Wages fell and unemployment kyrocketed. Tin miners, teachers, nurses, and factory workers were especially hard hit. The shock treatment worked, though, in the sense that prices eventually stabilized and the Bolivian government's good relations with its foreign cred- itors—and, most importantly, with their de fac- to enforcement arm, the International Monetary Fund—were restored.

There were conditions, of course. The I.M.F. and the World Bank (the Bank's development loans helped keep the country afloat) took effec- tive control of large areas of public policy. Like many poor countries, Bolivia was subjected to what is blandly known as structural adjustment—a set of standardized, far-reaching austerity and "openness" measures that typically include the removal of restrictions on foreign investment, the abolition of public subsidies and labor rights, re- duced state spending, deregulation, lower tariffs, tighter credit, the encouragement of export- oriented industries, lower marginal tax rates, cur- rency devaluation, and the sale of major public en- terprises. In Bolivia's case, the latter included the national railways, the national airlines, the tele- phone system, the country's vast tin mines, and a long list of municipal utilities. Many indebted countries have had to be force-fed structural ad- justment, but Bolivia turned out to be a model stu- dent. The country's small, white, wealthy politi- cal class seemed to have come to a quiet under- standing with the international bankers. The power of the workers and peasants, once orga- nized and formidable, was clearly broken; all of the major parties were now business aligned. And so the parties began to trade the presidency around every election cycle, and their leaders found that



BOLIVIA, THE POOREST COUNTRY IN SOUTH AMERICA, PRIVATIZED ITS RAILWAYS, ITS AIRLINES, ITS PHONE SYSTEM, ITS TIN MINES, AND MOST OF ITS UTILITIES

they could collaborate profitably with the inter- national corporations that came in to run the phone company or pump the oil and gas.

Angel Villagomez said, "The politicians here all campaign with their left hands up." He raised his left hand. "But once they get in office, they all turn out to have hearts that beat on the right!" He struck the right side of his chest sharply.

A newspaper editor in Cochabamba put it dif- ferently. "The World Bank *is* the government of Bolivia," he said.

Since both the World Bank and the I.M.F. are based in Washington, D.C., and Bolivia's primary overseer in the developed world has long been the United States, it's not surprising that some Bolivians detected that old-time Yankee imperialism in this new globalization regime. It wasn't, to be sure, gunboat diplomacy (except when it came to the war on drugs, an entirely dif- ferent sore subject in Bolivia), and it wasn't a purely North American operation. The cheap foreign products that flooded the country after 1985 came from all directions, as did the for- eign investors.

But the hundreds of local factories that went bankrupt, unable to compete, were, for the most part, Bolivian. And, contemplating what the anthropologist Lesley Gill calls the "imposed disorder" of post-shock Bolivia—the havoc and deep social pain caused by structural adjust- ment—contemplating, especially, the mysterious power of these faceless institutions, the World Bank and the I.M.F.—both ostensibly public

Photograph © Ferdinando Scianna/Magnum Photos

agencies dedicated to the reduction of Third World poverty—many Bolivians must have asked one another, echoing those suave gringo outlaws Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid (who died, it may be remembered, after robbing a mining company in Bolivia), "Who *are* those guys?"

These pillars of the postwar international financial order were conceived during the latter part of World War II at a conference of American, British, and European economists and civil servants held in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, and dominated intellectually by John Maynard Keynes. The World Bank was originally intended to help finance the reconstruction of postwar Europe—a project that neither private capital nor shattered states could be expected to undertake. After the Marshall Plan made that purpose redundant, the Bank, looking for a raison d'être, began to concentrate on Asia, Africa, and Latin America, where it loaned money to poor governments, usually for specific projects. Today, the Bank has 9,700 employees, 184 member states, and lends nearly $20 billion a year. The founding purpose of the I.M.F. was to make short-term loans to stabilize currencies and the balance of payments, promote international economic cooperation, and prevent another Depression. It, too, has changed with the times. Now it makes long-term loans as well, functions almost entirely in the developing world, and, by interpreting its mandate to maintain international financial stability as broadly as possible, seeks to actively manage the economies of many poor countries. Because almost all significant aid and loans to poor countries hinge on the I.M.F.'s assessment of a nation's financial soundness, the Fund has the leverage to dictate public policy in large areas of the globe. Power within the institutions was originally apportioned among governments according to their relative financial strength and contributions, which meant that the United States had the leading role from the start. Although the managing director of the I.M.F. is traditionally a European, the U.S. is the only country with an effective veto over I.M.F. actions. The president of the World Bank has always been an American. The Bank and the I.M.F work together closely. They are the two most powerful financial institutions in the world.

During the Cold War, loans were often nakedly political. Anti-Communist dictators—in Uruguay, Ethiopia, the Philippines—were rewarded. Dictatorships in general were viewed as more reliable than democracies, and useful Communists, such as Ceauşescu, in Romania, also became big clients. Even apartheid South Africa got loans from the World Bank. Robert McNamara, having presided over the Vietnam War, became president of the Bank in 1968. He aggressively expanded its operations, pushing poor countries to accept loans to build factories, highways, huge power projects, vast agro-industrial schemes. This development model had fundamental problems. By 1981, when McNamara retired, abandoned megaprojects littered the Third World, together with uprooted populations, ravaged forests and watersheds, countries no longer able to feed themselves, and an ocean of impossible debt.

Both the Bank and the I.M.F. passed through an ideological looking glass in the 1980s. They had been established and run on Keynesian principles—on assumptions that markets need state guidance, whether to stabilize currencies and prevent panics (I.M.F.) or to build infrastructure necessary for economic development (the Bank). But with the ascendance of Reaganite (and Thatcherite) free-market economics in the West—among their rich-country masters, that is—both institutions changed their operating philosophies.* They began pushing policies of laissez-faire—what became known as the Washington Consensus.

Unfortunately, they have had even less success with the new philosophy. Financial panics and crises continue to roil the I.M.F.'s clients, from East Asia to Argentina. The idea that open markets and increased trade lead invariably to economic growth may be sound in



A GUATEMALAN CHILD PARTICIPATES IN THE GLOBAL LABOR MARKET

The Fund is generally seen as more ideological than the Bank. Certainly that is the view of Joseph Stiglitz, Nobel Prize winner and former chief economist of the World Bank, whose Globalization and Its Discontents *comprehensively trashes the Fund for its rigidity. "Decisions were made," Stiglitz writes, "on the basis of what seemed a curious blend of ideology and bad economics, dogma that sometimes seemed to be thinly veiling special interests."*

Photograph © Fernando Moleres/Times Pictures

ory, but it has repeatedly failed the reality t. A recent study found that I.M.F. pro-ms have had, overall, a *negative* effect on nomic growth in participating countries. d the World Bank's declared mission of re-cing poverty has been a bust so far. More n a billion people are now living on less n one dollar a day—the figure in 1972 was 0 million—while nearly half the world's ulation is living on less than two dollars a y. When Catherine Caufield began the re-rting for her book on the World Bank, *Mas-s of Illusion*, she asked the Bank to direct her ward some of its most successful projects. ne Bank's press officers made repeated mises but produced no list. Finally, as Cau-ld was leaving for India, which happened to the Bank's largest client, they came up with e name of one project, the South Bassein ffshore Gas Development Project. Caufield uld find no one in India who had heard of it. ter, she discovered that the project was a gas ld in the Arabian Sea and was known in In-a by a different name. The Bank had loaned 72 million to the project and, because no llagers had needed to be resettled from the en sea, had managed to avoid controversy—is was apparently the successful part. The oject had taken twice as long as expected to mplete, and, according to Bank records, ore than a third of the loan had ultimately een written off "due to misprocurement."

Every generation of Bank officials has vowed improve this record, to start funding projects at benefit not only big business and local elites ut also the poor. And the Bank's efforts to pro-ote access to health care and education—proj-cts undertaken with non-governmental organi-ations (NGOs) and other "civil society" roups—have increased. But many Bank con-racts are worth millions, and multinational cor-orations remain their major beneficiaries. Tes-ifying before Congress in 1995, Lawrence ummers, then of the Treasury Department (now resident of Harvard), disclosed that American orporations received $1.35 in procurement con-racts for each dollar the American government ontributed to the World Bank and other multi-lateral development banks. This was an unusually candid admission by a leading Bank supporter that one of its main activities is, in fact, corporate welfare. Those donated American dollars come, after all, from ordinary American taxpayers—few of whom know anything about what the World Bank does.

The Bank does many things, of course, and employs many people who are undoubtedly devoted to the idea of reducing poverty. (So does the I.M.F.) It provides technical assistance to poor countries, some of it clearly useful, and even tolerates a degree of internal debate.* But both the Bank and the I.M.F. are locked in unhealthy relationships with their client governments. Governments recognize, obviously, that their poverty is a precondition for the flow of aid, and, for the less scrupulous among them, this can turn the poor themselves into a valuable commodity, their pitifulness a resource not to be squandered through amelioration. On the donors' side, lending is essential to the continued health of aid bureaucracies and the advancement of careers—not the best environment in which to make wise decisions. Then there is the merry-go-round of fiscal crises and bailouts, aboard which the Bank and the I.M.F. and rich-country bilateral lenders regularly make new loans to deeply indebted countries in order to avoid the embarrassment of nonperforming loans. Because it helps condemn the world's poor to a fate of permanent debt, the Bank's self-description as a "pro-poor" development agency is at best self-deluding. (Bolivia, like many other countries, spends more on debt servicing than it spends on health care.) The Bank's core constituencies remain the corporations and the poor-country bureaucrats and politicians whom it enriches.

THE WORLD BANK'S SELF-DESCRIPTION AS A "PRO-POOR" DEVELOPMENT AGENCY IS AT BEST SELF-DELUDING

After seventeen years of structural adjustment, Bolivia remains the poorest country in South America. The predicted foreign investment has arrived, largely in the form of multinational corporations taking control of privatized entities. But prosperity has not followed. Inflation is under control, and there has been modest economic growth, but its benefits have been concentrated among the wealthy, exacerbating a centuries-old problem of extreme inequality.

With the labor unions smashed, hundreds of thousands of workers have been thrown into what economists call "the informal sector," which in Bolivia means sweatshops producing knockoffs of brand-name clothing, street peddling in the towns and cities, and coca farming. Peasant farmers, too, have found it increasingly difficult to make

* *William Easterly, a senior Bank economist, tested the limits of that tolerance in 2001 when he published* The Elusive Quest for Growth, *a book that chronicled the failed development panaceas the Bank has promoted over the years. In a prologue, Easterly applauded the fact that his employer "encourages gadflies like me to exercise intellectual freedom." In the preface to a paperback edition, published in 2002, however, Easterly was obliged to revise this assessment. In truth, the Bank, he had learned, "encourages gadflies like me to find another job."*

[illegible] prices for their cash crops have fallen under the pressure of foreign competition. The outlook is bleak, as even Jeffrey Sachs, who continues to advise the Bolivian government, concedes. "Belt-tightening is not a development strategy," he recently told the *New York Times*, criticizing I.M.F. policy. Sachs is no fundamentalist. He is not, that is, a fantasist. Regarding Bolivia: "I always told the Bolivians, from the very beginning, that what you have here is a miserable, poor economy with hyperinflation; if you are brave, if you are gutsy, if you do everything right, you will end up with a miserable, poor economy with stable prices."

It is also possible to march backward, though. Some privatizations succeed in improving service. But those that go badly can be catastrophic. Bolivia's national railways were awarded, in a forty-year concession, to a consortium led by a Chilean multinational called Cruz Blanca. The terms of purchase allowed Cruz Blanca to discontinue service on lines it found unprofitable. Accordingly, it soon closed a number of freight and passenger lines, including the line connecting Cochabamba, Bolivia's third-largest city, to La Paz, the capital. (It was the only rail line connecting Cochabamba to anywhere.) Given Bolivia's rugged terrain, and its awful roads, this was a serious blow to the national infrastructure. The closure, moreover, seemed to be indefinite. The Cochabamba train station was turned, willy-nilly, into a vast marketplace, shanties were built over the track bed, and photos began to appear in local papers showing collapsed stretches of track in the mountains. Bolivia's railroads were built a century ago, when superexploited labor made such monumental construction possible. Such railroads will not be built again. Cruz Blanca may abandon as many lines as it chooses, and non-maintenance for even a few Andean winters will render them irrecoverable. The latest Sánchez de Lozada government, elected in mid-2002, seemed to realize that a historic fiasco was in progress. Within weeks of taking power, the government announced that it planned to reopen the main line from La Paz to Cochabamba. The announcement contained no details, however, and it did not mention Cruz Blanca, and no one seemed to believe a word of it.

SOME PRIVATIZATIONS SUCCEED IN IMPROVING SERVICE. BUT THOSE THAT GO BADLY CAN BE CATASTROPHIC

The handful of countries that have managed to escape mass poverty since the 1950s are concentrated in East Asia—South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, and, to a lesser extent, Thailand and Malaysia. South Korea and Taiwan followe strongly *dirigiste* industrial policies. High prote tive tariffs were raised, for instance, around ce tain fledgling industries. (This is sometimes know as the "infant industry" strategy.) Some of the industries were selected for their export potentia and when they were ready to compete interna tionally they quickly found markets. The loc standard of living began to rise. This develop ment strategy is similar to what all the Wester powers once did to encourage their own industrie but it is anathema under the free-trade dogma the Washington Consensus, and it could not b implemented by any underdeveloped, indebte country today. It relies heavily on tariffs and stat planning, and is thus noxious not only to th I.M.F. and the World Bank but, equally as im portant, to the World Trade Organization, whic is the third Bretton Woods institution. Th W.T.O. is dedicated, even more unequivocall than the others, to eliminating "barriers to trade

South Korea, Taiwan, and Singapore also mar aged, each in its own way, to turn some of the ea ly waves of the current flood of corporate glob alization to their advantage. When manufacturin started fleeing the high-wage nations of the We opening assembly plants in Latin America an Asia, the countries that came to be known the Asian Tigers successfully imposed local content laws (requiring that investors buy local ly produced components when possible) and con sistently cut better deals for the transfer of tech nical skills to their own workers than, say, Mexic did. Thus, when the multinationals moved o to Indonesia and Vietnam in search of cheaper la bor, Taiwan and South Korea were ready to le the sweatshops go and to assume a higher positio in the global production chain.

None of this wise planning meant that th Tigers were immune to pressures from the mul tilateral financial institutions. The I.M.F., in par ticular, was determined that the newly prosper ous East Asian countries liberalize their capita markets, and its success in prying open thos markets contributed to the devastating regiona economic crisis of 1997–98. In the crisis, onl Malaysia seriously defied the stern—and, in ret rospect, disastrous—advice of the U.S. Treasur Department not to impose capital controls (These are laws that impede international in vestors and speculators—what Thomas L. Fried man, the great sloganeer of globalization, calls "th Electronic Herd"—as they move money in o out of a country.) By no coincidence, Malaysi emerged from the wreckage more quickly an less scathed than any of its neighbors. (Chile which has made more progress against poverty un der neoliberalism than any other Latin America country, also uses capital controls.)

China and India, although poor, have the pop

ational heft to ignore many applications of estern pressure, which has helped each of them le the globalization wave at least in the right gen- al direction. China offers foreign corporations me of the world's cheapest labor, particularly in hat are called export-processing zones, or free- ade zones. EPZs are tax-free manufacturing zones, here local labor and environmental laws (if any) e often relaxed or suspended in order to attract reign capital. Today, tens of millions of people more than seventy countries work in EPZs. hey are where the American (and Canadian, nd Western European) manufacturing jobs go hen they go south. Or, rather, parts of the jobs o there, temporarily, because multinational firms ave found that it is often most profitable to dis- ibute the different aspects of production and as- embly to different contractors and subcontractors, ften in different countries, with the lowest-skilled, ost tedious, unhealthy, labor-intensive work ypically going to the least developed country. Mobility is essential to this arrangement—the bility to quickly transfer operations from coun- ry to country in search of the cheapest produc- ion costs and least hassle from local authorities. Thus the facilities in EPZs, the vast prefab sheds nd plants, are rarely owned by the contractors who use them, let alone by the multinationals who place the orders. They are leased.

EPZs are not a viable development model. Wages are low, and workers are typically drawn not from local communities but from distant villages and rural areas. With the constant threat that companies will pick up and leave if they are taxed or regulated, local governments rarely profit in any significant way. Local-content laws and knowledge transfer are seldom, if ever, part of the package. A few corrupt officials, along with managers drawn from local elites, profit, certainly, but the great influx of foreign technology and capital that EPZs are supposed to bring rarely materializes.

And this seemingly minor, disappointing fact undermines a crucial assumption, widespread in the West, about the new global division of labor. The assumption is that the developed world is turning into one big postindustrial service economy while the rest of the world industrializes, and that, yes, sweatshops, child labor, egregious pollution, health and safety nightmares, and subsistence-level wages come with industrialization, but that any country that wants to develop must go through all that. *We went through it. So did Western Europe.* This assumption, although not usually stated so crudely, underpins every serious argument for corporate-led globalization. The problem is that the industrialization that Indonesia, Honduras, the Philippines, and dozens of other countries are now experiencing is not the same industrialization that we in the West experienced. It's true that people are moving from farms to factories, and that urbanization is occurring at a rapid pace. But exploitation and immiseration are not development. And unregulated, untaxed foreign ownership, with profits being remitted to faraway investors, will never build good infrastructure. It is simply not clear how, under the current model, the poor majority in most poor countries will ever benefit from globalization.



WORLD BANK–BACKED DAMS HAVE DISPLACED MILLIONS. ACTIVISTS IN INDIA PROTEST THE PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION OF YET ANOTHER BY PREPARING TO DROWN THEMSELVES IN THE RISING WATERS OF THE NARMADA RIVER

China has achieved and maintained impressive growth, even in the present world recession. And yet China, although increasingly integrated into the world economy, and recently admitted to the W.T.O., is following a development path very much its own. It has strict capital controls. It forbids foreigners from owning many forms of stock. It has gone slowly with privatization. (Russia already demonstrated how to do it fast and badly.) The state retains control of the banking system. Still, everybody wants to do business with China, if only because of the size and docility of its labor force and the size of its consumer market, which is expanding swiftly, along with its urban middle class. Politically, China remains, of course, a one-party state—a police state, in fact—nominally Communist, with little interest in human rights, the rule of law, or other democratic niceties that theoretically come with a market economy.

India, the world's largest democracy, has achieved less growth, and it has been racked by battles over some of the main insults of corporate globalization, such as seed patenting and the construction of giant, World Bank–backed dams that have displaced millions of villagers. But the Indian middle class (also growing) has enjoyed the fruits of a technology-led boom, thanks to a thick slice of the world's software programming and back-office work being outsourced to a few Indian firms. The government, meanwhile, has continued to protect many domestic industries—and to use capital controls—basically thumbing its

Photograph © Karen Robinson/Panos Pictures

invest in the impoverishment of the Bretton Woods institutions to stop.

Most national governments today, though, must struggle in a world economy in which they are dwarfed by global corporations. And those corporations, while gaining power steadily in relation to states (which must compete to lure investment), have also been quietly undergoing a profound self-transformation. This transformation can be seen most easily in two figures: first, the total assets of the 100 largest multinational corporations increased, between 1980 and 1995, by 697 percent; second, the total direct employment of those same corporations during that same period *decreased* by 8 percent. This was more than mere downsizing. These figures demonstrate, again, that a great many of the jobs that left the rich world over the past twenty-five years did not, in fact, rematerialize intact elsewhere, in the Global South, where labor is cheaper. Because the question turned out to be, in many cases, again, not where to produce goods but how to produce them, and the answer turned out to be not by owning factories and having employees but by ordering products from contractors and subcontractors and sub-subcontractors in poor countries. EPZs have been instrumental to the success of this strategy.



HAITI, THE POOREST COUNTRY IN THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE, DOES WELL ON THE [illegible] AT AN AMERICAN-OWNED FACTORY. WORKERS MAKE TWO DOLLARS A DAY

Bolivia, by the way, has EPZs. Nobody wants to use them, though. Transportation costs alone—in a landlocked country with bad roads and disappearing railroads, far from major markets—deter potential investors. Then there is the country's tradition of labor militancy, which frightens foreign investment and is not a problem in, say, Thailand (and certainly not in China, where independent labor unions are illegal). Bolivian trade ministers end up in the same position as many trade ministers from sub-Saharan Africa. They would be delighted to have foreign corporations come and exploit their people. But the corporations see better opportunities elsewhere.

The market fundamentalist's version of history and economics is both more scriptural and more expedient than it is factual. The idea, for instance, that greater trade leads to greater general prosperity, which is an unshakable conviction not only among true believers but also among liberal globalizers, including most of the American journalistic establishment and the Democratic Party, is in many cases simply untrue. In Latin America, during the 1960s and 1970s—the decades preceding the great trade boom of globalization—per capita income rose 73 percent. During the last two decades, with trade expanding rapidly under neoliberalism, per capita income rose less than 6 percent. The same dismal pattern appears in the United States. Between 1947 and 1973, economic growth averaged 4 percent and non-managerial wages—that's the pay of more than 80 percent of American workers—rose 63 percent, in real dollars. Since 1973, with international trade soaring, real wages have fallen 4 percent, while economic growth has averaged 3 percent. Nobody knows precisely what effect trade has had on American wages and growth, but even conservative economists ascribe a significant amount of the long-term American wage stagnation to the effects of globalization. These effects, when they are acknowledged at all by free traders, are, we are assured, only temporary. But they have lasted more than a generation now and, as the Springsteen song says about good jobs, "They ain't comin' back."

Another core belief, that lower taxes promote economic growth by encouraging people to work harder and invest more, is equally unfounded in reality. Neither U.S. history, which shows no correlation between tax rates and growth, nor studies of other countries, which show randomly mixed results, bear out this article of free-market faith. If a government collects high taxes and then spends the revenue unwisely, economic growth will be impeded, obviously. If it spends the money wisely, growth may be enhanced. Of course, different groups in society will be affected differently by the progressivity and specifics of any tax regime—this is why wealthy corporations and individuals tend to be especially enthusiastic about lower marginal tax rates, which reduce their own tax bills.

But even economic growth, which is regarded nearly universally as an overall social good, is not necessarily so. There is growth so unequal that it heightens social conflict and increases repression. There is growth so environmentally destructive that it detracts, in sum, from a community's quality of life. (Trade itself carries vast, and rarely

culated, environmental consequences, with pollution-spreading ships, trucks, and planes rushing goods around the globe.) Then there is the destruction of communities themselves, as nations frantically reshape their economies around exports and specialization—the mass production of those goods that may afford them comparative advantage in the global marketplace. Finally, there is the peculiar way that growth, or gross domestic product, is calculated, which is as a value-free measure of total economic output, one that does not distinguish between costs and benefits. Thus resource extraction is a plus, while resource depletion does not register. Strip-mining, clear-cutting, overfishing, pumping an aquifer (or an oil reserve) dry—these ravages and permanent losses do not figure in the growth equation. Neither is income distribution a factor, meaning that most people may be getting poorer in a context of economic "growth." Medical bills and legal bills all count as growth, leading to an absurdist universe in which, as policy analysts Ted Halstead and Clifford Cobb put it, "the nation's economic hero is a terminal cancer patient who has just gone through a bitterly contested divorce."

This is not to say that the world's poor are not in need of economic growth, in the sense of greater economic opportunity. They are. But the question remains: What policies and incentives will actually provide that opportunity? Increased international trade *can* be beneficial to the poor. *But it is not automatically so.* Markets *can* do great things, and yet they remain flawed, fickle mechanisms that favor those with money, and they must be carefully regulated.

One hears a great deal of piety from the Bush Administration about raising global standards of living—and the president has in fact pledged to increase his foreign-aid budget by half—but the U.S. government's primary job is to advance and protect American interests. Our leaders' passion for "free trade" is driven not by altruism but by a desire to open new markets for U.S. firms and products.

How will we respond, though, when our overtures are rejected? There is a popular backlash building against the Washington Consensus throughout Latin America (and elsewhere). The top priority of U.S. policy toward Latin America, meanwhile, is the creation of a hemisphere-wide free-trade zone known as the Free Trade Area of the Americas. If and when it goes into effect, the F.T.A.A., which was first seriously pursued during the Clinton Administration, will be a sort of super-NAFTA, including in its embrace thirty-four of the Western Hemisphere's thirty-five countries—all but Cuba. Like NAFTA, the F.T.A.A. is a brainchild of big business, whose interests it would serve from start to finish. It would virtually eliminate barriers to foreign investment, strengthen investor rights (and gut consumer rights), eliminate tariffs, ban capital controls, and establish secret trade courts in which multinational corporations would be able to sue governments over health, labor, or environmental laws that could be shown to impede profits. The F.T.A.A. would actually go beyond NAFTA, with mandatory requirements that national markets be opened to foreign corporations not only for basic services such as banking and insurance but also for public services such as health, education, and water. Within Latin America, there is broad popular and political opposition to the F.T.A.A., which is widely seen as an economic onslaught on national sovereignty. North American firms, it is believed, simply want more access to Latin American markets, on grossly unfair terms. U.S. embassies in the region spend a great deal of time parrying such arguments—presenting the F.T.A.A. as a win-win deal, trying to woo local businessmen, politicians, and opinion makers onto the bandwagon.*

THE U.S. SHOVES FREE-TRADE DOCTRINE DOWN THE THROAT OF EVERY COUNTRY IT MEETS BUT PRACTICES PROTECTIONISM ITSELF

Their job would be easier if the United States did not flout the principles it espouses. Last spring, for instance, President Bush, responding to domestic political pressure, imposed steep new tariffs on steel imports. Loud protests came from Europe, East Asia, and Brazil, and complaints were soon being filed with the W.T.O. The hypocrisy was stark: the U.S. shoves free-trade doctrine down the throat of every country it meets while practicing, when it pleases, protectionism. Even more hypocritical, and economically painful, to dozens of countries in Africa and Latin America has been the latest round of U.S. farm subsidies, which may total as much as $180 billion over the next decade. Most of that windfall goes directly to big agricultural corporations (all of them big political contributors). These subsidies effectively close American markets to many poor-country food producers (we also have tariff barriers in place, just in case), while allowing U.S. exporters to

** The F.T.A.A. even made it onto the Bush National Security Strategy's wish list. Regional and bilateral trade pacts have recently bumped multilateral venues, notably the W.T.O., from the top of the administration's trade priorities. Bilateral agreements with Jordan, Chile, and Singapore have already been reached. Morocco and Australia are among those next in line. W.T.O. trade rules are, by their global nature, more difficult to control than bilateral agreements with much smaller economies. Indeed, the U.S. has recently violated W.T.O. trade rules so consistently that the organization's top officials have likened American trade unilateralism to Bush's policy toward Iraq.*

flood foreign markets with cheap food, often putting poor-country farmers out of business. Global trade rules, as codified in the W.T.O.'s Agriculture Agreement, do allow countries to make direct payments to their farmers. But only rich countries, for obvious reasons, have that option. This is one of the many ways that the "level playing field" extolled by free traders does not look level from the Global South.

Our NAFTA partners—Canada and Mexico—are exempt from the new steel tariffs, a fact sometimes pointed out by U.S. diplomats campaigning for the F.T.A.A. The implication is that members of a free-trade pact may actually practice free trade with one another. But since the advent of NAFTA in 1994, the fate of Mexican workers and farmers—especially small corn farmers, the country's rural backbone—has not been confidence-inspiring. Wages have fallen, and a half million families have been driven off their land by a collapse of prices as local markets have been swamped with subsidized corn produced by U.S. agribusiness.

The election, in October, of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, a socialist ex-metalworker, as president of Brazil, will likely try the Bush Administration's commitment to respecting democratic outcomes. Lula, as he is known, has been a strong critic of neoliberalism and the F.T.A.A., and without Brazil, which has the largest economy in South America, there will be no F.T.A.A. (*Pace* Trade Representative Zoellick, who, in remarks that infuriated Brazilians across the political spectrum, suggested that if the new government did not sign the agreement it would be welcome to trade with Antarctica.) While Lula has vowed not to renege on Brazil's international debt, he has ambitious plans to ease his country's terrible inequality, poverty, and hunger, and international bankers and investors have been loudly nervous about the prospect of his presidency. They caused a plunge in the value of Brazil's currency before Lula was even elected, and it is not too much to say that they retain the power to annul the results of the country's election by pulling out investments and calling in loans. The I.M.F., especially, with its power to extend or withhold loans, and its even greater power, through its influence, to cut off lines of credit, holds the keys to Brazil's financial stability—which is another way of saying that the U.S. holds those keys. In the Bush Administration's quasi-theological version of political economy, democracy and free markets are two halves of a mystical whole. In reality, they can be deadl opponents, when voters decide t go against the markets.

FREE TRADE IS A CREDO, A CHIMERA—A NICE IDEA—AS WELL AS A FINE CLUB WITH WHICH TO BELABOR COMPETITORS

The truth is, no government practices fre trade. It is a credo, a chimera, a utopian con ceit—a nice idea—as well as a fine club wit which to belabor one's political opponents an economic competitors. The E.U. subsidizes it farmers as lavishly as the U.S., and Japan doe almost as well by its farmers. The W.T.O. is tariff-trading bourse, where countries dicker an bicker and hash out compromises under arbitra tion. Its founding document is more than 27,00 pages long. This is not the yellow brick road to purified, simplified ("free") global trading syste

But the main problem, from the perspective c poor countries, with the existing system of worl finance and trade is simply that the rules draw up, and the decisions handed down, at th W.T.O., the I.M.F., and other international tri bunals, are drawn up and handed down almost en tirely by the rich countries. They have the ne gotiators, the expertise, the financial leverage and in some cases (such as the I.M.F. and th World Bank) the weighted vote to win virtuall every dispute. Even when rich countries clearl violate an agreement, their poor-country coun terparts may lack the resources (meaning, often simply the lawyers) to lodge a successful protest

Lopsided legal contests in trade courts ar not tragedies, of course. Those occur, rather, i what international bureaucrats like to call "th field"—when the European Union decides t dump heavily subsidized powdered milk in Ja maica, say, and Jamaican dairy farmers ar forced to throw away hundreds of thousands o gallons of fresh milk; or when the Unite States decides to off-load vast quantities of sub sidized rice in Haiti, putting thousands of smal rice farmers out of business and causing a re gional rise in child malnutrition. Haiti, al though the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, does well, incidentally, on the I.M.F.'s trade-openness rankings.

Beyond the egregious incidents, though there are the structural obstructions. Rich country tariffs, for instance. They are, in the ag gregate, four times higher against the product of poor countries than against the products o other rich countries. Why? Well, what you go to negotiate *with*, mon? Or consider the twis known as "tariff peaks." These charges, levied a rich-country ports, get higher with the amount of processing that an imported product has un dergone. Peanuts? We charge you, assuming that this is an American port, *x*. Peanut butter We charge you *x* plus *132 percent*. Our peanut butter companies do not appreciate competi tion, you see. Canada, Japan, and the E.U. al

· tariff peaks to keep out processed foods and ıer manufactured products. The result is to :vent poor countries from adding any value their raw commodities—to prevent them, at is, from achieving even the primary stages industrial development.

It's the perennial mismatch of the powerful nter and the weak periphery. In economic pol- today, though, it plays out in a particularly per- rse way. When a poor country is in recession, r instance, it is usually ordered by its paymas- rs at the I.M.F. to balance its books. This ap- oach to fiscal management went out in the 'est with Herbert Hoover. In the rich coun- ies, we run deficits during a recession and apply od countercyclical remedies like lowered in- rest rates. We don't listen to the I.M.F.'s ultra- thodox prescriptions because we don't owe the M.F. money. Austerity, like free trade, is for us prescribe and for poor countries to practice. Pri- ate enterprises in poor countries are expected to mpete with rich multinationals when the in- rest rates that they must pay to raise capital—ushed dizzyingly high under austerity plans—ake fair competition impossible. And all this bitter medicine comes in a bottle labeled Economic Freedom.

I was surprised to learn that the *cocaleros*, Bolivia's coca farmers, have a parliamentary brigade. went to see its leader, Evo Morales, at his office n La Paz. His office turned out to be a dimly lit oom in a high-rise government warren. People lumped in the shadows, and it felt a bit like a NORML meeting, particularly after I told Morales nd his aides that I had recently chewed coca to combat altitude sickness on a drive through the igh mountains, and they all cackled happily.

Morales is short, dark, handsome, round-faced, with a long pageboy haircut. His father was a peasant potato farmer, he said, and he himself still farmed a coca plot in the Chapare, a jungle district east of Cochabamba. Most of the coca farmers are ex-miners, he said, "on the run from neoliberalism." They had been fighting for years with the Bolivian army, which was being heavily supported by the U.S. in a coca-eradication effort known as "zero coca." Although the Bolivian government and the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency were claiming victory, most independent analysts believe the effort is futile, since poor farmers in other parts of South America have always proved willing to raise coca when there is a market for it.

Morales didn't want to discuss the drug business, except to say that in Bolivia it was certainly not a military problem. He preferred to frame the U.S.-Bolivian war on drugs as a war on his people, the Quechua and Aymara, who have been growing coca for thousands of years, and have been suffering attacks from white colonizers for centuries. "Zero coca means zero Quechua and Aymara," he said. "They see us as animals. They enslaved us. When we learned to read, they cut out our eyes."

Evo Morales is a prominent Bolivian politician, but the U.S. Embassy in La Paz assured me that his career had peaked years earlier, and that he would soon be found in the dustbin of local history.



ARGENTINA FOLLOWED THE I.M.F. TO THE BRINK OF COLLAPSE. IN BUENOS AIRES A GROCERY-STORE EMPLOYEE STAYS ONE STEP AHEAD OF LOOTERS

The embassy was wrong. That was in early 2001. In 2002, Morales ran for president, on a socialist ticket. He vowed, if elected, to end Bolivia's participation in the U.S. war on drugs, and to end, moreover, Bolivia's participation in the failed neoliberal experiment. All the industries and utilities that had been privatized? They would be renationalized. To the horror of the local authorities, not to mention the Americans, Morales began to rise in the polls. His radical ideas clearly appealed to a fair number of people. As election day neared, the embassy seemed to panic. Ambassador Manuel Rocha announced that if Morales won the election, the U.S. would have to consider cutting off aid to Bolivia. This threat was taken ill, apparently, by Bolivian voters. Support for Morales surged, and on election day he finished second, behind Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada. Since no candidate had received a majority of votes, there was a runoff between the top two finishers. Fortunately for Goni, as Sánchez de Lozada is known, the voters in the runoff were not the Indian majority of Bolivians, in which case Morales would probably have won. They were, instead, the Bolivian parliament, whose members overwhelmingly favored the wealthy, well-educated, white man, Goni.

The American presence in Bolivia is less brainlessly imperial than Ambassador Rocha made it seem. The embassy understands, for

Photograph © AFP/CORBIS

instance, that the relative success of the coca-eradication program has been a major blow to Bolivia's economy. Jorge Quiroga, Goni's predecessor as president, told me that the income from coca had accounted for more than 8 percent of Bolivia's gross domestic product and 18 percent of exports. "Imagine wiping that out," he said. "All the unemployment and suffering, all the multiplier effects. In the U.S., it would be like wiping out the mining and agricultural sectors combined." The embassy did not dispute these numbers or the analogy (and Quiroga is a *supporter* of eradication). Partly because the war on drugs causes hardship, the U.S. remains by far the largest source of bilateral aid to Bolivia, as well as the prime mover behind the World Bank's local largesse.

The Bank also recognizes the impossible burden that international debt places on nearly all poor countries, and it has lobbied for partial debt relief for poor countries it considers fiscally responsible, including Bolivia. Despite its annexation to the Washington Consensus, the Bank is not a solid bastion of market fundamentalism, and its analysts have seen enough social and financial fallout from hasty privatizations to realize, belatedly, that in many sectors, such as utilities, a strong regulatory framework to protect the public interest is essential to successful privatization. In most poor countries, the modern regulatory body is a novel concept. The Bank has therefore started sponsoring courses to train would-be regulators from countries undergoing structural adjustment. The courses are said to be first-rate, although problems can arise with the students sent to them by client governments. "They always send the minister's nephew," a regulation advocate in Bolivia told me. "Somebody who thinks of regulation the same way he thinks of a job in government, as a way to make money from bribes."

"Structural adjustment," incidentally, has precipitated so many riots in so many countries, caused so much suffering and received so much bad publicity, that it is currently being rebranded, by both the Bank and the I.M.F., as "development policy support lending," which has a much less procrustean sound.

The U.S. Embassy is not, of course, a charitable organization. It exists to represent U.S. interests, which in Latin America has traditionally meant the interests of U.S. business. This is as true today as ever. Even at the World Bank, and at each of its regional development banks, the United States has, under order of Congress, an officer of the U.S. Commercial Service assigned to look out for U.S. business interests. And the economic big stick is at times still crudely wielded. In late 2002, for instance, the Colombian defense ministry expressed interest in buying forty light attack planes from the leading Brazilian aircraft manufacturer. Colombia, which is racked by civil war, is a major recipient of U.S. military aid. General James T. Hill, head of the U.S. Southern Command, learning of the Colombians' interest in purchasing Brazilian planes, fired off a letter to the Colombian government warning that future U.S. military aid could be jeopardized by the purchase. The Colombian air force should be buying American-made C-130s, the general wrote, mincing no words. When this letter unexpectedly became public, a Southern Command spokesman claimed it was merely a technical evaluation of Colombia's military needs.



[illegible] SHARPLY AGAINST THE WASHINGTON CONSENSUS, AND NEARLY ELECTED A SOCIALIST COCA-[illegible]

It's easy to be cynical about the double binds—the rigged world trade system, to be blunt—faced by poor countries. And the bald contradictions of U.S. policy and preachments suggest, certainly, a degree of official cynicism. But nobody really wants to see economies stultify or implode (nobody except, perhaps, a few financial specialists known as vulture capitalists), and the I.M.F.'s great efforts to prevent emerging-economy disasters with emergency bailouts, although frequently unsuccessful, seem basically sincere. The problem lies, rather, with the model.

Even market fundamentalists concede that corporate-led globalization produces both winners and losers. Why should the U.S. government look beyond a strict pro-business definition of the national interest? Because it is *in* our national interest, especially in the longer term, to expand globalization's circle of winners and to throw lifelines to the billions of people struggling to stay afloat in the world economic maelstrom. The U.S. currently enjoys a truly rare global preeminence—military, economic, pop-cultural. But power is not, obviously, the same as legitimacy. And every overweening, remorseless projection of American

Photograph © Raymond Depardon/Magnum Photos

p/er, every unfair trade rule and economic d/ble standard jammed into the global finan-ci/ architecture, helps erode the legitimacy of A/erican ascendancy in the eyes of the world's p/r. This erosion is occurring throughout L/in America, Africa, Asia. At the W.T.O., i/esponse to worldwide protests against the h/h prices of AIDS drugs, the United States fi/ly acceded, in November 2001, to a historic d/ision that public health should, after all, be a/onsideration in some areas of patent protec-t/n. Then, in late 2002, under pressure from / big pharmaceuticals, the Bush Administra-/n quietly changed its position and sent /ade Representative Zoellick to kill an agree-/nt allowing poor countries access to generic /dicines. Few Americans noticed. But in /rica, and Asia, and all the countries directly /ured by this decision, millions noticed.

President Bush had it all wrong about Al /eda and world trade, of course. Still, there /s the long, horrifying groundswell of popular /pport for Osama bin Laden and the attacks / New York and Washington that surfaced, /inly in the Muslim world. The depths of ha-/d that the United States has inspired in some / the world's more oppressed corners may be /timately unfathomable. But the importance of /ing to change that, of trying to inspire some-/ing less malignant with policies less rapa-/ous, seems undeniable. As the Bush Adminis-/ation has been discovering in its campaign /ainst Iraq, even empires need allies.

Americans always overestimate the amount of /reign aid we give. In recent national polls, people /ave guessed, on average, that between 15 and 24 /ercent of the federal budget goes for foreign aid. / reality, it is less than 1 percent. The U.N. has /t a foreign-aid goal for the rich countries of .7 /ercent of gross national product. A few countries /ave attained that modest goal, all of them Scan-/inavian. The U.S. has never come close. Indeed, / comes in dead last, consistently, in the yearly to-/als of rich-country foreign aid as a percentage of /NP. In 2000, we gave .1 percent. President /ush's dramatic proposal, post–September 11, to /ncrease foreign aid to $15 billion looks rather /uny next to the $48 billion increase in this year's /379 billion military budget.

Along with our delusions about foreign aid, /here persists a more general belief about the /ich world trying to help the poor, at least fi-/nancially. In fact, the net transfer of moneys /ach year runs the other way—from the poor /countries to the rich, mainly in the form of cor-/porate profits and government debt servicing.

But it is simplistic, even misleading, to talk /about whole nations as winners or losers under the /current globalization regime, since there are, in /very country, significant groups of both winners and losers. In China, with its remarkable growth rate and burgeoning middle class, tens of millions of people have been left unemployed and destitute in the upheavals caused by the arrival of capitalism, while millions more find themselves working seven days a week in dangerous, abysmally paid factory jobs. In dozens of countries, a dominant ethnic minority is reaping most, if not all, of the gains of economic integration while working-class and peasant majorities absorb the shocks and bitter downsides of trade liberalization. Even in the U.S., the foremost proponent of free trade and presumably its great beneficiary, there are those millions of good jobs that disappeared with globalization, leaving their former holders working non-union at Wal-Mart. There is a strong argument that the U.S. may be trading itself into oblivion, for it seems that we began, in 1976, running a trade deficit, leading to an international debt that has since ballooned to $2.4 trillion, or roughly 24 percent of GDP. Our major trading partners have yet to call in these debts, but the national balance sheet looks worse every year. With the economy threatening to slip into Japan-style deflation, life as a debtor nation could become quite unpleasant. In that event, globalization, certainly in this corporate-driven form, may start looking like a bad idea to more and more Americans.

THE WORK OF INCREASING AMERICAN COMMERCIAL SUPREMACY IS BEING DONE IN THE NAME OF FREEDOM

Empire is expensive. The finances are tricky. Countries need to be bribed as well as bullied. A government that's solidly in the fold can be sent on many errands: during the first Gulf War, Argentina, neoliberalism's poster child, was the only country in Latin America to contribute troops. That was then. President Bush relies greatly, by his own testimony, on faith—and he does seem to possess the fundamentalist's personal serenity on both the knotty, ambiguous questions of economics and on the far weightier matter of war. But the daily work of increasing American commercial supremacy, while binding the global economy into stronger, more tightly woven webs of integration, is not for the otherworldly. It's being done quietly, in our name, by trade bureaucrats and proconsuls and "area specialists" even while our leaders speak soothingly of a rising tide of freedom.* Restive countries,

* *It's also being done by war planners. The* Wall Street Journal *has reported that the Bush Administration's plan to rebuild and administer a conquered Iraq relies not on the U.N. or other international-development agencies but on American private companies with deep Pentagon connections, such as Bechtel and Kellogg Brown & Root, which have been secretly bidding on contracts since February.*

awakening to some notion of self-interest, may wander off the reservation, of course. More poignantly, transnational capital always has its own logic and pursues its own ends. While we make the world safe for multinational corporations, it is by no means clear that they intend to return the favor.

Outside the cities in Bolivia, the visitor still enters an unfamiliar world. What are those white flags hanging outside the houses? What does that graffito mean, NO A LA FLEXIBILIZACIÓN? You need a local guide. Drive into the high country and you need a Quechua-speaking guide. In a small town at the base of the mountains, I ask around and find a kid who speaks Quechua and hire him. He's a chubby teenager who makes himself comfortable, then tells me that his ambition is to study radio so that he can make educational programs for *campesinos* who don't speak Spanish and don't see newspapers or TV but listen faithfully to their radios. What are those white flags? Those are *chicherías*, unlicensed taverns selling *chicha*, a homemade corn beer. The flags mean they're open for business. *Chicha* is the people's brew—cheaper than canned beer, which comes from the German brewery. What is *flexibilización*? That was the law that took away labor rights, such as the forty-hour workweek. It was part of structural adjustment and was bitterly opposed by the unions, to no effect.

Everything feels contested. I ease my rented car through a herd of llamas and try to remember the story. The sale of llama meat, prohibited for centuries, was legalized only in 1994. What was it, besides the power of the big cattle ranchers, that kept llama meat, which is highly nutritious, off the market? "*Discriminación*," I am told, against the Indian herders. We pass a group of peasant women in beautiful, beribboned, handmade straw hats. Those hats, which are expensive, take months to make, and now they are disappearing, under an avalanche of cheap baseball caps from El Norte. The Indian women in the mountains farther to the west adopted the British bowler hat in the nineteenth century and made it jauntily their own. Somehow nothing similar seems likely to happen today. We come to a village with a brilliant, multicolored, woven flag hanging from a lamppost in the plaza. "That is the *wiphala* of these people." The *wiphala* represents local pride, the organization of local peasants, vehemently distinct from the Bolivian state. It has also become a symbol of resistance to globalization. *Everything feels contested.*

We run low on gas and find ourselves negotiating with a *campesino* in his half-tilled potato field. It's all in Quechua, but I gather he has a can of gas somewhere. He's reluctant to part with it but finally agrees to sell it to us if we'll give him a ride to town. I watch him put away his hoe. H wife comes to the door of their hut and studies m I've always despised the social-service pencha for classifying hardy peasant self-sufficiency "poverty." It's such an easy, condescending, i curious, vaguely missionary appropriation of gre unknown worlds of experience and knowledg This is not a romanticization of peasant life. It respect. For purposes of analysis and advocacy, course, the "poverty" classification is useful. I'v often been guilty of it myself. The young Quechu woman watches me, unsmiling, as I drive off wit her husband down the mountain.

I later find myself at a big, commercial *chicher* near a market town, sitting in the garden with convivial group of local officials. It's a sunny a ternoon, and a raucous *ranchera* band plays insi a tile-floored dance hall. Pitchers of cool, earth tasting *chicha* keep arriving at our table, accom panied by platters of *mote*—huge moist kernels corn. Drinking *chicha* has its rituals. Four of share a single drinking bowl, which we pa around, each carefully filling it for the next ma Before each drink, you pour a splash of *chicha* o the ground and then offer a toast to an Andea earth deity called Pachamama. The *chicha* buzz mild, even after half a dozen pitchers.

A couple of my companions are older men. turns out that they both fled Bolivia during th days of military dictatorship. One made the mi take of going to Chile, shortly before the milita coup that overthrew Salvador Allende. Out of th frying pan, he said, shrugging. He ended up be ing held for weeks inside the National Stadiu in Santiago. Not a nice place to be. We drink round to civilian rule.

Kissinger, we agree, is a war criminal.

We drink a round to democracy.

Talk turns to the I.M.F., whose local repre sentative, a U.S.-trained Israeli economist, is i all the papers. It seems he is giving valedictory in terviews because his term is up. His parting mes sage to Bolivia? First and foremost, it must solv the corruption problem. That must be done firs Thank you, Señor Kreis.

Seriously, someone asks me, do I think there i any hope for bringing democracy to the Worl Bank or the I.M.F.? Or, for that matter, to th U.N. and the W.T.O.? Shouldn't the citizens of th world be electing representatives to these power ful institutions, so that they might be account able to someone other than wealthy corporation and their allies in the rich countries? I can't thin of any reason why not. We drink a round to thi brilliant idea. It is only later, back at my hotel—or maybe it's back in New York—that I remembe it is only people in countries like Bolivia wh know or care what the World Bank or the I.M.F do. In the West, most of us have other things t worry about.

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The Humber Screenwriters' Summer Workshop

June 22 – June 27, 2003

Faculty:
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Lorne Frohman
John Krizanc
Don McKellar*
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The Writing Workshop in Siena, Italy

Oct. 10 – Oct. 20, 2003

Faculty:
Wayson Choy
Joe Fiorito
Alistair MacLeod
Don McKellar*
Paul Quarrington
Don Sedgwick

*to be confirmed

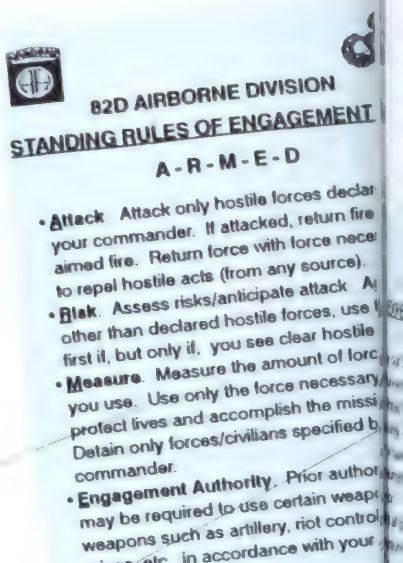
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WE H

The U.S. soldier's laws of war, in principle

While at war, the United States has international law on its side in at least one, strictly literal sense. U.S. soldiers are required to carry pocket cards that outline their "rules of engagement"; the front and back of one such card, issued to the Army's 82nd Airborne Division, are pictured here. Soldiers also learn these rules, a condensed version of the laws of war, during their training, and in combat a staff of lawyers oversees adherence to the rules on a minute-to-minute basis. Soldiers ultimately take orders from Washington, however, which under Presidents Clinton and, to a greater extent, Bush has been reluctant to support or even recognize any authority greater than its own. Increasingly, Washington commands the military according to public opinion, letting its timidity about U.S. casualties dictate military strategy and erode its concern for international law, and leaving the military no choice but to wage its wars by less than legal means.



82D AIRBORNE DIVISION

STANDING RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

A - R - M - E - D

- **Attack**. Attack only hostile forces declar your commander. If attacked, return fire aimed fire. Return force with force nece to repel hostile acts (from any source).
- **Risk**. Assess risks/anticipate attack. A other than declared hostile forces, use first if, but only if, you see clear hostile
- **Measure**. Measure the amount of forc you use. Use only the force necessary protect lives and accomplish the missi Detain only forces/civilians specified b commander.
- **Engagement Authority**. Prior author may be required to use certain weap weapons such as artillery, riot control mines, etc., in accordance with your commander's orders.
- **Deadly Force**. Use deadly force to persons/property designated by yo commander. Stop short of deadly protecting other persons/property.

20 AUG 1994

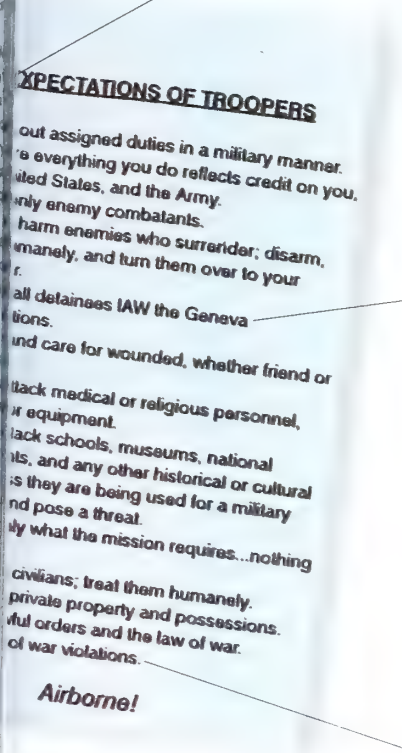
International law requires soldiers to "measure" their force, weighing a mission's goals against humane treatment of the enemy. The law also forbids commanders and government officials to order excessive force: chemical and biological weapons, for example, are banned, because they cause indiscriminate suffering. But in recent conflicts the U.S. government has deemed it more important to safeguard popularity at home than to conduct battles humanely. Late in the recent campaigns in Kosovo and in Afghanistan, with the enemy's surrender all but assured, the U.S. continued to kill enemy soldiers from the air. Even on the ground, the U.S. preference to wage war impersonally and with great haste leaves enemies with little time or opportunity to surrender. During the Gulf War, U.S. tanks and bulldozers buried several hundred Iraqi soldiers, some of whom were surrendering, in their trenches rather than face the possibility of hand-to-hand combat.

The soldier is taught to "respect all civilians," who are granted broad protections under laws of war. Washington has taken less care, occasionally harming civilians deliberately—as when pilots destroyed Serbia's civilian electrical grid in a failed attempt to incite an uprising—but more often imperiling them as bystanders to massive and ill-aimed air assaults. Belying claims of "surgical strikes," more than 70 percent of the 88,500 tons of Allied ordnance dropped in the Gulf War failed to strike its target; this errant firepower killed 1,000 to 3,000 civilians directly, and tens of thousands more died as a result of damage to hospitals and utilities. The legality of certain U.S. weapons, such as cluster bombs and depleted-uranium shells, is still in question. Cluster bombs regularly fail to explode on impact, causing their "bomblets"—which resemble the food parcels planes dropped on Afghanistan—to become, in effect, land mines. The Gulf War left more than a million unexploded bomblets in Iraq and Kuwait, accounting for an estimated 1,600 civilian deaths in the decade since.

FEW

ice, *by Paul Maliszewski and Hadley Ross*

U.S. soldiers need additional authority to use land mines. One hundred thirty-one nations, including every other member of NATO except Turkey and Greece, have ratified the 1997 Ottawa Convention, forswearing their use entirely. Contradicting stated U.S. policy—to use such mines only to train mine-removal experts and to defend Korea's Demilitarized Zone—U.S. forces deployed land mines around some coalition camps in Afghanistan. For multinational military operations, the U.S. refusal to join a majority of the world's governments creates what one handbook for military lawyers delicately terms "interoperability issues," as soldiers fighting together become subject to different rules of war. When the United States uses land mines, Canadian or British soldiers fighting alongside U.S. troops can be in violation of their country's international obligations and may subject themselves to discipline for breaking the laws of war if they cooperate.



XPECTATIONS OF TROOPERS

out assigned duties in a military manner.
e everything you do reflects credit on you,
ited States, and the Army.
nly enemy combatants.
harm enemies who surrender; disarm,
manely, and turn them over to your
r.
all detainees IAW the Geneva
tions.
und care for wounded, whether friend or
ttack medical or religious personnel,
r equipment.
lack schools, museums, national
ts, and any other historical or cultural
s they are being used for a military
nd pose a threat.
ly what the mission requires...nothing
civilians; treat them humanely.
private property and possessions.
ful orders and the law of war.
of war violations.

Airborne!

In accordance with the Geneva Conventions, prisoners of war must be allowed to worship, to send and receive mail, to elect leaders, and must be quartered as favorably as are the detaining power's troops. In Guantánamo Bay, the United States has been eager for its detainees to practice Islam, providing halal meals and multiple imams, but has neglected other aspects of the Conventions. The detainees live in shipping containers outfitted with squat toilets, which have actually been cited as evidence of cultural sensitivity. They live in a perpetual daylight, with halogen lamps illuminating their cells after sundown. President Bush has decided to classify the detainees as "unlawful combatants," a legal category with uncertain provenance and little precedent, despite the fact that the International Committee of the Red Cross, arbiter of the Geneva Conventions, considers detainees "to be prisoners of war unless a competent tribunal decides otherwise." The United States has yet to organize a single tribunal.

Soldiers are instructed to "prevent law of war violations," but the Bush Administration has resisted international efforts to this end. It has, for example, tried repeatedly to derail the International Criminal Court, which was established last July to prosecute alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity. The president, concerned that "our diplomats and our soldiers could be drug into this court," has been actively working to undermine it, so far cutting twenty-four backdoor deals—mutual promises of nonprosecution—with such stalwarts of humanitarian law as Rwanda and Uzbekistan. But soldiers likely have little to fear; this card prepares them for a more just and proportionate war than any poll-driven administration will ever have them fight. If the past ten years are any guide, the most questionable U.S. acts of war will be the responsibility not of soldiers but of high-level officials. Perhaps, then, the Bush Administration's opposition to the ICC is a question less of principle than of preemptive self-defense.

liszewski's writing has appeared in The Paris *and the Pushcart Prize anthologies. His story Against the Experts and Their Ways" was in the December 2001 Readings section of* Magazine.

Ross studies international law at Duke Uni-chool of Law.

ROLLTOP MANTRA OF THE OUTER BANKS

Creepy but tranquil in North Carolina

By Mark Richard

On my first trip down to the Outer Banks of North Carolina, in 1966 or so, when the dentist we were with had to let air out of his tires to drive to our cottage, we visited Jockey's Ridge, the tallest sand dune on the East Coast. Seasonal winds sometimes sculpt its crest to over 100 feet. I remember someone saying that Satan is buried beneath it. The dentist's children and I took pieces of cardboard and sledded down the gentle oceanside slopes, where people now pay a lot of money to hang-glide; kite-flying is still free. I remember standing on the dune's crest and looking down on its sheer soundside back, looking down at the sand flooding through the windows of the abandoned houses where Jockey's Ridge migrated into Albemarle Sound as if in the hopes of filling it. The whole of the Outer Banks is shifting ever westward, the sea levels continuing their post–Ice Age flood. The changes only seem recent to us, passing newly sea-stranded cottages on stilts in Kitty Hawk as the ocean erodes the beach beneath them. A freshly condemned cottage begins a slow topple, like a horse buckling to its knees. If you could time-lapse the natural nautical clock, you would see the whole of the Outer Banks, the mons of woods, the limbs of sand, the rump of Jockey's Ridge, turning away from the ocean like an unhappy lover rolling over beneath a blanket of development. Or maybe it really is God's Plan, and Satan really is buried beneath Jockey's Ridge, and the prevailing winds are merely making his resurrection more expedier by whisking the mountain of sand o his grave.



I had a math teacher once. Let's ca her Miss Satan, because she was so ev and is probably still alive, for we a know that you can't kill evil. I was th precocious little seventh-grade bumped up into her sophomor algebra class, and she smelled cheat. In defining finite and in finite numbers, she said, by de inition, finite items are numbe assigned to things that can b counted. For instance, is th number of grains of sand in Jock ey's Ridge finite or infinite? I wa the little shit who not only raise his hand but propped up one arm with the other in my eagernes grunting Me Me. When calle upon, I said the number of grain of sand in Jockey's Ridge was in finite. Miss Satan smiled evill and said No, if you could coun them, you would find that ther is a finite number of grains o sand in Jockey's Ridge. No, said, that's incorrect. First of al I patiently explained, the ocea is constantly throwing up fresh san that dries and is blown onto the dun by the wind at the same time the sam wind is carrying sand into Albemarl Sound. Secondly, I said, even as I nc

Mark Richard lives in Los Angeles with his wife and two sons. His short story "All the Trimmings" appeared in the December 2002 issue of Harper's Magazine.

Photographs by Jason Fulfo

d Miss Satan's tail twitching irri-
y beneath her dress and the smil-
face beginning to purple, second-
the number of grains of sand in
key's Ridge would have to be con-
red infinite by her very own defin-
n of being able to count them; if the
ns cannot be counted, there is no
te answer, hence no finite number.
if you *could* count them, she said,
ttle bats swarmed out of her mouth
steam seeped out of her ears,
would eventually reach a
mber, a finite number, so
're wrong, she said sulfuri-
ly. Then you go fucking count
m, I unwisely countered, and
s sent home from school for
days at a time when my fa-
er was having his first affair
I was looking for someone up-
whom to vent his guilt. I
knamed his backhands "flying
ers" after his college mascot,
ke the Tiger, whose tiny head
amented the LSU class ring
rn on the hand delivering the
ten unexpected blow. The
xt home football game I sat
th the pep band, warming the
outhpiece to my trombone in
y cupped hand, sharpening a
ate Stare into the back of Miss
tan's head as she sat in the rough
ard bleachers of our small-town foot-
ll field. I psychically projected all
nds of terrible things upon Miss Sa-
n when suddenly she reached up to
r face with both hands to try to hold
ck the stringy torrents of black crim-
n blood that gushed with each beat
a heart I had no idea she possessed.
ur team doctor rushed over from the
nch and packed her nose with cot-
n before the county ambulance that
as always parked in the end zone and
anned by the guys from the Gulf sta-
on drove her to the hospital. I was
aky with my newfound powers and
romised immediately to use them re-
ponsibly in the future. But I broke
he promise the very next morning,
rning my new powers on my father
s a flying tiger sprang from his bed-
oom ceiling. Although they didn't
stop the tiger, it pounced a
lot less often after that.

Nearly forty years after that first visit, I've come to the Outer Banks with my wife and two sons to meet a circuit-riding Episcopal priest, retired, pastoring pastorless country churches in the tobacco Piedmont of North Carolina. His name is Ben, and I know him from childhood: he took over our church when our minister ran away with the organist, an old story. Ben was a fighter pilot before entering the ministry; he tells me, that day at the Oregon Inlet marina, that he had always known he wanted two careers, one in the military and one in the ministry. Ben's general philosophy, he says, is People are generally doing the best they can.



Ben and I are waiting for a Wanchese charter boat to take us through the inlet to the ocean buoy beyond which we will spread my father's ashes. We talk about my father and his famous anger. Ben says he may have inadvertently angered my father when my father appeared one afternoon at one of Ben's little parishes with his next wife-to-be and insisted Ben marry them on the spot. Unprepared, but willing, Ben cast around for a witness and was only able to enlist a handy black janitor. Ben said my father fumed and didn't call him for years.

I tell Ben how I had adopted the Rolltop Mantra to defuse my father's anger after the Aquarium Incident. The thermostat on my father's beloved aquarium went on the fritz and my father kept turning the heater up and up until the neon tetras and black mollies and guppies leaped out of the hot tank landing in little gummy blobs on the dining-room floor. While cleaning out the aquarium in the kitchen sink, my father saw a much smaller boy give me a thorough whupping in the back yard. Tapping on the window with his class ring, he summoned me inside. My father shook some water off his fingers, landed a flying tiger, then went back to rinsing the aquarium. I learned that whenever my father summoned me, especially to stand next to his rolltop desk, where a hundred cigarette butts smoldered in a large glass ashtray, I could recage the tiger simply by reciting "I am very disappointed in myself."

I ask Ben about his own sons, one of whom spent a longish time on the Outer Banks, living in a moldy surfers' swamp deteriorating into the primeval Nags Head woods. After years of twisting hemp at a hammock shop and surfing, the son decided to re-enter the world and is now a successful federal prosecutor. It's another old story, the way the Outer Banks take hold of some of us during what is supposed to be a summer job and transform our lives. For me, I had come to a point at my private coat-and-tie college where it was best not to go back for a while. To cover my exit, I interned with a small newspaper in Virginia Beach during spring semester. I don't remember a lot of the articles I wrote, just the beauty pageant where I didn't behave well and a terrifying ride in a Blue Angels F4 that permanently burst some blood vessels in my left eye. I wrecked my car several times, an overpowered Mercury Montego MX. I do remember the last article I wrote: the circus had come to town, and I spent the day watching the wranglers use the elephants to hoist the tent poles and canvas. Later, I saw a guy bathing out of a bucket, and I thought That's the life for me! even as I faced another college-boy summer in the local paper mill.

But then I got The Call. My two best friends, David and Steve, were camped in a World War II army tent pitched in a five-dollar-a-night campground on Roanoke Island. Bug-bit,

down to their last twenty, living on peanut-butter-and-honey sandwiches, sleeping in the sweltering tent at night stitched up against the black swarms of [illegible] buzzing each other with sleeping-bag punches thrown in the dark over snoring. Every day they would go down to Wanchese to get on a scallop boat, having heard you could make as much money in one week on a scallop boat as you could all summer in the paper mill in our hometown. And they had believed it. When they discovered the depth of the deception, they called me, collect, them snickering, broke, bug-eaten and wild-eyed hungry beneath the campground pay-phone streetlight, and sold me the same story, and I believed it.



No one will lead you down a slippery path faster than your best friends. They knew how much I hated the idea of working graveyard shifts in the paper mill where our fathers were white-collar management, and where the blue-collar labor enjoyed assigning us double shifts unloading pulpwood off river barges, breaking up logjams on the conveyors with long-handled picks more effectively used to fend off the thigh-sized water moccasins that came slithering along with the cargo.

I drove down to Roanoke Island, stopping for gas at the country store where a man kept a bear in a cage out back. One summer, with a bladder full of eighty-nine-cents-a-six-pack A&P beer, I'd stumbled behind the store after finding the men's room occupied and had a pretty good torrent going into a stand of bamboo when the bear came charging within inches of me, the cage bars hidden in the thicker stalks of cane. When my friends in the car wondered what had taken me so long and why had I pissed all over my pants and shoes, I just shook my head and told them to drive.

Currituck County, your last step before crossing the sound on into Dare County, is still full of black bears, they say, especially up and down the Alligator River. I knew a man one night who set out to kill the bear that was destroying his vineyard, and like in a fable he fell asleep around midnight with his shotgun across his lap. He woke up hearing grunting and thrashing paws ripping clusters of grapes, and he smelled the smell of bear, strong, he said. He stood up, and the bears stood up, one by one around him, five of them, checking out the interloper. Later I tasted the man's wine, and he was right: nothing to kill a bear over.

I had about two hundred dollars when I found David and Steve in their campground, and they took the money and bought some Rebel Yell bourbon and a cheap motel room. The next morning we used what was left to rent a Nags Head beach cottage that the week before had been scheduled for bulldozing. The two hundred dollars wasn't really mine to spend; I was supposed to have given it to the lady in whose basement I'd been living in Virginia Beach, but while she had been away I had let some surfer friends and their girlfriends stay in the house and some things had gotten messed up, so I had left without saying goodbye.

Here is how the Wanchese scallop boats assembled their crews. You work for free getting the trawler ready to go fishing, changing over gear, painting, rerigging, building dredges, and then after the tons of ice are shoveled into the hold, the captain says You, you, and you. If you've worked hard, maybe you and about ten other guys will get on. This didn't sound like a good idea to me, but by this time all the paper-mill jobs had been filled. What seem[ed] more sensible was to approach a m[an] who had caught us asleep in some c[ot]tages we had broken into the previ[ous] spring in Kill Devil Hills and ask h[im] for a job. Instead of calling the poli[ce] he had put us to work openi[ng] his restaurant, painting, scra[p]ing oven grease, nailing in n[ew] screens, and shoveling tons [of] sand out of the parking lot. H[e] didn't pay us but said we h[ad] done a good job. This idea w[as] vetoed by my friends. Beside[s] they said, remember on the l[ast] day we were working for the m[an] and you realized it was East[er] Sunday and excused yourself a[nd] hitchhiked to church? He's n[ot] going to hire you, they said, h[e] thinks you're some kind [of] weirdo. Okay, I said.

So we started working for fr[ee] and pretty soon we were down [to] peanut-butter-and-honey san[d]wiches. We got on the phon[e] and called another friend of ou[rs] collect and told him about [all] the money you could make workin[g] on a scallop boat in one week, and [a] couple of days later, our friend Ricky [ar]rived. Ricky had some money his au[nt] had given him, so we took that an[d] bought some Rebel Yell bourbon an[d] set up the tent behind our cottage an[d] then lit it on fire. Later on that nigh[t] we took the charred wooden tent pol[es] and beat one another with them yelling Kung Fu! accidentally knockin[g] Ricky unconscious. We dragged hi[m] into a spare room and fed a lawn sprin[k]kler from a realty office next door [in] through the window and turned it [on] full blast so that Ricky could wake u[p].

Finally, the most notoriously vi[o]lent Wanchese captain of all, with [a] single name known from Mexico t[o] Rhode Island, a large burly man with a[n] enormous black beard that crept a[ll] the way up to his shocking blue eye[s] tapped two of us to join h[is] crew. Ricky and I went.

During World War II, Germa[n] U-boats sleeked up and down the Ou[ter] Banks, unchallenged in the earl[y] days, sometimes sinking ships at th[e] rate of one a day—oily smoke on th[e] horizon and the bodies of seamen wash[ing] up onto the beaches to be found b[y]

oolchildren. From the decks of scal- boats, we often dredged up the car- Churchill fretted after. On one trip pulled up hundreds of helmets, the bbing rotted out, and we wore them til one came up with the top part of kull affixed to the inside, and we ved them all overboard. We looked old torpedoes in the nets and dges as we swung them aboard. ople were still talking about the live pedo that slid out of the scallop boat *oopy's* nets, killing eight of the twelve w members aboard. Once, miles over e horizon from shore, we pulled up veral ossified motorcycles that seemed iseled out of cheap concrete.

As a cub reporter in Virginia Beach, ad interviewed the Navy diver who plored the first U-boat sunk in U.S. aters in the war, U-85, just off Bod- Light. It had been a messy kill. An d WWI destroyer, pressed into meland-security duty, caught the b on the surface one night trying to ut men ashore, or so the diver be- ved. The destroyer punched holes in he U-boat's conning tower with its ree-inch gun, then raked its deck ith machine-gun fire. No one is cer- in if the U-boat was submerging or nking stern-first into the April waters. erman sailors abandoned ship nd began calling for help. Fear- ng a trap and perhaps feeling a age, the destroyer depth-charged verything, settling the U-boat n a hundred feet of icy water, its lead blue crew retrieved, all in- ernally ruptured.

The old Navy diver told me hat on his first daylight descent o the U-boat the first thing he aw, painted on the conning tow- r, was a wild boar with a red rose n its mouth. He said the way the un struck it, it was a beautiful ight underwater that he would never forget. In the sub's com- partments he found bodies and thousands of U.S. dollars floating around like large confetti. Of the twenty-nine bodies recovered, four were in civilian clothes, and souvenir hunters aboard the recovery vessel found American social-security cards and driver's licenses in the pock- ets. The U-boat crew members were secretly buried in their underwear in numbered graves in the National Cemetery just north in Hampton, Virginia. To the south, on Ocracoke Island, four British sailors, U-boat victims, are buried in a small cemetery where every year a fresh Union Jack arrives punctually from the Queen.

Hundreds of shipwrecks litter the ocean floor off the Outer Banks, most stranded and beaten to pieces on Diamond Shoals off Cape Hatteras, where the cold Labrador Current collides with the warm waters of the Gulf Stream on their way to take the chill off the Swedish reindeer cowboy's winter above the Arctic Circle. From the dredgings, I collected smooth riverstone ballast, imagining the English streams from which it had originated until there was just too much of it and I tossed it over the side. The smaller items were more interesting, the handmade bottles and the clay trading pipes, some long-stemmed sorts remarkably intact and functional as we found out off watch, in the forepeak packed to the brim with Roanoke Island homegrown. Foolishly, I let the other winchman on my watch use my best pipe once. A sudden turn in the rudder sent the holder pitching over; the pipe fell to the floor and shattered; my curse at losing the pipe was matched by the curse coming from the bunk below—he hadn't gotten his hit yet.



My father tried to find me in our condemned cottage a couple of times when I was out at sea. Once, he found Ricky, lounging in the living room, covered in flies and reading Edgar Allan Poe, bong nearby, Ricky oblivious to the incessant buzzing and crawling. We had caught a three-foot lobster and let it rot under the front porch. My father never told me he'd been there, seen the way we were living. He told Ricky to tell me that he dropped by but Ricky "forgot."

Here is a Ricky Illustration. One night, getting ready to go to the dance pavilion, David, Steve, and I accidentally took some pills we found and woke up several hours later when Ricky came in and announced, "Hey, somebody stole my car!" Somebody stole your car? "Yeah," he said, kind of crazy-eyed, "that guy right over there!" He pointed to a little stilted cottage diagonally across the beach road where a friendly dope dealer lived. We kicked open the dope dealer's door and put him by the throat against the wall. "Where's Ricky's car?" we demanded. When he could take a breath, the dope dealer said just a little while earlier he had picked up Ricky, walking along the side of the road from the dance pavilion. Evidently, Ricky had experienced another of his infamous blackouts at the dance pavilion, wandered out the beach exit instead of the road entrance, and, unable to find his car in the wrong parking lot, had been walking up and down the beach road disoriented until the dope dealer recognized him and offered Ricky, a good customer, a ride home. Is that true? we demanded. The dope dealer pointed out that if he'd stolen Ricky's car, why wasn't it parked under his cottage? In fact, the dope dealer was pretty sure the car was still in the parking lot of the dance pavilion. We turned to Ricky for his side of the story. Ricky suddenly stared down at his bare feet and exclaimed, pointing, "Hey, somebody stole my shoes!"

It was probably a good thing that Ricky returned to college at the end of the summer to complete his business degree and become a captain of industry. Everyone seemed to be returning to school except Steve and me. We'd made a lot of money and

had spent every penny. There was no [illegible] my college had invited me not to return that semester. The first mate on the scallop trawler I crewed was a guy named Art. He and his best friend were looking for an extra hand to take an old wooden subchaser down the Intracoastal that fall, en route to the Caribbean. I had just read Thomas McGuane's *Ninety-Two in the Shade* and wanted to see the Florida Keys.

I drove up to Southhampton County to sell it to my father as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to cruise the Caribbean, much like the time he had spent smoke-jumping in Idaho. My father listened patiently, sipping from his green goldfish bowl of ice and Rebel Yell bourbon. Finally, he said he would make a deal with me; he would give me his blessing if I promised to finish college the next year, on the condition that he would no longer have to foot any part of my tuition. I jumped at the bargain. Driving down to Nags Head later, I caught the hook in my father's proposition. I was still smarting from my mother's parting comment to me. When she had finished my summer's worth of laundry, boiled and line-dried, especially the sheets and trousers, she'd said to me, "We don't live like this."

Some bad things happened between Steve and me that fall, mainly having to do with a seventeen-year-old girl. It seemed the brightness of the Outer Banks dimmed just after Labor Day. The people who could leave, did. The wrecks remained. There were a lot of burglaries in the cottages around us, and people should have suspected us but didn't. A girl punched out all the windows in the nearby realty office one night after she'd drunk about a quart of vodka alone. The glass had opened her arms from her wrists to her elbows, and the doctors said the only thing holding the flesh together was all the bracelets she liked to wear. She was almost bled out, sitting in the dark in her rocking chair, when I found her. She had called out weakly to me in greeting as I just hap- [illegible]

evening at the nearly empty dance pavilion. You could smell all the blood. She had been a popular girl all summer, and her parents came and got her and took her away—to a mental hospital, I think.

Steve went out on steel hulls, and I took a couple of trips on the wooden shrimp boats down in Core Sound. We rafted alongside a local boat one night, a real horn-callused barefoot fisherman from Wanchese who invited us to his galley table overflowing with cucumbers, fish, fresh biscuits, tomatoes, okra, corn, and he thanked God for the plentiful harvest. Later that night I had the wheel of the little shrimper, an old one, wheelhouse on the stern. The night was moonless and cloudless under a canopy of stars so dense it made me claustrophobic. I was homesick and unwilling to go home, undone by a young girl and pretty much broke. I remember realizing that this evening was the beginning of an eclipse of something in my heart and that things would stay dark for a long time. On my last trip north the captain and mate shot up vodka after they finished off the heroin they'd brought. A guy tried to knock me overboard one night after arguing about a rain hat. We were boarded by the Coast Guard at gunpoint and forced in to Cape May, where we decided to go out on the town, everyone putting on his best wear: black pants, black T-shirts with motorcycle logos and skulls, wallets chained to belts, hob-nailed boots. The crew popping pills and snapping open dangerous-lookin knives—bucks, martial arts, and th first stiletto I had ever seen and whic I subsequently stole. About ten of u walked the bad streets adjacent to th docks at Cape May, a scythe up th street of black and trouble, except fo the one element that was me: slicked back long greasy hair, scraggly beard sure, but wearing the only clean clothe I could find in the bottom of my duf fel, the irrelevant college clothes: th pristine white corduroy slacks, bagg with the weight I'd shed on deck, an the baby-blue Izod alligator shirt, tigh with new muscle, purple variety-stor flip-flops clopping around my feet. An still I swaggered with the rest of them looking exactly like what I was, som assholish seafaring preppie impostor.

I was thinking about the girl dow on the Outer Banks, the seventeen year-old, and I slipped away from m crewmates to call her from a pa phone, charging the call to my par ents' number. It must have been two o even four in the morning. I didn't re alize the operator would call my par ents' house to get authorization to bil the call to their number. Th operator woke my parents up and my father answered th phone and gave his permission thinking I was calling collect and then waited for me to com on the line. My mother said tha my father sat at his rolltop desk in the dark for a long time hold ing the old black receiver to hi ear, waiting to hear my voice be fore finally hanging up and get ting back into bed where she sai she could hear him not sleepin until it was time for him to get u and go to work at th paper mill.

One day a storm brough me home to find that they hac bulldozed all the shacks aroun us; the power and water to our had been cut, but I continued to slee there. I hot-wired the current an found the water main. The same storm brought Steve home early, and we tried some false hilarity for a while the storm had washed thousands o pounds of green bananas and broken



tes up onto the beach. With the vaged lumber we built a new front ch and steps to our place, placating a while the guy who owned it when found us squatting. But by Thanksing we'd gone our separate ways, d by Christmas I was in Marathon y watching smugglers unload es of pot one night at a pub- wharf under the direction of eputy sheriff. My buddy Art d his best friend, caught up a disagreement concerning t sleeping with the best end's wife, had let their subaser sink at a dock far short of e Caribbean. In our southmost misadventures we spent night in Cuban custody along th other fishing-boat crews ing to ransom refugees out of ariel when Castro temporarily opened the port. We'd refused take the convicts the authorities loaded onto our boats; ey weren't on the list of relaves the Miami nationals had ven us when we'd left arathon Key. It was either rent or remain in jail, and so we rented, locking ourselves in the wheelouse on our return with a .22 rifle d a revolver, keeping a wary eye on e dozens of prison-pale men who unged on our decks. In that jail, I vore that if ever given the chance, I ould go home, embrace my folks, go ack to school. But given the chance, headed for the Outer Banks instead.

To Steve's credit, he and a buddy ad swung through Key West on their ay back from a dive in the Dry Tortugas at the height of shrimping season, ith hundreds of trawlers working out f Stock Island and the Singleton ocks. The very first stranger they topped and asked knew me, a guy I'd net from New Bern, North Carolina, who was running a stolen-bicycle operation from a boat he and a cohort were painting, hundreds of bikes tacked in the hold. I'd met the New Bern guy when he'd tried to steal my andem bicycle, which I'd left unchained in front of Sloppy Joe's. The bicycle thieves were later found murdered in their bunks. I was glad to see Steve, and when I drifted north I found him living in a trailer on the canal in Wanchese, his yard littered with busted and ongoing business transactions, surfboards, outboard motors, dead cars, a Harker's Island rig, and a homemade houseboat that was slowly sinking at the dock despite the array of car-battery-powered bilges Steve had rigged to keep it afloat.



Steve and I adopted a restaurant in South Nags Head as an office from which to work our scams, Steve having recently started going out with a waitress there. We had taken on the names of Sven and Sven, dreaming up business ventures over home-style platters and free draft beer: taxis for drunks, boat painting. The people in charge of the boat railway where Steve had hoisted a prison warden's boat, the hull of which he'd been hired to scrape and repaint, notified him that his time had run out, so we ran down there and slapped on anti-fouling paint literally as the railway owners slid the boat back into the water. I applied a wavy waterline from a rowboat. The warden, a kind man, came down to check our progress one day. Mark and Stephen, he said; one was stoned and the other was a prophet. At that time I didn't know which was which. The warden liked us until we took his boat out all day when the Spanish mackerel were running, and in the afternoon when we came back with hundreds of dollars' worth of fish, there was the warden on the dock with a flock of lost children he was trying to shepherd from errant paths. They'd been waiting for us for hours. Those were terrible faces on those children.

I took one last trip with the notorious captain, this time earning the right to step aboard just as his trawler was about to leave the dock. I'd learned enough so that I was actually able to run the winches and read the lorans and make repairs. With the money, I fulfilled my promise to my father, and returned to my little college where Robert E. Lee had been president after The War. I showed up in a battered truck and beard, wild girlfriend only temporarily in tow. I made two short films that I think are autobiographical, violating film-school policy that cameras were not to leave the little Virginia town limits. I took the best camera down to Rodanthe both times. The first film was about a guy whose wild girlfriend leaves him and he decides not to stalk her. The second was about a lonely plane spotter, binoculars up to an empty sky, living in a tent in the dunes during World War II. One night something crawls out of the surf, disembowels him on the beach, and then slips back beneath the waves. My film professor really liked them both. I watch them now and realize how empty and bleak and beautiful the seascape was back then, enhanced by the grainy black-and-white film, the foam, the birds, the sand, all shades of gray in the monochromatic winter light.

Last summer, twenty-five years later, I took my wife and two sons down to Ocracoke. There are still a few unspoiled places south of Whalebone Junction, along Highway 12, but you have to squint to see them. There are still plenty of opportunities left to make it worse. The places on Ocracoke where we all used to play naked are run over by SUVs and other four-wheel-drive vehicles. The week we were on the Outer Banks, the Park Service said in the newspaper they counted 983 vehicles on the beaches just between Ramp 49 at Frisco and Ramp 43 north of Cape Hatteras, what the locals gen-

erally refer to as Cape Point. The DUIs and rowdy doughnut spinners are becoming more than an annoyance; there are dangerous near-misses and races and overturned trucks on the beaches now. The tides barely have time to smooth the sands over; sea turtles especially are vulnerable when their nests of buried eggs are splattered by all-terrain tires.

Beyond the sewage and the sprawl today, the light and the noise, there are also the unseen introductions of new arrivals to the New World; offshore divers report the presence of the poisonous lionfish on the wrecks, a Pacific Ocean native that has found its way here, possibly from someone's dumping of his tiresome aquarium into a creek. And this week Navy divers have successfully lifted the 120-ton turret of the ironclad U.S.S. *Monitor* from the seafloor sixteen miles off Hatteras. There was an old Union gunboat burnt to the waterline and sunk at the wharf in my hometown. When the paper mill wanted to deepen the turn in the river for the pulpwood barges, a dredge scoop was towed up from the Albemarle to dredge up the old black timbers. As kids, we gathered on the banks to watch, hating the rotten timbers, hoping the dirty black sand was full of Yankee bones.

The day we take the ferry to Ocracoke there are nine ferries running, and the wait is still an hour and a half to board. In the car next to ours is a Czech couple, or so my wife, a keen-eyed journalist, tells me. The couple works at one of the restaurants in Nags Head—no way they'll make it back for the dinner shift. Years ago the restaurants and stores employed college kids, mostly from the Carolinas and Virginia. My favorite seafood restaurant boasted Home Style Meals Served By Barefoot Co-Eds! and the place was always packed; platters delivered to your table by red-and-white checkered blouses knotted above the midriff atop short cutoff shorts and bare bronze legs. Now there's a foreign exchange of talent and a website; your orders are liable to be spelled and changed on your bill in Polish, Romanian, French, and Dutch. The Czech couple drives a bored-out-sounding late-seventies Buick coupe. They stand with the other tourists at the bow of the ferry and take each other's images, him wielding an old Russian box camera, her with a neat new digital. A female deckhand on the ferry says her grandmother claims to have traveled between Hatteras Island and Ocracoke Island on a homemade bridge of grapevines. When I ask her about Teach's Hole, Blackbeard's old haunt, she says she's a lifelong native of Hatteras, that she really doesn't know that much about Ocracoke, a short span of grape to the south.



We visit the Teach's Hole Blackbeard Exhibit and Pirate Specialty Shop, where my sons choose their weapons, a large red plastic sword and a slingshot. Nearby, Blackbeard, a notoriously violent captain with a single name known from the West Indies to England, a large burly man with an enormous black beard that crept all the way up to his shocking blue eyes, experienced a very disappointing day. Shortly after celebrating his fourteenth wedding, this time to a sixteen-year-old girl, he woke up one morning to find two English sloops rounding Teach's Hole. Blackbeard had enjoyed a cozy relationship with the governor of North Carolina, with whom he divvied up his prizes. Unfortunately, many of the prizes originated in Virginia, whose governor commissioned the two little Royal sloops. In fierce hand-to-hand combat, Blackbeard took five pistol shots and twenty-five saber slices before falling dead on the deck of his *Adventure*. The Royal commander, young Lieutenant Robert Maynard, severed Blackbeard's head and hoisted it on his mizzenmast. Onlookers reported that Blackbeard's headless body swam three laps around his ship before slipping away on the tide.

The little town of Ocracoke is crowded with us tourons: kites, crabs, and ice cream. I look at the docks where I tied up twenty-five years ago in little wooden hulled trawlers with fresh shrimp and cold beer on ice in our holds (the island was dry back then). There'd be a party, some locals, some backpacking hippies, always a girl with a guitar.

We stay too long on the perfect beach where a few years earlier as newlyweds my wife and I had spent a naked afternoon. Our sons are sandy and asleep in the back of our van, waiting at midnight for the last ferry. My wife gets out and counts cars to see if we'll make it on, all the while taking an anthropological sampling of the other vehicles. The Cubans are dancing; the Marylanders are watching a sci-fi movie on DVD in their minivan; and Virginia prep boys take sand wedges out of their trunks and practice golf swings on the dunes. We board third from last. Her favorite part of our Outer Banks trip is standing in the balmy breeze above the ferry's flat foaming bow as the captain above and behind us picks out the brilliant red and green channel markers with a spotlight in the thick humid dark. Eerie and tranquil, creepy yet peaceful, is how she describes it.

The morning of tending to my father's final business, I go into the ocean alone at dawn, just when the convenience-store posters say not to, reminding people about the two fatal shark attacks of last year that happened just north and south of where I enter the water. AVOID SWIMMING ALONE AT DUSK OR DAWN IN A RISING TIDE. I make it out past the double sandbar, feeling a rip current so strong at one spot that it's like my legs are tangled in sheets. The waves are confused but insistent

y keep coming—their nature, their
I swim and then try to make it in
out dislocating either of my two
hips. My surgeon would not ap-
e of this. I was born with bent hips
precluded contact sports and mil-
service. A puny, bookish youth, I
ize the years at sea are an attempt
me sort of compensation, valida-
n. Thus has my worldview been
ed, always looking down so as not
rip. I stagger up onto the beach,
my towel, and wonder if that noise
ard was a sonic boom from Oceana
val Air Station to the north or
ething else. With several pounds of
nium hip and femur in my body,
cognizant of lightning. I'm the first
the beach when thunder rumbles.
en I lived in Virginia Beach, a beau-
l black-haired girl who rented board-
k bikes and always wore a long one-
ce bathing suit was split open down
chest when lightning found the
per there.

And like Sam McGee happily sit-
g in the flames of the wrecked barge
ce May, I think about cremation,
I can never be too hot, though go-
g to hell, as I am learning, is not a
mpulsory thing to do. We never
m to think about death other than
observers, and in my mind I really
n't want some funeral director
nding my sons a box of ash
d molars and a shovelful of
scorched titanium
parts.

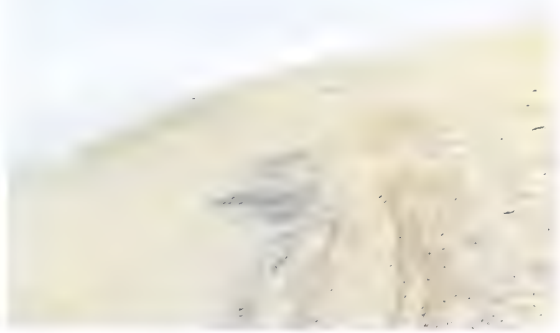
My father hated the beach,
d "sand issues," couldn't swim,
d, like me, was actually terri-
d of water. At age four, I fell
to a chocolate creek in East
exas. My father stood beside
e, fishing. I wasn't pushed; I
as just the type of child who
celerated the odds of in-
itable mishap. I stood beside
ater, therefore I fell in. My fa-
er, unable to swim, saved my
fe by lying prone on the dock
nd reaching around frantically
the water until he found
y shirttail. I was landed—
rowned—and resuscitated by a doc-
r's wife who later bathed me in a
ink and tweaked my erection to
anch my crying. Freud said story-
elling is unconscious desire to sum-
mon fears in order to be able to exorcise them.

My own son Roman accelerates odds of inevitable mishap by sheer proximity to slick floors, wobbly chairs, sharpened pencils, hot stoves. I imagine him in these Outer Banks being sucked out by the notorious undertow, which has almost drowned all of my friends at some time during the last forty years. Stupidly surfing a big onshore hurricane break years ago, I got tumbled and spiked on my left shoulder, splitting the scapula in two. The doctor said it takes at least seven hundred pounds of pressure to split a scapula. Lucky it wasn't my neck, he said. But what are you going to do? Not go back into the ocean, ever? Freud said the most important day in a man's life is the day his father dies. For now, I would suggest it's the day your first son is born. I was my father's only son, his first born.

On the day of the ashes, I quote Ben, loosely, a favorite collect that he used in services thirty years ago: "Come Holy Spirit come, come as a wind and cleanse, come as a fire and burn; convict, convert, consecrate our lives for our great good and Thy greater glory." Ben says he doesn't remember where it comes from. Have I ever thought of the ministry? he asks. Yes, I have, one clear clean winter in Tennessee, I lined things up to enter the seminary and was talked out of it by a visiting bishop from Britain. Ben seems surprised at this. Yes, I tell him, the bishop said that as a writer, if I really had The Call, I would reach more people with my work. Ben says the bishop must have thought I was a good writer. Or else he was Satan, I said. I ask Ben if they would have let someone like me into the seminary, and he says when he went through he girded himself for what he had been told was the toughest interview in the whole process. He said his interviewer mainly wanted to talk about airplanes. When Ben asked him shouldn't they be talking about more serious matters, the interviewer said the main purpose of the interview was to comb for messiahs and homosexuals, and he could tell Ben was neither.

On the way out to where we're going to attend to my father, Ben and I spot a white disk, like a communion wafer, and the disk hovers over the south end of the beach before slipping westward. Maybe it was one of those banners pulled behind an airplane advertising reggae and fish tacos; maybe it was something else. I can't tell and neither can Ben, with his Air Force eyes. The captain of the *Captain Duke* asks if we've brought a camera or flowers. We've brought neither. I have a tape with one of my father's favorite songs on it—a song about Lake Charles, the place of both our births—but the mate says the tape deck is still chewing up the last tape they put in a while back.

Ben, in full vestment, begins when our captain, a Wanchese native and part-time preacher himself, cuts the engines after pushing us into the wind. The words come hard for Ben at the commending of the ashes; he knew my father as well as anyone could know him. Ben puts his hand on my shoulder to steady himself as we drift a little, side to side, during the gospel. He pets my shoulder twice at the place in the service where I am supposed to do what I do, lean over the rail and pour out the last mortal remains. I wonder about the particle density of the remains, the way they seem to stream



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straight to the bottom, only the finer specks leaving a ribbon of beige pollenlike dust on the surface that clings to the boat's waterline.

The rest is the ride in, my sister grieving over the paucity of good memories, me reciting the Rolltop Mantra at the thought of allowing the twenty-year estrangement between my father and me, except for the last two weeks of his lucid life, when he shooed everyone out of his hospital room when I arrived, telling me to pull up a chair to hear his confession. We order fresh grouper sandwiches in the South Nags Head restaurant where once I was Sven and where my father went looking for news of me. "He's at rest and where he wants to be," Ben says after I'm quiet for a while.

The bottom of the ocean is dark and cold and roamed by Pleistocene fish that science has forgotten. One night Steve and I were culling through what had emptied from the tailbag—scallops, fish, ballast stones, sand—and something jumped up and ran to the rail, and I'm glad someone else saw it. It looked like a hairless monkey with webbing between its arms and body. It hopped up on the rail and turned its head to us and hissed like a cat through cartilage-looking teeth. It had been a strange trip already. A submarine, spooked by our fathoms of cable strung behind us, had surfaced in a football field of foam the previous night; the ocean erupted beside us and from deep below you could see this pulsing yellow light that signaled Everything Must Yield. The submarine leapt up like a fish, snorting foam, and its bow wave nearly rolled us. We'd been taking little white pills that flapped shrouds in the edges of the deck lights already. The boiled-looking furless monkey hissed at us on the rail again before diving overboard. No one would have believed us if we had told about the monkey thing, but there was a guy on board who said he had seen worse. He couldn't talk about it without tears welling up in his eyes. That's the kind of thing you find at the bottom of the ocean, where my father wanted to be.

In the following days I take my older boy, Roman, down to Wanchese. Wanchese was the bad Indian my fifth-grade history teacher used to say, the one who turned against the colonists after they kidnapped him and the good Indian Manteo and took them to London. Returning to the New World, Sir Walter Raleigh's men repaid Chief Wingina's kindness of feeding the starving colonists by shooting him in the buttocks and then severing his head. Wanchese defected back to his own people. Manteo was named Lord of Roanoke.

Not much has changed in Wanchese: the derelict cars, broken marine gear, old culling boxes rotting in the marsh; the fish houses, the old trailer on the canal where Steve and I lived. My son Roman notices how many stop signs have been knocked off their corners. Grocery-store accounts are still kept in spiral-bound notebooks. I ask about the notorious captain who first hired me twenty-five years ago. Someone says they don't know, maybe Alaska, maybe South America, maybe "sumwarz up norf."

I take Roman to the South Nags Head restaurant. It's been flooded a couple of times by hurricanes, and the picture of Steve and me long gone from the wall. I still know some of the women we knew back then who are still there now. They've married commercial fishermen once or twice, raising teenagers now; they say that Roman looks so much like me I must have spit him out of my mouth.

Across the beach road is the old pier where Steve and I used to shoot pool at three in the morning, wobbling eight-ball as winter swells rocked the place. We meet a low-end crowd of drunk tattooed sailors with pitbull puppies. From the tip of the pier we watch a lethargic waterspout beginning to slip from a foamy bottom of cumulus crossing the beach, but it pulled out to sea after only a half-hearted quarter-drop down. The bait man says the Outer Banks is going to hell. Did I hear they're bringing in an Outback Steakhouse? When they bring in an Olive Garden I'm out of here, he says.

The water is gentle by the pier today, and we wear ourselves out on

· Boogie Board, then fill a glass
tle with only tiny purple shells, a
t for Roman's grandmother. We
nk strawberry milk and drive
rth along the beach road. I point
the cottage where his mother and
ayed six years ago, the kind of old
ttered place they're now tearing
wn to build the eight-bedroom
odels. There's a tiny bedroom in
e back with a broken-shouldered
uble bed in which he was con-
ived, beneath an old reproduction
Winslow Homer's *Hurricane*.

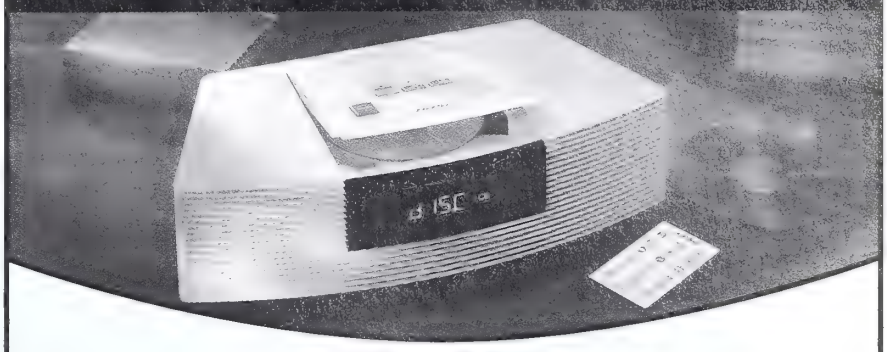
What is an apostrophe? Roman
ks. He's five years old, and he
mics me by walking with his back
nt a little forward, with the view
his feet that affords. So far at the
ach this week, he has found a
tch, a piece of rare coral, a Smith
Wesson tactical knife, and, in the
ined inner court of a washed-over
ndcastle, a shark-tooth fossil.

I'm often flummoxed by his sim-
e questions. I work through an
nsatisfactory explanation of pos-
ssive mechanics and contrac-
ons. Finally I tell him it's usually
a little speck that means
something's missing.

The evening veil is on the At-
ntic to the east even as Pamlico
ound to the west is still lit like a
ke of fire. As we drive north to sup-
er, we pass an old outdoor pay
hone I spent many a midnight lean-
ng into trying to make something
ght with someone miles away on
ne mainland. I realize something
ew about the Outer Banks. It's not
bout the development or the
eascape laid waste or even the inva-
ion of sneering Connecticut Yan-
ees; the rich, like the poor, will al-
ways be with us. It's not that this
veek of attending to my father's busi-
ness has made the whole place seem
nore fraught. The Outer Banks is a
place where only God knows how
close I came to what could have
been, and only His grace saved me
rom it. It's the lesson of Shadrach in
he oven: sometimes God saves us
hrough the fire, sometimes He saves
us from the fire, and sometimes He
saves us not at all.

I doubt I'll be bringing us back
here anytime soon. ■

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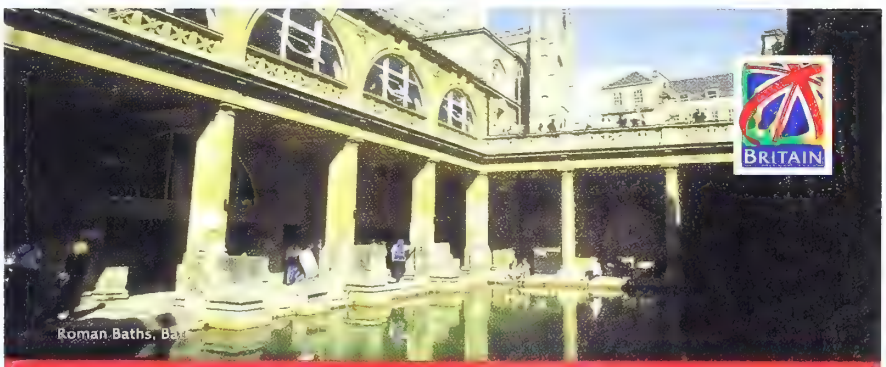
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ROMAN BERMAN, MASSAGE THERAPIST

By David Bezmozgis

Night after night, for more than ear, my father tortured himself with dical texts and dictionaries. He had cided that to succeed in nada, he would have to be- ne a Registered Massage erapist. After a long day at chocolate-bar factory he uld come home and turn the lamp in the bedroom. would eat his soup with us the kitchen, but he'd take e main course into the bed- om, resting his plate on a kety Soviet stool. The work is difficult. My father was proaching fifty, and the glish language was more an emy than an instrument. In tvia, after resigning from e Ministry of Sport, he had ade a living as a masseur in e sanatoriums along the altic coast. He'd needed no creditation, only some min- al training and the strength his connections. But in the ew country, to get his cer- ficate, he was forced to mem- ize complex medical termi- ology and to take an eight- our exam in a foreign language.



Getting his license would mean that he could start his own business. At the time, aside from the chocolate-bar factory, he also worked at the Italian Community Center, where he massaged mobsters and manufacturers and trained seven amateur weightlifters. The money was lousy, but he was making contacts. He was certain he could take some of the Italians with him if he started his own practice. And if he got his office in just the right location, the old Polish Jews would surely follow. This was 1983, and as Russian Jews, recent immigrants, and political refugees, we were still a cause. We had good P.R. We could trade on our history.

The morning my father was to take the exam, my mother made an omelette and quartered a tomato. He ate quickly, downing his tea. His bare feet set a steady rhythm going in and out, in and out of his slippers. I told him about tryouts for indoor soccer. I described the fuzzy yellow ball. Midway through the omelette, he got up and retched into the sink.

He left the apartment stolidly, as if he were going off to war. In a rare moment of overt affection, my mother gave him a kiss. They hugged in the hallway, because it is bad luck to kiss someone at the threshold.

At the window, I watched as he backed the massive green Pontiac out of the parking lot. It was the end

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ustration by Leigh Wells

of March and still painfully cold. The [illegible] and as my mother joined me at the window, we could see the long streams of my father's condensed breathing as he turned onto Finch Avenue.

"God willing, God willing," my mother said.

Three weeks later we received the letter from the Board of Directors of Masseurs. A certificate would follow shortly, the sort of thing my father would frame and hang in his office. We celebrated the news by going to the Pizza Patio restaurant in a strip mall not far from our apartment building. I spoke for the family and ordered a large pepperoni-and-mushroom pizza. We toasted to our future with fountain Cokes.

The next weekend my father signed a lease for a one-room office at the Sunnybrook Plaza where we bought our groceries and I got my hair cut. For eighty dollars, Yuri from Smolensk built a sturdy massage table wrapped in burgundy Naugahyde and secured with shiny brass rivets. My father paid half that for a desk at a consignment shop in the East End, and ten bucks apiece for two used office chairs for the waiting area. On the recommendation of someone at the Italian Community Center, he also took out a one-year subscription to *Reader's Digest*. And, to create the impression of clinical privacy, we drove to Starkman Surgical Supply on Davenport where my father bought a green three-paneled room divider. The final touches were made by my mother, who purchased a sheet of adhesive letters from the hardware store and carefully spelled on the door:

[illegible]
THERAPIST, B.A., R.M.T.

After the initial excitement subsided, reality asserted itself. Aside from the handful of Italians at the Community Center and some of my parents' Russian friends, nobody else knew that Roman's Therapeutic Massage existed. Boris Krasnansky from Tashkent, whose employer offered a modest benefits package, was my father's first patient. He went for as long as his benefits held out and insisted that my father kick back a third of the money, since he was doing him a favor. Joe Galatti, a dry-goods wholesaler, showed up each time with a bottle of homemade wine and told my father about his troubles with his son. Joe had a heavy Italian accent and my father's English was improving very slowly. The session would end only when the bottle was empty. Sal, a semiretired contractor, came with his wife's cousin, who had arrived from Naples and fallen off a scaffold after his first week on the job. The cousin spoke no English and couldn't drive a car. Sal felt guilty and drove the cousin over on Saturday afternoons to give his wife a break. My father would massage the cousin, and Sal would sit outside the partition with a *Reader's Digest*. Guys like Joe and Sal had good intentions, and they liked my father. But after a few visits they stopped coming. The Community Center, with the sauna and the familiar camaraderie, exerted its influence. Another Russian masseur had taken over my father's position and although they swore he was "no Roman," it didn't help. Inconvenience superseded loyalty, and my father found himself staring at the walls.

Fearing just this sort of thing, my father had held on to his job at the chocolate-bar factory. It was driving him crazy, but what was the alternative? To move from this factory job to another was pointless, and reapplying for welfare was out of the question. It had taken us two years to get on our feet, and my parents were not prepared to face the implications of regression. So my father resolved to work five days at the factory and go to the office on weekends. As soon as he felt secure enough at the office, he would abandon the factory and focus all of his attention on the business. The discussion was ongoing. To quit or not to quit. But as the original patients started to disappear, my father began to despair of ever being able to leave the factory. None of this information, none of these discussions, was concealed from me. It seemed as though my parents had no secrets. I was nine, and there were many things I did not tell them, but there was nothing they would not openly discuss in front of me, often even soliciting my opinion. They were strangers in the country, and th[illegible] recognized that the place w[illegible] less strange to me, ev[illegible] though I was just a bo[illegible]

With the business grinding do[illegible] to a terminal inertia, my father to[illegible] the advice of some friends and went [illegible] seek the help of a certain rabbi. Ot[illegible] ers had gone to him before: Felix wh[illegible] he needed a job, Oleg for a good de[illegible] on a used car, and Robik and Eda f[illegible] someone to co-sign a loan. The rab[illegible] was supposed to be particularly sy[illegible] pathetic to the plight of the Russi[illegible] Jews. To improve his chances, my f[illegible] ther brought me along.

To make me presentable for the ra[illegible] bi, my mother ironed a pair of pants a[illegible] put me into a clean golf shirt. Both m[illegible] father and I wore yarmulkes and walk[illegible] hand in hand to the synagogue not f[illegible] from his office. It was rare for me [illegible] have this sort of time with my fathe[illegible] as he was usually either working or a[illegible] onizing about not working. I filled th[illegible] silence with the affairs of the thi[illegible] grade and my plans to make the S[illegible] lects team in the summer soccer leagu[illegible] It was a warm Sunday in June. To mo[illegible] of the people on the street—men [illegible] their lawns, women with shopping bag[illegible] pensioners floating by in their Buicks—[illegible] we must have made a fine image. Fath[illegible] and Son. Sunday stroll.

Seated across the table from the ra[illegible] bi, my father wrestled language ar[illegible] dignity to express need. I sat silent [illegible] beside him, looking appropriately fo[illegible] lorn. I was sufficiently aware of ou[illegible] predicament to feel the various pe[illegible] mutations of shame: shame for my f[illegible] ther, shame for my shame, and eve[illegible] shame for the rabbi, who seemed [illegible] be a decent guy. He was younger tha[illegible] my father, and as if to compensate f[illegible] his youth, he affected a posture of litu[illegible] gical gravity.

My father told the rabbi about h[illegible] qualifications. He told him about th[illegible] years of training Olympic athletes [illegible] hoist almost inconceivable amounts [illegible] weight. He told him about working [illegible] a masseur in the best sanatoriums alo[illegible] the Baltic Sea after resigning his po[illegible] tion at the Ministry of Sport. He tol[illegible] him about the months of study, his ce[illegible] tificate from the Board of Directors [illegible] Masseurs, the chocolate-bar factor[illegible] the one-room office, and the hard, har[illegible]

he was willing to do. He also told about Hebrew school and what a student I was. He suggested that abbi speak to me to see how well 'd earned the language. Slightly un- ortable, the rabbi engaged me in nversation in rudimentary Hebrew.

-Do you like school?

-Yes, I like school.

-Do you like Canada?

-Yes, I like Canada.

y father, who could not follow the ersation, interrupted and told the i that I could also sing Hebrew s. The rabbi didn't seem particu- interested, but my father encour- l me out of my chair.

the middle of the rabbi's office I d and sang "Jerusalem of Gold." fway through the song I noticed rabbi's attention flagging, and I re- nded by trying to bring the song to ematurе conclusion. The rabbi, bly relieved, started to bring his ds together to create the first clap y to be reassured by my father that is capable of singing more. To prove point, my father poked me in the k, and I picked up the song where happily abandoned it. The rabbi ned forward, seemingly much more erested in my performance the sec- l time around. When I was finally he, the rabbi gave me a five-dollar l. For my father, he promised to ead the word about the business to congregants. He also offered a word dvice: advertise.

Fifteen minutes after going in, we re back out on the street, hand hand, and on our way home. For r trouble we had five dollars and e business card of a man who would print my father's flyers at cost.

The following week my father, other, and I gathered around the chen table to compose the ideal ad- rtisement for Roman's Therapeutic assage. I was given the pen and as- gned the responsibility of translating d transcribing my parents' concept r the flyer. My father wanted a strong mphasis placed on his experience with lympic athletes, as it would provide estige and imply familiarity with the man anatomy at the highest level. y mother, on the other hand, be- ved that his strongest selling point

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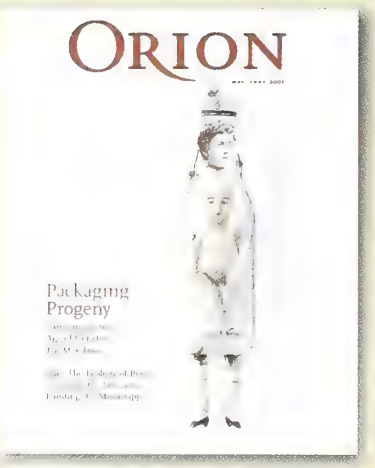
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[illegible] Soviet refugee. The most important appeal, she said, was to guilt and empathy. That would get them in the door. Once they were in the door, then my father could impress them with his skill. In the end they agreed on a combination of the two. For my part, I contributed a list of familiar advertising superlatives.

Best New Therapeutic Massage Office!

Roman Berman, Soviet Olympic coach and refugee from Communist regime, provides Quality Therapeutic Massage Service!

Many years of experience in Special European techniques!

For all joint and muscle pain. Car accidents, work accidents, pregnancy, and general good physical conditioning

After the box of flyers arrived, my father and I loaded it into the trunk of the Pontiac and set out to canvass the houses near the office. I took one side of the street and my father took the other. To counteract my embarrassment, I made it a race: I would be the first to finish. I ran from house to house, stuffing the flyers into mailboxes or handing them to people without making eye contact. Every now and again I would look across the street to gauge my father's progress. He was in no hurry. He wandered from house to house, going up the walkways, never stepping on the lawns. Whereas I tried to avoid people, my father lingered, passing deliberately in front of windows. Heeding my mother's instructions, he tried to be particularly conspicuous in front of homes with mezuzahs on the doorposts, hoping to catch sight of someone, to engage them in conversation. Most people weren't interested—except for one man who wanted to know how his own son could get a job delivering flyers.

With the flyers all gone a new phase of waiting began. Now with every ring of the phone there was the potential for salvation. The phone existed like a new thing. From the moment we came home we were [illegible] of it. It was either with us or against us. My father talked to it. As a sign of solidarity, I talked to it as well. When it was silent, my father would plead with it, curse it, threaten it. But when it rang, he would leap. He would come flying from the dinner table, the couch, the toilet. The phone would ring and he would leap. My mother would leap after him—her ear millimeters away from his exposed ear, listening, as if my father's head was itself the telephone. She listened as friends called, other friends called, my aunt called and called. Everybody called to see whether anybody had called.

By the time Dr. Kornblum called, an agonizing week had passed. It was in the early afternoon and I was home alone. My mother would not be home for another hour, my father later still. When the phone rang I was already seated on the parquet floor in front of the television: I had a Hungarian salami sandwich on my lap as well as the plastic wrappers from a half dozen chocolate-covered prunes.

Kornblum told me I should call him Harvey. He was a doctor, he said, and he'd received my father's flyer and wanted to meet him. In fact, he wanted to meet the whole family. How many of us were there—it didn't matter. We were all invited to his house for Friday night dinner. I should tell my parents that he would not take no for an answer. Kornblum with a K. Blum as in rhymes with room. As in there's plenty of room for everybody. Did I get all that? He gave me his phone number and told me to make sure my father gave him a call.

By the time my mother came home I was barely able to restrain myself. I shared the good news, and she overlooked the fact that I'd eaten the half-dozen chocolate-covered prunes. I gave her the sheet of paper with Kornblum's name and telephone number, and she quickly started dialing. My aunt was certain she had heard of this Kornblum before. When Victor Guttman's father slipped on the ice, wasn't it a Kornblum that did the operation? That Kornblum was very nice. Also very rich. It could be the same one. My mother called others. Sophatch[illegible] was studying to pass her medic[illegible] boards and was familiar with ma[illegible] doctors. Did she know Kornblu[illegible] Kornblum the family physician [illegible] Kornblum the orthopedic surgeo[illegible] Not that it made a difference, th[illegible] were both very successful. If eith[illegible] one referred even a small fraction [illegible] his patients, our troubl[illegible] would be over.

After washing his hands a[illegible] changing out of his work jeans, [illegible] father crossed the room toward th[illegible] phone. Merely crossing the room, h[illegible] assumed a professional demeano[illegible] With utmost gravity he dialed Kor[illegible] blum's number. My mother and I s[illegible] on the sofa and watched. She h[illegible] already coached him on what to s[illegible] and the goal was not to stray too f[illegible] from the script, to keep the pho[illegible] call short and polite. God forbid h[illegible] should say something wrong and u[illegible] set Kornblum, and then what wou[illegible] we do? My father dialed and [illegible] three of us waited as it rang. Wh[illegible] someone answered, my father ask[illegible] to speak with Dr. Kornblum. H[illegible] waited again, apparently for Kor[illegible] blum to come to the phone. In t[illegible] intervening silence my moth[illegible] mouthed yet another remind[illegible] about how to behave. In respons[illegible] my father turned his back on h[illegible] and faced the wall. Moments pass[illegible] before my father said that he w[illegible] Roman Berman, massage therapi[illegible] and that he was returning Dr. Kor[illegible] blum's call. Then he sa[illegible] "Yes, okay, *Harvey*."

Before Stalin, my great-gran[illegible] mother lit the candles and made [illegible] apple cake every Friday night. In [illegible] grandfather's recollections of prew[illegible] Jewish Latvia, the candles and app[illegible] cakes feature prominently. When [illegible] mother was a girl, Stalin was alrea[illegible] in charge, and although there w[illegible] still apple cake there were no mo[illegible] candles. By the time I was bor[illegible] there were neither candles nor app[illegible] cake, though to my mother, app[illegible] cake still meant Jewish. With this [illegible] mind, she retrieved the apple-cal[illegible] recipe and went to the expensive s[illegible] permarket for the ingredients. A[illegible] that Friday afternoon she pleaded i[illegible]

and left work early, coming
e to bake so that the apple cake
d be fresh for the Kornblums.
y father also left work early and
e to my school to pick me up.
n we arrived home the apart-
t was redolent with the scent of
e cake. My mother hustled my
er and me into the shower to-
ier so as not to waste time. I
n't showered with my father in
s and wasn't accustomed to see-
him naked. I didn't know where
ok. My father, however, seemed
vious to both his and my nudity.
soaped me up, rinsed me off, and
me into a towel. I stood on the
n mat watching through the
ed shower door as he hurriedly
ed his bald head and washed un-
his armpits. When he stepped out
he looked surprised to find
me still standing there.

Kornblum's turned out to be
y a few streets away from my fa-
r's office. The house was on the
side of the street, which meant I
delivered Kornblum's flyer, but I
n't remember it. My mother not-
the size of the house. Maybe
ee thousand square feet, with a
yard. Also, it was fully detached.
is was two substantial steps be-
d our means. Between our apart-
nt and a fully detached house
med the intermediate town
use and the semi-detached house.
fully detached house was the ulti-
te accomplishment. Nobody we
ew had even moved up to town
use, though recently there had
en plans and speculations.

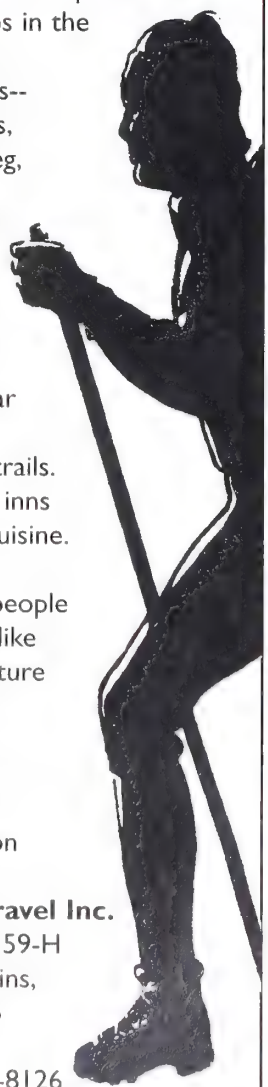
Three abreast, we went up Korn-
m's walk. My father was dressed
his blue Hungarian suit—veteran
international weightlifting com-
titions from Tallinn to Sochi. I
d been put into a pair of gray
users and a pressed white cotton
irt, with a silver Star of David on
silver chain not under but over the
irt. My mother wore a green wool
ess that went nicely with her am-
r necklace, bracelet, and earrings.
e were a sophisticated family—
ofessional people with their
raight-A-student son, future doc-
r or lawyer. With feigned confi-
ence we strode up Kornblum's nicely trimmed walk: three refugees and a warm apple cake.

My father rang the bell. We heard footsteps approaching. Then a man in slacks and a yellow sweater opened the door. The sweater had a little green alligator emblem on it. This was Kornblum. He was smiling broadly. He put a hand on my father's shoulder and told us who we must be. My father must be Roman, my mother must be Bella, and I must be little Mark. He ushered us into the house. We followed him through the foyer and into the dining room, where a table had been set. Six people were already seated around the table; three of the people were smiling like Kornblum. One of the smiling people was a woman who bustled over to my mother. Kornblum said this was his wife, Rhonda. Rhonda told us how nice it was that we could make it and relieved my mother of the apple cake. She told my mother she shouldn't have and took the cake into the kitchen.

Kornblum then introduced us to his good friends, the other two smiling people, Jerry Kogen and his wife, Shirley. Jerry and Shirley told us how wonderful it was to meet us. My mother said it was wonderful to meet them too. My father nodded his head, smiled, and said thank you. He did this while glancing at the other three people at the table, the people who were not smiling like Kornblum, Rhonda, and their friends. A man, a woman, and a boy. Like us, they were overdressed.

As Rhonda returned from the kitchen, Kornblum started to introduce us to the other family. Genady and Freda and their son, Simon, from Kharkov, wasn't that right? Genady said it was right. His English was a little better than my father's, but he had more gold teeth. In English, my mother told them how nice it was to meet them. In English, Freda thanked my mother. We were seated opposite them, and Jerry announced that Freda was also a medical professional—in Russia she had been a dentist. He himself was an eye doctor. Going around the table they had most of the body covered. Eyes, teeth, Harvey with

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[illegible] and Kornblum talked a lot of the muscles. What did that leave? Kornblum laughed and said he could think of a thing or two. Jerry laughed, and Rhonda laughed and told Kornblum that he was too much. Genady and Freda laughed more than they needed to and so did my parents—though maybe a little less. Then Rhonda said a prayer and lit the candles.

Over roast chicken, Kornblum told my parents and Genady and Freda what an honor it was to have them at his house. He could only imagine what they had gone through. For years he and Rhonda had been involved with trying to help the Russian Jews. If it wasn't too personal, he wanted to know how bad it really was. My mother said it was bad, that the anti-Semitism was very bad. Jerry said that Genady and Freda had been *refuseniks*; he wanted to know if we had also been *refuseniks*. My mother hesitated a moment and then admitted that we had not been *refuseniks*. She knew some *refuseniks*, and we were almost *refuseniks*, but we were not *refuseniks*. Everyone agreed that this was very good, and then Freda and Genady told their story of being *refuseniks*. Midway through the story, the part where they were evicted from their apartment and forced to share a room with three other families, Genady lifted up his shirt to show everyone the place where he had been stabbed by former co-workers. He had a large scar below his ribs. Walking down the street one night he had stumbled upon some drunken comrades from the factory. They called him a filthy Jew traitor, and the foreman went after him with a knife.

After Genady finished his story and tucked his shirt back into his pants, Jerry and Rhonda wiped tears from their eyes. They couldn't believe it was so horrible. My parents had to agree it was horrible. Kornblum said, Those Russian bastards, and then asked if Simon and I wanted to go down to the basement and play. Kornblum's children, a boy and a girl, were away at sleepover camp. That was too bad. They would have been so excited to meet us. Downstairs in the basement was a Ping-Pong table, a pool table, a hockey net, and some other toys. As we went down, Freda was telling a story about her mother who was stuck all alone in Kharkov. My parents weren't saying anything.

Aside from the Ping Pong and pool tables, Kornblum's basement also had a big-screen television and a wall unit full of board games and books. In the corner, one of his kids had assembled the complete Star Wars Death Star. All the Star Wars figures were there, including Ewoks. I went over to the Ping-Pong table. A paddle lay on top of a ball. I picked up the paddle and looked over at Simon. Simon wasn't interested in Ping Pong. He was inspecting the Death Star. In Russian, I asked him if all that stuff his father had said really happened. Are you calling my father a liar? he said, picking up an R2-D2 doll. He picked up another toy and stuffed them both down his pants. What doesn't this rich bastard have, he said.

When I returned to the table everyone was there except my father and Rhonda. Shirley was sitting beside my mother admiring her amber necklace. Kornblum had a photo album out and was showing Genady and Freda pictures of his grandfather in Poland. Jerry also had a pile of old photographs on the table. On his father's side, his family was from Minsk. All the dinner plates had been cleared, and there were now some pastries on the table and a pot of coffee. I had to go to the washroom and Kornblum said there was one downstairs and three upstairs, take your pick. He then turned a page in the album and pointed out everyone the Nazis had killed.

I went back through the foyer and looked for the washroom. The stairway leading up to the second floor was there, so I climbed it. There was one bathroom in the hall, but I heard voices from behind a door. The door led into the master bedroom, and the voices were coming from behind the door leading to the washroom. The door was partly open. Inside, Rhonda was sitting on a stool in front of the mirror, her blouse was undone and gathered at her waist. She was leaning forward on the bathroom counter in her bra and my father was massaging [illegible] neck. As I retreated, she called [illegible] and pushed the door open with [illegible] foot. She said it was wonderful, [illegible] father was a magician, if only [illegible] could bottle his hands and sell the[illegible] I mumbled that I had only be[illegible] looking for the washroom and [illegible] said that they were already finish[illegible] She turned toward me and start[illegible] doing up her blouse. Her hea[illegible] breasts bulged over the top of [illegible] bra. She told me not to worry [illegible] should go ahead and do my busine[illegible] Downstairs Harvey was probab[illegible] waiting for her to ma[illegible] more coffee.

As my father washed the Vaseli[illegible] lotion from his hands, I stood in fr[illegible] of the toilet with my pants undo[illegible] He dried his hands on the decora[illegible] towels and waited for me to pee. Af[illegible] a while he asked if I wanted him [illegible] wait outside. After a little while lon[illegible] he left and waited in the bedroo[illegible] When I came out my father was sitti[illegible] on Kornblum's bed. Above him wa[illegible] large family portrait taken for Kor[illegible] blum's daughter's bat mitzvah. T[illegible] Kornblums, formally dressed, were se[illegible] ed on the grass under a large tree. M[illegible] father wasn't looking at the portra[illegible] He said, Tell me, what am I suppos[illegible] do? Then he got up, took my hat[illegible] and we went back downstairs.

At the table everyone was eati[illegible] pastries. Shirley was still sitting besi[illegible] my mother. She was trying on [illegible] mother's amber bracelet. As my fath[illegible] came in she shuffled over to ma[illegible] room for us. Rhonda announced th[illegible] my father was a miracle worker. H[illegible] neck had never felt better. She ma[illegible] Kornblum promise to send him son[illegible] of his patients. Kornblum said it wou[illegible] be an honor. Kornblum said my fath[illegible] would get a call Monday morning. B[illegible] fore he knew it, he would be out [illegible] the chocolate-bar factory. Kornblu[illegible] would spread the word. A chocolat[illegible] bar factory was no place for a man lil[illegible] my father. Jerry said that my fath[illegible] could count on him to help in any wa[illegible]

On our way out Kornblum shoo[illegible] hands with my father and with m[illegible] and then he kissed my mother on th[illegible] cheek. It was a very special eveni[illegible] for him and Rhonda. Rhonda can[illegible] out of the kitchen carrying my moth[illegible]

apple cake. She didn't want it to go aste. Even though they sometimes the kids to McDonald's, they kept ıer at home. So unfortunately, although it smelled wonderful, they couldn't keep it.

As we walked back to the Ponti- was unclear whether nothing or ything had changed. We returned h as we came, the only tangible evıce of the passage of time was the l apple cake. Before us was the Pon-, as green and ugly as ever. Behind was Kornblum's fully detached se. We walked slowly, in no hurry each our destination. Somewhere ween Kornblum's and the Pontiac our fate. It floated above us like an er, ambiguous and perceptible.

My father stopped walking. He ıtemplated my mother and the le cake.

—Why are you still carrying it?

—What am I supposed to do?

—Throw it away.

—Throw it away? It's a shame to ste it.

—Throw it away. It's bad luck.

Something in the way my mother ked confirmed my own suspicion. ıere were countless superstitions, mberless ways of inviting calamity, t I had never heard anything about posing of an unwanted cake. Also, y mother had worked hard on the ke. The ingredients had cost money, d she abhorred the idea of wasting od. Still, she didn't argue. Nothing as certain. We needed luck and were lnerable to the wildest irrationality. ght or wrong, the cake was now dou- tainted. She handed it to me and ointed down the street toward a ımpster.

She didn't need to say run. ■

nswers to the April Quiz, "Pity ıe Fool"

The turning of the year; **2** Thomas lore; **3** Cinchona tree bark, conining quinine; **4** Logs were disguised s cannon; **5** Britain; **6** *New York vening Sun*; **7** *San Francisco Examin-r*; **8** The Eiffel Tower; **9** Conversion f metric measurements; **10** *The War f the Worlds*; **11** 1966; **12** Thomas)ewey; **13** Albert Einstein; **14** Amrose Bierce.

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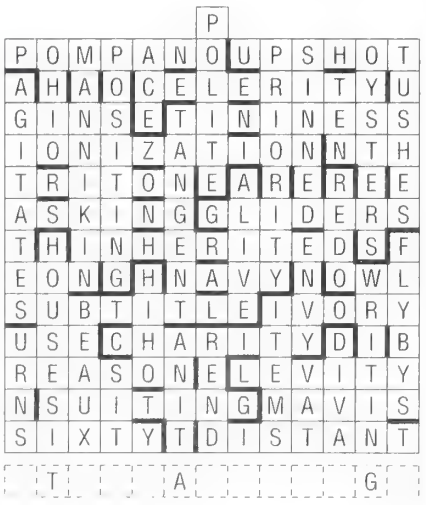
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SOLUTION TO THE APRIL PUZZLE



NOTES FOR "GAME":

Puzzle editing by Dan Asimov.

The game is TAG. The word IT is added as each word-to-be-altered is "tagged," beginning with POL(IT)E, continuing through CELER(IT)Y, PRIOR(IT)Y, INHER(IT)ED, POS(IT)ING, TR(IT)ON, AG(IT)ATES, SUBT(IT)LE, HOUSES(IT), SU(IT)ING, AN(IT)A, CHAR(IT)Y, (IT)EMS, LEV(IT)Y, and ending in WR(IT)ING.

Anagrams are indicated with an asterisk (*).

ACROSS: 2. pomp-a-no; 7. U.P.S.-hot; 13. c(el-e.)ry; 15. hidden; 16. ti(nines)s*; 17. (L)ionization; 18. n(or)th; 19. nort(h), rev.; 22. as-king; 23. two mngs.; 25. in-her-ed.; 28. *; 30. Y-van, rev.; 31. hidden; 33. *; 35. Iv(or)y; 36. (m)use(um); 37. c(ha)ry; 41.*; 43. homophone, levee; 45. (is)suing; 46. hidden; 47. s(IX)ty; 48. hidden.

DOWN: 1. elop(e), rev.; 3. O(hi)O; 4. man-ni(rev.)-kin; 5. P.O.(sin)G. (rev.); 6. hidden; 8. prior-y.; 9. rev.; 10. *; 11. *; 12. a-gat(E)s (rev.); 14. rev.; 16. tan-gent; 20. Al-I've; 21. red-O; 24. houses*; 26. env(o)y; 27. hidden; 29. homophone; 32. wring, homophone; 34. homophone; 35. EMS, two mngs.; 36. homophone; 38. an-a; 39. (t)rend; 40. rev.; 42. *; 44. VAT, two mngs.

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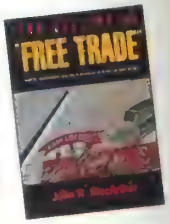
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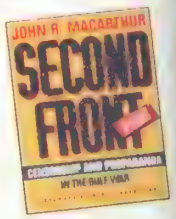
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NEW BOOKS

by John Leonard



We first heard about "the gentle Tasaday" at roughly the same time as we heard about the awful Ik, in the early 1970s. The Tasaday, according to *National Geographic*, NBC News, and many other eager media beavers, were Stone Age hunters and gatherers hiding out from helicopters in a rain forest in the southern Philippines—a "lost tribe" of cave-dwelling, leaf-wearing innocents so out of touch with the history of the fallen world that they hadn't any words for "iron," "boat," or "sea," much less "war" or "weapon." Whereas the Ik, discovered instead in Africa, were said to be almost as nasty, brutish, and short as the Yanomamo of South America; they'd stomp on their own grandmother, if they had one, for an extra lump of gristle.

Something in us, running away from Vietnam into communes and disco, needed a noble savage. Robin Hemley, a novelist and English professor at the University of Utah, speaks to this dream of foraging and camaraderie in INVENTED EDEN: THE ELUSIVE, DISPUTED HISTORY OF THE TASADAY (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, $25), even as he escorts us through a jungle of contradictions and a thralldom of confabulations. He will go to Mindanao himself, and be lied to by everybody. By the time he has differentiated among the warlords, the anthropologists, the media, the missionaries, the Muslim insurgents, and the Marxist revolutionaries, what's left of the rain forest looks more like slash-and-burn agriculture than a garden patch of paradise.



So now we know that the Tasaday were not exactly Stone Age. But we know, too, that they were less a hoax than they themselves were hoaxed. "They had something the rest of us wanted to take," Hemley says, whether it was mineral rights or photo ops or exotic frisson or symbolic magic. And we took it as we poked them with a stick. Promises were made, vendettas indulged, violence done, and careers advanced with a furious pedaling of tricycle wheels into the corridors of Big Foot science and journalism.

Besides a terrific story, *Invented Eden* is a savvy caution: In imagining where we came from, scientists have friends, enemies, agendas, careers, and ulterior motives. Even when the chirpy gauchos of the media pampas argue about such basic stuff as whether humankind began, on the African savanna, pure of heart, telling stories and singing songs (which is what Bruce Chatwin wanted to believe), or as killers of our own kind with a double-knuckled antelope humerus (which is what Robert Ardrey used to insist), they rely on the latest morbid scenario from a desert-crazed ant-eater who has dreamed up our distant past and his future glory on an Ice Age toenail or a tooth. Worry instead about where we're going.

Rebecca West dreamed in history instead of rain forests. The boneyards of culture were her stamping grounds. Which isn't to say that she didn't imagine things, even when she wasn't writing fiction. Religion, especially, brought out the fruitcake in her. In her 1941 masterpiece, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, she imagined a Turk under every bed in the Balkans.

The Snake Charmer, by Henri Rousseau © Réunion des Musées Nationaux/Art Resource, New York City (top); Engraving of Aztecs before the conquest by the Spanish © Mary Evans Picture Library

In SURVIVORS IN MEXICO (Yale, $26.95), she is glad that Catholic Spain got to the New World before Islamic North Africa did; otherwise, she'd be looking at a mosque instead of Our Lady of Guadalupe, "and the women about me would have been veiled and have had not faces but black snouts." This difference means a lot: "The Turks had their chance of colonisation in the southeastern corner of Europe, the Balkans," where "they made a mess that brought on us the turbulence of Europe and the two World Wars."

It is an accusation astoundingly wrongheaded even for a book as weird as this one. At age seventy-four in 1966, Dame Rebecca began an essay as ambitious on Aztecs, mestizos, and modern Mexico as *Black Lamb* had been on Yugoslavia. Never mind that Octavio Paz had already written such a book, *The Labyrinth of Solitude*, in 1950; she relied instead on the anthropology of Jacques Soustelle, who later got into trouble trying to save Algeria for France. The abandoned drafts she left behind at her death in 1983 have been edited by Bernard Schweizer into a coherent manuscript of 60,000 words or so that all of a sudden stops, as if chopped down like Trotsky. Trotsky, in fact, gets a surprising amount of digressive space in *Survivors*, as do Basques, Hapsburgs, and the Paris Commune, along with volcanoes and balloons. *Black Lamb* likewise meandered, but we could count on its return from woolgathering (by Basque shepherds) to the master narrative. When *Survivors* ducks and runs, we are lost.

What remains, between shrewd remarks on Montezuma, Maximilian, and Frida Kahlo, are West's quarrels with a God she seems to have decided was a monster, eating his creatures as if starved for meaning, and sentences as swift and supple as ever were written in blessed English.



What Robert Stone has always dreamed about is God, or perhaps His absence—a missing father. In his last novel, *Damascus Gate*, he found a quote from Pascal that he might have stapled to almost any of his books: "'The universe is such that it bears witness everywhere to a lost God, in man and outside him, and to a fallen nature.'" In BAY OF SOULS (Houghton Mifflin, $25), "a man without a meaning"—a father who has lost his faith—will end up underwater off the coast of a Caribbean island a lot like Haiti, contemplating Dambala, the serpent of wisdom, and *bizango*, the secret society of soul stealers. After gnosticism, alchemy, and kabala, after kundalini yoga and the Egyptian *Book of the Dead*, after Saint Teresa and Theravada, it was only a matter of time before Robert Stone got around to voodoo.

Michael Ahearn, a professor of literature at a Minnesota college, has a kinky affair with Lara Purcell, a political scientist with Third World roots. Whips and cocaine are involved, and so is racquetball. He will follow her to the Windward Island of St. Trinity, where she is supposed to be burying a brother and selling a hotel. But smugglers, militias, intelligence agents, neo-Nazis, an entire pantheon of gods and devils from the Afro-Caribbean syncretic religion known variously as *voudon*, Santería, or *candomble*, and many (too many) drums complicate their spring break. As always in a Stone novel—and this one is sleeker than a submarine—choices are actually made, with moral consequences, quite as if something else were at stake besides the snap, crackle, and pop of plot and the usual warrants of manhood. When Baron Samedi arrives with his wheelbarrow, he's looking for you too.

Choices and consequences are thrust upon the Israeli writer David Grossman whether he wants them or not. There isn't a more interesting novelist in the West today, and he should be busy at some dreamwork on love and landscape, solitude and community, discrepancy and transcendence. But where Grossman lives the children come home from school in body bags. PEACE N may be his forlorn party, but his keeps getting in the way. And so tween the big books of fiction like *Under: LOVE* and *The Book of mate Grammar* there are the l books of journalism like *The Ye Wind*, in which he talked on the W Bank to Palestinians and Israeli tlers and prophesied the Intifada; *Sleeping on a Wire*, in which he in viewed Israeli Arabs alienated f absolutely everybody else; and r DEATH AS A WAY OF LIFE: ISR TEN YEARS AFTER OSLO (Far Straus and Giroux, $21), a decad newspaper articles, all shadowe "the unbearable lightness of dea in which he seems to abandon ho

Maybe not entirely. But the W Bank occupation is an offense to J ish morality and international law, the suicide bombings have sicke him beyond discussion. There will n er be peace until Israelis give up settlements and Palestinians give "the right of return." And while Ar and Sharon may deserve each oth the rest of us don't. Fear now de mines the norms: "Terror conta something that acts like a digest enzyme—it decomposes the priv human body and the body polit Noise drowns out thought. "What mains? To live through this nightm to its end, to go from funeral to fun al and to try to survive each pass moment. Thoughts of peace, of m tual understanding, of coexistence tween the two peoples now sound l the last signals of life from a ship th has already sunk."

Even Grossman's last novel, *My Knife*, seemed to metastas from an epistolary love story int terrible wounding, as if intima were a usurpation. One longs the courage of the Children of t Heart in *See Under: LOVE*, w flew to the rescue of slaves, glad tors, Armenians, and Robin Ho before ending up in the Wars zoo; and for the levitating magic the young Aron in *The Book of Ir mate Grammar*, with his imagina dog, his "jinxed" shoes, his magn and his flute. If the Middle East l broken David Grossman's migh heart, a howl is all that's left for t rest of us.

Saturn Devouring One of His Sons, by Francisco de Go
Lucientes © Scala/Art Resource, New York

UR ESSAYS, OURSELVES

defense of the Big Idea

By *Cristina Nehring*

ussed in this essay:

Shades of Shadow, by Tracy Daugherty. University of Nebraska Press, 2003. 96 pages. $27.95.

Fish's Eye: Essays About Angling and the Outdoors, by Ian Frazier. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2002. 176 pages. $20.

Nature of Home: A Lexicon and Essays, by Lisa Knopp. University of Nebraska Press, 2002. 256 pages. $24.95.

al Wonders: Sessions in the Bohemian Alps, by Ted Kooser. University of Nebraska Press, 2002. 168 pages. $22.

Founding Fish, by John McPhee. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2002. 358 pages. 525.



The essay, we sometimes hear, is "the freest form in all of literature." How is it, then, that the ot new essay collections on my desk ok so damn similar? Published re-ntly by writers both famous and ob-ure, they look uncannily inter-hangeable. For one thing, each sports photograph of the Great Outdoors on the cover: a darkened road through the wilderness, an old American truck in the grasslands, sun-kissed trees, or, at the least, a close-up of some freshly slain fish. Indeed, the volume by Ian Frazier and the one by John McPhee seem (to my untutored eye) to have exactly the same unhappy fish flung in precisely the same fashion around their spine. Many of these books have bucolic titles like *The Nature of Home*, *Local Wonders*, *The Founding Fish*.

Open them up and the differences do not dramatically increase. Whether elaborating the illness occasioned by their author's absence from her prairie home (Lisa Knopp), waxing lyrical about the Okies (Tracy Daugherty), painting the tranquil pleasures of shad fishing (John McPhee), reminiscing about bugs bothered as a boy (Ian Frazier), or recalling the pies of an Iowa grandmother (Ted Kooser), these books share a somewhat sleepy obsession with rural retreats, peaceable pastimes, and childhood memories. The name of a loved local landscape—"Oregon's Willamette Valley," "Nebraska"—appears in the first sentence of each one.

Extensive autobiographical detail attends them, too: three out of five narrate the author's medical experiences in lavish detail ("'Could you look at the back of my tongue on the left side?'" Kooser tells us he asked his doctor. "'I've had a sore spot back there for a number of weeks.'" "One Sunday night Margie and I were making love. 'I'm sorry. I have to stop,'" Daugherty recalls saying as his heart trouble began). All of these writers deliver themselves to long and lingering backward glances at youthful pranks and pleasures (eating insects, walking in the woods). Many of them offer a level of precision about their CVs we never knew we wanted. Knopp actually ticks off the courses she taught during a brief stint at a university: "American Autobiography, Literary Journalism, American Travel Literature, Early American Literature." Indeed, lists appear to have become the literary device of choice in essays of this ilk. Some go on for a page or two, like the one Frazier makes, in *The Fish's Eye*, of the many-thousand kinds of bait contained in a cluttered old store. No detail strikes these writers as too small or too banal to include: if they noticed it, it's *important*. Thus Frazier relates every word of three consecutive telephone conversations he overheard in the store:

> "Angler's Roost."
> ". . . . . "
> "We've got all kinds of hook hones."
> ". . . . . "
> "Fresh and salt, both."
> ". . . . . "
> "Yes, some of them are grooved."
> ". . . . . "
> "Each one comes in a plastic case."
> ". . . . . "
> "Different lengths. I think two-inch and three-inch."

ristina Nehring is a contributing editor to arper's Magazine. Her last review for the agazine, "The Unbearable Slightness," ap-eared in the November 2002 issue. She is at ork on her first book.

lustration by Matt Dennis

That even writers as formidable as Frazier and McPhee have yielded to such pedestrian rehearsals is testimony to the pettily autobiographical frenzy that has lately seized American essayists—a frenzy for cozy, complacent, and oddly insular self-revelation that has swallowed them up in numbers. When it does not take the form of pastoral angling tales, this frenzy easily assumes the shape of urban microhistories such as Joseph Epstein's repeatedly anthologized "The Art of the Nap," in which he describes—with loving precision and evident satisfaction—his own slumbering tastes:

"Sleeping in some beds," he wagers,

> is more pleasurable than sleeping in others. . . . As a boy, I would have been delighted to have slept in a bunk bed; I only did so later in the army. I have never slept in a hammock. . . . Sleeping in the cramped quarters of a submarine wouldn't be easy for me. Sleeping alone in a hotel in a king-size bed, on the other hand, gives me the willies.

As erstwhile editor of *The American Scholar*, compiler of *The Norton Book of Personal Essays*, and author of at least twelve books of essays, Epstein is probably one of the most prolific and mood-setting practitioners of the genre today. Indeed, his brand of "personal essay" has become, as the *Encyclopedia of the Essay* asserts, "what most people mean when they consider the essay as a genre." Highbrow anthologies abound with this kind of essay—essays on the author's memories of his first ice-cream cone or of her parents' drugstore, essays about catching trout with Uncle Elmer or watching the sunrise with Hubby, essays about the author's domestic peccadilloes or a visit to an old boarding school. At once backward-looking and navel-examining, these pieces lack *Sturm und Drang*; a consensus seems to have grown that the genre should be . . . a bit sedate. No panicked incest here, as we might find in modern autobiographical poetry—no, the essay now is a cooler form; emotion is "recollected in tranquility," if it is recollected at all. The essay is a "middle-aged" genre, according to Epstein—one's early thirties is "young" to dabble in it, he thinks; never mind that our nation's premier essayists, Emerson and Thoreau, did their best work at just that age.

But essayists today are less hotheaded, imperative, dangerous, and presumptuous than their predecessors. Whatever their actual age, the likes of Emerson and Thoreau were young in their literature—they were exhortative, urgent—clutching after truths for their own improvement and for that of their fellow human beings. They felt, like Seneca, whose *Letters from a Stoic* are sometimes dubbed the first essays of Western literature, that as "philosophers" they were "called in to help the unhappy . . . the shipwrecked," the timid, the unself-realized, the blind, the bungling, and the weak, among whom—it goes without saying—they counted themselves. They were always preaching to themselves as much as to their readers, but preaching they were—not in the manner of a priestly, middle-aged know-it-all but in the manner of a young and ardent paramedic who knows, when he speaks, that life hangs in the balance.

Personal essayists today, however, insist upon their "modesty." The "essayist is most profound . . . when his intentions are modest," writes Epstein. "Common to the genre is a taste for littleness," adds Philip Lopate, editor of *The Art of the Personal Essay*. Littleness indeed, but also frivolity. Witness Cynthia Ozick's oft-reprinted "Portrait of the Essay as a Warm Body": A real essay, she tells us, quoting John Updike, is shaped like the "ideal female body," which "curves around the centers of repose." Of course, it also harbors a little bit of spirit, "as if it—or she—were a character in a novel . . . moody, fickle, given on a whim to changing her clothes or the subject; sometimes obstinate, with a mind of her own, or hazy and light." And even on those occasions, when this Woman-Essay has "a mind of her own," Ozick is at pains to reassure us that *we don't have to take it seriously!* It is "whimsical" and weightless, flitting and inconsequential like a butterfly. We need not feel threatened by it. Like a frivolous lady or a pet puppy, it's just playing. So even if, by some accident, "there is an opinion in it, you need not trust it for the long run."

Often, there isn't. To present an opinion is to risk being presumptuous, pompous, and, as Epstein calls El son, "a gasbag." It is to assume a kn edge of one's neighbor one cann should not have. It is to sin ag identity politics. It is to deny div ty. The more exclusive your atter to your own idiosyncratic tastes, to unique particulars of your life (w you list or describe, just so long as don't generalize on their basis), more politically kosher and celebr your essay.

Ultimately, this cult of persona tail, this hermetic attention to the is no less arrogant than the desir tell people what's best for them. It often presumes that the author is nitely fascinating for his or her sake, that we should read him not cause he says something that b upon our world but because he hin is so fetching, so enthralling, so qui "so singular in each particular." should read essayists not for gen insights but for personal tics—beca for example, we find it so intrigu that Joseph Epstein "found I could listen to [Books on Tape]. . . . Let m on to a further confession: I can read detective or spy fiction. . . ."

The essay in our day is aili Quintessential form of n fiction since the Renaissanc today delivers on only a small par its heady old promise. Montaigne p posed to "boldly meddle with ev kind of subject" in an attempt to cover "how to die well and live we His essays rested on the assumpt that self-examination was not mer a narcissistic but an altruistic ende or, for every individual life "whether emperor's or common man's, . . . is s a life subject to all human accident Thus Montaigne could say, in a sin breath, that his essays deal exclusi ly with his private self (a comme routinely quoted by contemporary sayists) *and* that he is undertakin "study, the subject of which is man" comment routinely ignored by co temporary essayists). He could exa ine his own reading and loving a cheating and hesitating, and dedu brave insights about the reading, lo ing, cheating, and hesitating of othe This makes his work, and that of sayists for centuries afterward, far mo provocative than it would be if

n and ended with self-description
e. Certainly the great essayists of
past attended to the particulars of
lives: Montaigne wrote of his
in sauces and women, Thoreau of
aste in plants and carpentry, Emer-
—albeit more obliquely—of his so-
inhibitions. But all three extrap-
d from these particularities. They
personal experience as a wedge
which to pry open the door to
eral insight. Today's personal es-
sts regard it as metal to be hoard-
or its own sake.

he best essays of the past general-
mbitiously; they prescribe as read-
as they describe; they are on the
cout for Big Ideas with Vast Ap-
ation. If they offend their audi-
e, at least they *address* it. If they
sure to err, they are sure to awak-
as well. Witness Montaigne's pro-
ncements on learning:

> ust as a plant is drowned by too much
> noisture and a lamp by too much oil,
> o is the mind drowned by too much
> tudy and matter, for, being . . . clogged
> vith a great variety of things, it must
> ose the power of freeing itself, and the
> veight of them must keep it bent and
> loubled up.

Emerson on action in the life of
intellectual:

> I do not see how any man can afford, for
> the sake of his nerves and his nap, to
> spare any action in which he can par-
> take. It is pearls and rubies to his dis-
> course. Drudgery, calamity, exaspera-
> tion, want, are instructors in eloquence
> and wisdom. The true scholar grudges
> every opportunity of action past by, as
> a loss of power.

r Dr. Johnson on the misery of as-
ring artists:

> We do not indeed so often disappoint
> others as ourselves. We not only think
> more highly than others of our own abil-
> ities, but allow ourselves to form hopes
> which we never communicate, and
> please our thoughts with . . . elevations
> to which we are never expected to rise;
> and when our days and years have passed
> away . . . and we find at last that we have
> suffered our purposes to sleep till the
> time of action is past, we are reproached
> only by our own reflections; neither our
> friends nor our enemies wonder that we
> . . . live without notice and die without
> memorial; they knew not what task we
> had proposed, and therefore cannot dis-
> cern whether it is finished.

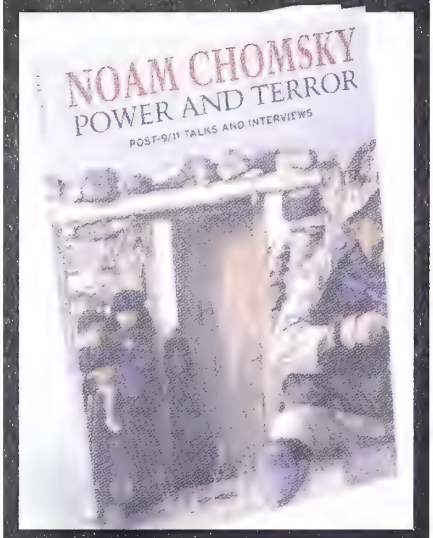
Or Thoreau on ambition:

> If you have built castles in the air, your
> work need not be lost; that is where
> they should be. Now put the founda-
> tions under them.

What these passages share is not only strong and searching thought but gripping imagery, deliberate rhythms, epigrammatic point, and, perhaps most conspicuously for the modern reader, considerable presumption.

Such presumption is extremely rare today. To be sure, a feisty film critic like Pauline Kael was still defending her right to generalize in the 1960s—"Any of my generalizations are subject to . . . infinite qualifications; let's assume that I know this, and that I use [them] in order to be suggestive rather than definitive"—and exercising it elegantly. "Educated audiences," she declared, use art films for "cheap and easy congratulation on their sensitivities and their liberalism." And we can still find Christopher Hitchens willing to hypothesize, in a book review, that "the connection between stupidity and cruelty is a close one." But this is an exception. Today's public intellectuals more often than not shun broader pronouncements. In our age of fetishized pluralism and strident allegiance to "local knowledge," each person speaks only for him- or herself; no one speaks for his neighbor; no one speaks for her fellow *Mensch*. This is no doubt respectful; it also can be spectacularly dull. Essayists have cocooned. Where once they shared Emerson's creed that "what is true for you in your private heart is true for all men," they now count their experience irremediably divorced from the experience of their differently gendered, differently colored, and differently educated fellow human beings.

It is one sign of the low esteem into which the essay has fallen that the best-regarded essays are the ones that strain to be stories—the ones, in other words, that renounce the main privilege of the essayist over the storyteller: the right to think out loud, the right to draw conclusions from data rather than merely present it, the



speak truth to power?

Q: You've said that we as citizens should not speak truth to power but, instead, to people. Shouldn't we do both? Could you speak more on this subject?

CHOMSKY: ...First of all, power already knows the truth. They don't need to hear it from us. Secondly, it's a waste of time. Furthermore, it's the wrong audience. You have to speak truth to the people who will dismantle and overthrow and constrain power. I don't like the phrase "speak truth to." We don't know the truth. At least I don't.

We should join with the kind of people who are willing to commit themselves to overthrow power, and listen to them. They often know a lot more than we do. And join with them to carry out the right kinds of activities. Should you also speak truth to power? If you feel like it, but I don't see a lot of point. I'm not interested in telling the people around Bush what they already know.

—from *Power and Terror*

"succinct...illuminating"

—*Counterpunch*, Feb. 21, 2003

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right to offer interpretations and propose hypotheses. "There is more to be pondered in the grain and texture of life" than traditional fiction allows, argues Laurence Stapleton, one of the first modern scholars of the essay. The work of essayists is vital precisely because it "permits and encourages self-knowledge in a way that is less indirect than fiction, more open and speculative." Except, of course, when it fails to exploit its permissions, when it fails to seize its right to ponder openly and limits itself artificially to the tools of the fiction writer.

I do not mean to suggest that such essays are uniformly bad. There are soporifically self-absorbed narrative essays whose raison d'être is hard to fathom. But, at the same time, the very best tales are, often, non-fiction tales—witness George Orwell's "Shooting an Elephant" and "A Hanging." Witness Seymour Krim's or James Baldwin's autobiographical essays, Joan Didion's reportage, the journalism of Tom Wolfe, or much of John McPhee. Few fictions could be more riveting, more immediate, more replete with revelatory and significant detail, than these writers' non-fictions.

The same talents fuel, the same vices sink, fiction and narrative non-fiction alike. But the reason the essay is in crisis is that narrative essays—*story* essays—are virtually the only essays that may even grope after artistic recognition today. It is for this reason that they fill the literary anthologies and have become the object of a peculiarly slavish and at the same time self-important movement called "creative nonfiction." Its founder, Lee Gutkind, freely concedes that most non-fiction is "tedious and boring," and specifies:

> Of course, I am a *creative* nonfiction writer, "creative" being indicative of a style in which the nonfiction is written so as to make it more dramatic and compelling. We embrace many of the techniques of the fiction writer, including dialogue, description, plot, intimacy of detail, characterization, point of view. . . .

Speaking broadly, non-fiction writers today are taken to be botched fiction writers. When it seems evident that they are not, when at no time in their careers have they betrayed a desire to write "non-truths" (an apt companion-word for "non-fiction"), this is viewed, insidiously, not as commendable resolution but as lamentable decadence. As early as the 1950s, poets like Randall Jarrell opined that "intellectuals become critics before, and not after, they have failed as artists." Without defending the particular critics Jarrell had in mind, I believe that his dichotomy is false. "Critic" versus "artist"? When Montaigne wrote up the forgettable scribbler Raymond Sebond, was Sebond (whose thought is palatable to us today only in Montaigne's essay about him) the "artist" and Montaigne the hack? When H. L. Mencken reviewed a transitory novelist, was the latter the artist and Mencken his inferior?

The most cursory review of literary history exposes such assumptions as absurd. And yet it has been with us—along with a host of other unflattering myths about non-fiction writers—roughly since the end of the nineteenth century. Today, every writer both rash and dogged enough to toil in the groves of non-fiction has had a version of this conversation: "You're a writer!" says the smiling face. "What do you write?" Slight hesitation. "Novels?" comes the anticipated reply. "Stories?" "Screenplays?" (If you're in L.A.) "*Poems*?" (If you're female.) Only after this golden list has been tinkled off can you muster your reply: "Essays?" you offer. A cloud passes over the face before you. Chopped liver has been confused with foie gras. Luckily, the ingredients can occasionally be reassembled. "Hey," says your kindly interlocutor, "I'll bet you could write a novel if you *tried*."

Not even essayists are especially eager to defend their craft—and when they do, it's in terms oddly demeaning. Take E. B. White, who blithely defined an essayist such as himself as "a recording secretary" and "a second-class citizen." No doubt this disclaimer is part of the charmingly humble, idiot-savant-ish persona White cultivated in his essays, but his followers took it at face value. In fact, they took it further. Ralph Ellison portrayed his own essays as trash cans: they "performed the grateful function," he wrote in *Shadow and Act*, "of making it unnecessary to clu up my fiction with half-formed or rageously wrong-headed ideas." good stuff goes into the novel; refuse is chucked into the essays.

Is this really the case? Ellison's es may indeed be weaker than his no but this is a matter of Ellison's par ular literary propensities, not of inherent imbalance between the g res. James Baldwin's essays are stron than his fiction. William Gass's ess are often superior to his novels. Gass looms large among non-fictic contemporary detractors: essays, he clares in a polemic against Ralph W do Emerson, are the products of th who have "failed in the larger ro the finer forms, and could not . . . p ulate a page with people, with p sionate poetry."

Our age has produced a new liter breed: the self-hating essayist. We n have a whole class of non-fiction w ers who, to all appearances, hate n fiction and either beat themselves for writing it, pretend they're do something else (witness all the me oirs that pose as first novels), or lin in the lowly realm of personal triv This is particularly astonishing in li of the fact that historically n fiction has more often been the publ favorite child and fiction the evil st sister. In the eighteenth and ni teenth centuries a good prose narrat was a *true* prose narrative, and writ went to great lengths to persuade th readership that the account they w perusing of love or adventure, soc climbing or moral collapse, was *his ry*, not fiction. From Daniel Defoe a Henry Fielding to Jonathan Swift a Laurence Sterne, even novelists twi ed their prose into pretzels to ma this point. A typical title page mig have read: "The True and Historic Tale of Ernestine Scrubb as told t on the occasion of X's visit to Imagination was a lesser god than servation; a lesser god, even, th philosophical reflection.

By the end of the nineteenth ce tury, tastes had shifted and the no was understood to be fiction—and b ter that way. But taste is hardly p gressive, and the fact that for most Western literary history "truth" w more highly esteemed than ficti should give us pause. The books t

at the fount of our tradition—
Homer's *Iliad* to the Bible—were
stood as earnest accounts of actual
ts. Many of the most important
rs in the Renaissance—Mon-
e, whose autobiography trans-
ed occidental literature; Francis
n, who imported the essay into
sh; John Donne, whose sermons
d far more hearts than his po-
—were, firstly and emphatically,
rs of non-fiction. So secure was
reference for truth in the arts that
hilip Sidney had to fight valiant-
his famous sixteenth-century "De-
e of Poesy" for the right to "lie" in
ature at all.

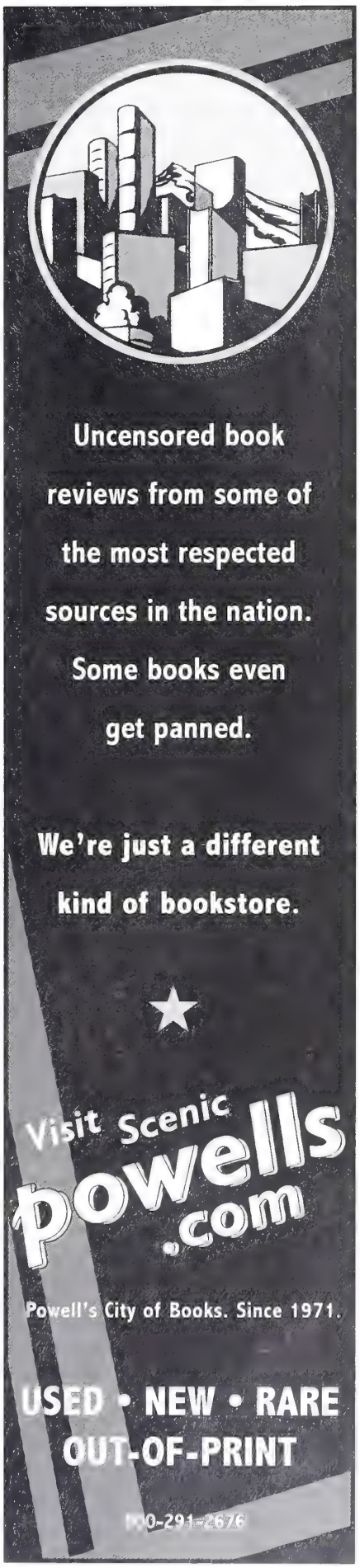
rictly speaking, even Shake-
re wrote predominantly "non-
on." The majority of his dramat-
ots hail from the history texts of
day: Plutarch's *Lives* and Holin-
d's *Chronicles*. A much smaller
mber stem from existing fictional
rces (for example, Thomas
ge's *Rosalynd*), but almost none
hem did Shakespeare make up
his own. What he brought to his
erials was not "invention" in the
al sense so much as form, style,
nd, insight, irony, aphorism, col-
and characterization—the same
s of qualities, as it happens, that
ay's non-fiction writers attempt
bring to their work. If they are
for that reason Shakespeares, it
he nature of genius, not the na-
e of the task at hand, that creates
rift.

There is no such thing as a higher
re or a lower genre in literature;
re is only good writing and bad writ-
, strong thinking and weak think-
. Stylistically, non-fiction has pro-
ed gems that glitter as brightly as
clearest stones of fiction. What
velist has penned words more brac-
; and eloquent than Thoreau's to
American writer: "Grow wild ac-
ding to thy nature, like these sedges
d brakes, which will never become
glish bay." What tale-teller can sur-
ss James Baldwin's lyricism on the
nlit prison of the American dream"
James Wolcott's evil imagination
the students of an "exciting growth
dustry": "You can almost see their
peful little heads poking out of the
il." Where in fiction are metaphors
ore inventive than in Anthony Lane's criticism of fiction? The prose of a certain spinsterly novelist, he says, is as "sad and tidy as a suitcase on a single bed." Where can we find descriptions more atmospheric than this, of Joan Didion's, from one of the essays in *Slouching Towards Bethlehem*?

> October is the bad month for the wind, the month when breathing is difficult and the hills blaze up spontaneously. There has been no rain since April. Every voice seems a scream. It is the season of suicide and divorce and prickly dread, wherever the wind blows.

If there is nothing about non-fiction that keeps it from scaling the stylistic heights of the best fiction, neither is there anything inherently less imaginative about the argument of an essayist than about the plot of a novelist. All great plots, when it comes down to it, are old: "Girl Meets Boy," "Man Versus Nature," "Man Versus Society," "Coming of Age." We learned them in high school: they are limited, as are the number of Great Ideas. What we need imagination for is less to "create" a plot or an idea than to make the one that imposes itself on us relevant and resonant: to clothe it in living examples, ally it with suggestive characters, render it in tough or tender and textured prose. This is the real creative work, and here essayist and novelist are on equal turf.

Yet even the best lose their nerve. Take Annie Dillard, one of the essay's staunchest defenders. This is the woman who kicked off an essay collection, *Teaching a Stone to Talk*, with a defiant declaration: "This is not a collection of occasional pieces, such as a writer brings out to supplement his real work; instead this is my real work, such as it is." It is a terrific shame that an essayist feels she needs to preface her art with such words, but in our day she does, and it is jarring and good that Dillard did. And yet when she edited the 1988 collection of *Best American Essays*, she found herself bending to the very prejudices she had combated elsewhere. She privileged the pieces that resembled stories; she emphasized a kind of sub-genre, "the narrative essay." The contemporary public was used to plots and details, not thoughts or hypotheses, and that is what Dillard gave them. To do other-



sentially idea-phobic readers, as Richard Rodriguez learned when he tried to write his autobiography as a series of engagements with issues. "'You should write your book in stories—not as a series of essays,'" his editors urged him. "'Let's have more Grandma.'" Let's have more cozy detail from your personal life, in other words, and less potentially troubling thought about matters such as bilingual education. People might actually get upset. Ideas enrage; they pique; they rattle; they move the furniture around in the reader's head. That is why they are so valuable and so dangerous. Stories you can interpret as you like, or not at all. Fiction—and, to a lesser degree, narrative non-fiction—is safer for readers *and* safer for writers. Readers need not question their assumptions and writers need not open themselves to attack.

When is the last time a cultural magazine published an enraged reader's letter about the *fiction* in the last issue? It must happen, but rarely. The only thing to attack, in such a case, is style and skill; you can hardly attack the writer's point or the writer's print persona. Any criticism is bound to be less urgent, less personal, and far less frequent than the criticism leveled at, say, the political columnist—the guy who makes claims, in his own voice, about issues on the reader's mind. Such essayists take far more risks, in this sense, than do fiction writers, and when they're attacked, it is not merely their literary skills but their entire personalities that bear the blow.

It is hard to hide a vice when writing an essay. If you are arrogant, it will emerge; if you are cranky and ungenerous, sentimental or clichéd, it will emerge. The essay, even in the most conservative of times, is a striptease. It is revealing, dangerous, and personal.

Today the essay has the peculiar disadvantage of being shortchanged not only by its detractors but also, and sometimes more damningly, by its defenders. One result is that we have not attained either the excellence or the dignity of which the essay is capable. We have some excellent writers, some of them underrated and working in the dark, but we have no Emerson or Montaigne to show for our time. We have few writers disturbing us with big ideas, and we have become allergic to big ideas. We associate them not with great minds but with weak minds—with televangelists and pop psychologists. It is time we enfranchise our essayists again, so that they may take over the business of making us think—not only about themselves, or their particular areas of expertise but about the fundamental questions, the stuff of human life.

Boldness has been the inheritance of the essayist since Montaigne exulted, in the sixteenth century, that when he knew less about a subject, he tried his judgment on it the more happily. "He that studies wisely learns in a *compendium*, what others labour at in a divided piece and endlesse volume," wrote another Renaissance essayist, Sir Thomas Browne; "we carry with us the wonders wee seeke without us." We do, but to appreciate them we must bring them out and turn them in the light. And we must trust the rays they cast on our neighbors. We are all much smarter than we let [illegible] knowledgeable about our peers [illegible] able to speak to them usefully. Beca[use] for all the salutary talk of diversit[y] our day, the human soul shares a g[reat] deal across cultural and religious [and] racial and gender lines. And if the [essa]yist is wrong, presumptuous, and [of]fensive? What of it? Even a bad i[dea] can prompt a good one. We think [by] refutation, and an idea we consi[der] wrong is more likely than just ab[out] anything else to inspire an idea we c[on]sider right. "It is not instruction," [said] Emerson, "but provocation, that I [can] receive from another soul."

Provocation we must have, and [essa]y tion writers cannot provide enough [of] it. This is why we need bold, brash [and] sayists. Ours today are too cute, [too] modest, and too afraid to presume [that] you have been put in your place l[ong] enough, you begin to act like [it's] place," wrote Randall Jarrell. So it [has] been for our essayists. We have soc[ially] them down for so long that now t[hey] are crouched and timid. It is incumb[ent] upon us to restore their power, to r[aise] them, so that they may raise us.

MAN OF ALL QUALITIES

The enigma of Giangiacomo Feltrinelli

By Barbara Probst Solomon

Discussed in this essay:

Feltrinelli: A Story of Riches, Revolution, and Violent Death, by Carlo Feltrine[lli] Harcourt, 2002. 352 pages. $30.

In 1940, during the Second World War, Giannalisa Feltrinelli persuaded the Italian dictator, Benito Mussolini, to bestow the title marquis of Gargnano on her twelve-year-old son, Giangiacomo. Giannalisa was the richest widow in Italy, and to sweeten the deal she gave Hitler's partne[r a] large donation. Had Il Duce kno[wn] the shape his young putative marqu[is's] career would take, he might have [re]fused no matter what the incenti[ve]. By 1944 the teenage Giangiacomo F[el]trinelli had joined the Italian volunt[eer] Legnano combat unit attached to t[he] American Fifth Army. The follow[ing] year he joined the Italian Commun[ist] Party and, precociously, became o[ne] of its leading figures.

Barbara Probst Solomon is the U.S. cultural correspondent for El País. *Her books include* Smart Hearts in the City *and the essay collection* Horse Trading and Ecstasy.

s son, Carlo Feltrinelli, who di- the publishing house and chain of stores founded by his father, has n a personal biography. *Feltrinel- Story of Riches, Revolution, and Vi- Death* sums up an extraordinary life g a tumultuous historical period. gins with the late nineteenth- ury industrial expansion that gave o the Feltrinelli family monopolies, s into the misery of post–World II Italy—the milieu depicted in films as Roberto ellini's *Open City* and eppe De Santis's *Bitter* —and ends in a series np cuts, allowing read- o arrive at their own pretation of the cause ltrinelli's demise.

Giangiacomo Feltrinelli fell to his death in 1972, n a bomb he had plant- n an electricity tower Segrate, a suburb of an, exploded prema- ly for reasons that are altogether clear. The question, which has a icularly grim current vance, is not whether death was caused by his mies, who might have ved back its time-con- mechanism, or by some er fault in the device, rather what Feltrinelli doing with the bomb in the first ce. His son correctly observes that extreme revolutionary choices Gi- iacomo made in the last years of life didn't quite add up to being rely the reactions of a man con- ced that Italy's return to Fascism s imminent. The photographs in book show him to have been a k-haired, good-looking man, well ssed but not overly so. He sports a shy mustache and dark-rimmed eye- sses that draw attention away from receding hairline. His eyes are his st remarkable feature; the gaze is ense, quizzical.

"Forty-three years old, an interna- nally successful publisher, having a ry filled with internationally known mes, fluent in four languages, with a n to raise"—the letters written to Carlo are enormously moving—"with a twenty-year-old fiancée and a life partner [Carlo's mother, Inge Schoenthal, Feltrinelli's third wife] enjoying a financial position of the first order—and then complete abdication." The photograph of Feltrinelli on his false identity card, issued in 1970, shows a very different man. The mustache has been shaved off. The eyeglass frames are translucent. He looks like a Middle European worker.



Feltrinelli was sui generis. True, his revolutionary phase coincided with radical movements such as the Weathermen and the Black Panthers in the United States, the Red Brigades and the Baader-Meinhof group in Italy and Germany; it was the time when Castro was chic and the French were giving tremendous legitimacy to the political aims of the Third World. Still, it was as if an heir to the Rockefeller fortune, already in his forties, who had created a publishing house with the literary distinction of Knopf or Farrar, Straus, suddenly went on the lam with the most extreme radicals. Giangiacomo Feltrinelli had orchestrated the smuggling of Boris Pasternak's *Doctor Zhivago* out of the Soviet Union, thus bringing it to the attention of the world; he rescued from unpublished oblivion the great Italian classic *The Leopard*, by the duke of Palma, Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa; he published Saul Bellow, Isak Dinesen, E. M. Forster, Borges—hardly the sort of career a publisher in any country would up and abandon.

Carlo Feltrinelli was eleven when his father was killed, and the son's memories of Giangiacomo, despite his research, are at times irritatingly vague. It would be useful, for our understanding of Feltrinelli, to know more about his role in managing the family empire. Did others do the managing? Did Feltrinelli attend shareholders' meetings? Carlo leaves us with many unanswered questions about Giangiacomo's return to radicalism, though he does point out the peculiarly personal aspects of his father's revolutionary zeal.

The book starts with an afternoon near the family vacation lodge in Austria. Carlo is five. He, his father, and the local forest ranger are watching over a herd of deer that have come down from a nearby hill to the gully to eat the oats, hay, and turnips scattered there for them. Years later the ranger tells Carlo: "Your father had a real feeling for the mountains, just like Hemingway."

Giangiacomo's childhood was a hell that had little to do with Hemingway. His mother comes across as a sort of Lady Macbeth, enthralled with aristo hunting parties and plots to restore the monarchy. The beautiful banker's daughter from Lake Como must have looked a tad loony to her children; she wore a monocle because her right eye had been shot out by an angry interloper during a ritzy game shoot, and she liked to keep her hunting rifle by her side. Giannalisa Feltrinelli continuously fought with Giangiacomo and his sister over their father's inheritance. She disciplined her rebellious son by locking him up for days at a time in the cellar of the Argentario,

istration by Riccardo Vecchio

ranean, forcing him to subsist on a diet of bread and water.

The formative event in Feltrinelli's adolescence was his flight (interestingly, he took a pistol with him) from the Argentario during the war. The estate was on the scenic road to Porto Santo Stefano, the key base for the German supply lines after the Allied landings at Anzio. The local butcher helped him join the rebels stationed on a nearby hilltop. Meanwhile, his mother, stepfather, and sisters fled the battles taking place virtually in their back yard, and went to Rome. The family gardener knew where Giangiacomo was hidden. He persuaded him to return by promising the boy that he could live with him in the servant's quarters near the citrus orchard. Feltrinelli had no classmates or friends his own age. He and his sister were educated by tutors; his time with the gardener near the citrus orchard was probably as close as he got to paradise. The escape to the Maquis in the mountains—with its mix of love, camaraderie, a just cause, and a pistol—would be obsessively repeated throughout Feltrinelli's life.

In the combination of chaos and hope that was Europe in the immediate aftermath of the war, children grew up quickly, and the Resistance was equated with morality. In 1948, I was a teenage American in Paris. I'd fallen in love with a Spanish student at the Sorbonne and impulsively moved in with him. Paco Benet was the same age as Feltrinelli, and the age you were during the war and when it ended would forever define your notion of friendship, loyalty, and the way you looked at the world. I met Paco when he enlisted my friend Barbara Mailer and myself to act as decoys in an effort to spring some of his friends who were moldering in a Francoist prison near Madrid. Now it seems rather odd that I was racing around the mountains trying to help aging anarchists dying in Paris and Madrid instead of going to college, but at the time it seemed normal. Being Jewish, I had cousins my age in Paris and Amsterdam who had lost most of their family.

Obviously there were huge differences between the Spanish and the Italian experiences: Franco lasted forever, dying only in 1974; the Spaniards had a bad experience with the Communists during the Spanish Civil War and were more savvy about Stalinism (the motto of the underground magazine Paco and his friends edited was "Neither Franco nor Stalin"). And, unlike Feltrinelli, they had little money. But emotionally, Paco and Feltrinelli were part of the same generation. They were children during the war, and the war was the only reality they had known. They worshiped the Resistance as a gang of heroes, and scrambled to join it just as the war was ending.

The barrier in Italy and Spain between the upper class and the workers (the middle class being thin) was ferocious. Kids like Paco and Feltrinelli were suddenly thrown, albeit of their own choice, into a Resistance and post-Resistance with trade unionists whom they admired but with whom they had no common language. On one occasion, Paco had been instructed to rescue an anarchist trade-union leader as well as his student friends. The man had escaped from prison and was being hidden in one of the makeshift caves used as slum dwellings in the mountains outside Madrid. He refused to join us. We seemed creatures from another planet. It was beyond his imagination that Paco had figured out a safe plan of getting him to France. Instead, he joined a group of anarchist workers who had dug their way out of prison, was immediately caught, and died back in prison. The handful of upper-class kids didn't have more outside help at that time; they just had better means of dissembling. And their place in the world to come, like that of Feltrinelli, would be very different from the one awaiting trade unionists.

When the editors of the French intellectual magazine *Esprit* would invite Paco and his friends for their Sunday afternoon get-togethers, their eyes would mist and they would sigh, *Ah, les jeunes espagnols!* I think the French didn't quite realize that *les jeunes espagnols*, whom they found remarkably intelligent and politi
ly informed, however fatherless
poor the Spanish Civil War had
them, were a young superelite,
workers. The only person I k
from that time who success
crossed the class divide was Pa
best friend, Pepe Martinez. He st
ed out unloading vegetables i
French market and became the p
lisher of the legendary dissid
Spanish publishing house, Ru
Ibérico, based in Paris.

Pepe remarked, apropos of a yo
anarchist who had placed a bomb
a park bench in the Retiro in Ma
where Franco's top man would r
his morning newspaper but who t
immediately removed it becaus
occurred to him that someone mi
get hurt: "We dream of being an
chists in the morning, but in rea
we are socialists in the afternoo
Giangiacomo Feltrinelli was a Co
munist in the morning and an inc
trialist in the afternoon.

When in 1945 Feltrin
joined the Italian Co
munist Party (the PCI
33 percent of the population,
the largest party in Western Euro
the Italian people were starving
wasn't until 1948, when Alcide
Gasperi's Christian Democrats (w
the help of the Marshall Plan)
dertook to build modern Italy, t
the absolute economic misery
picted in post–World War II n
realist Italian films such as *The Bi
cle Thief* began to recede.

But Feltrinelli's quest for just
and morality was also spiked w
rage toward his mother. After
war ended, he leaked information
the party newspaper, *L'Unità*, ab
a secret meeting on the eve of
Constituent Assembly. It took pl
in Giannalisa's home, where a *co
de théâtre* aimed at restoring the It
ian monarchy was being hatch
The report, presumably written
Giangiacomo, refers to the meeti
place as being in "the home of big
dustrial sharks, the Feltrinellis."

With each new phase, Feltrin
acquired a new wife. In his PCI pe
od he married Bianca Dalle Noga
a young militant from the more
treme Socialist Party of Proletari

In 1948, in his most spectacu-
ture of filial defiance, he creat-
ummer camp for young party
ers on the grounds of the Fel-
li villa on Lake Garda, the
anct family emblem. I have a
l image of the grounds of what
r friend of Carlo's described as
d of Bavarian mausoleum,"
n with debris, looking like
lstock when the festival was
Significantly, the estate was al-
ssolini's last residence; he lived
in isolation, protected by crack
an troops, until he fled during
al days of the war. In a single
stroke Feltrinelli managed to
out at Mom, Mussolini, the
ch, and the local Fascists who
trying to stage a comeback.
ips on a deeper level, he had
orarily revived his utopia in the
orchard.

trinelli bankrolled many of the
biggest expenses, which put
on an almost equal footing
Palmiro Togliatti, the party
er, an unusual position for a
g man. But Feltrinelli's support
ne Communists began to waver,
ne used his fortune to confront
comrades with the brutal con-
ons of their ideology. In the
fifties he met a new generation
olish and Hungarian intellectu-
ull of fresh ideas, who were re-
ng against Soviet domination
eir countries. Then, in 1956,
Soviets smashed the Hungarian
sing. Feltrinelli's final move
y from the PCI and Togliatti in-
ed a moral act fueled by aggres-
. In a Machiavelli-cum-James
d maneuver, he dealt his friend
liatti and the party a savage
w heard round the world. He
the manuscript of *Doctor Zhiva-*
smuggled out of the Soviet
on. It helped that he loved dan-
us adventures, that he had huge
unts of cash at his disposal, and
t the Communists he was betray-
had trusted him, allowing him
rrange the initial contacts with
ternak in the Soviet Union. Fel-
elli was immediately convinced
t the book was a masterpiece. He
l engineered a complicated, deli-
e operation, devising a system for
ling the letters he exchanged
with Pasternak in a way that would lessen the dangers to Pasternak and those close to him. His dead father and uncles would have said he was a true Feltrinelli: he had rushed the publication of the book and thus owned world rights. In November 1957 he published *Doctor Zhivago*, in all of its explicitly anti-Marxist glory, and a year later Boris Pasternak was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature.

Feltrinelli's real quarrel with the Communists came from his keen understanding of modern industry, and he comes across best in his son's memoir when he behaves like an industrialist. Several weeks after the Soviets put down the Hungarian uprising, the Italian historian Giuliano Procacci happened to be in the Feltrinelli library: "In the reading room was Giangiacomo Feltrinelli, absorbed in the pages of *Das Kapital*. You could see from his face that he had been up all night, 'Nothing makes sense here,' he said to me, 'we're in the shit right up to our necks.'" This was the impatient, brilliant young industrialist talking. He had organized his publishing house to be a modern firm. Books had to come out on time. His editor Valerio Riva said: "Feltrinelli taught us to talk with Italian authors on an arithmetical basis: print runs; industrial, general, and advertising costs; list prices; multiplication, subtraction, and addition. If the figures added up, the book could be done, otherwise forget it."

Feltrinelli's chain of independent bookstores, still in operation today, concentrated on selling books of high literary caliber, but the operational mode more resembled our mass bookseller chains like Barnes & Noble and Borders. He was attracted early on to the use of paperbacks for serious books, and he offered other booksellers financial backing for all his titles in order to get prime shelf space.

Ironically, his extraordinarily acute sense of marketing books reflected the way the Feltrinellis had always done business: through vertical monopolies. During the First World War, the Società Forestale Feltrinelli owned the forests, the means of processing the raw lumber, and the delivery. The

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firm's agencies in the sprawling Austro-Hungarian Empire and Italy spread into East Africa, setting up depots, sawmills, and warehouses. Due to the Austrian connection, the company supplied half the world's consumption of wood.

By the mid-1960s, Giangiacomo had created a vertical monopoly of his own, with a publishing house, a chain of stores, and his own distribution system. In the United States this would have been considered a violation of the Sherman Antitrust Act and would have raised the same knotty issues as the case against Microsoft: when are vertical monopolies bad, and when do they encourage innovation?

Feltrinelli's personal lifestyle was flashy: sports cars, yachts, great estates, an ever changing succession of wives (four, at the time he was killed); his bookstores were on the cutting edge in the early sixties, when literary books *were* the cutting edge. He introduced self-service shopping, planned meet-the-author events (long before they were fashionable in Europe), and enticed new customers with every gimmick he could dream up: free roasted chestnuts, pinball machines, and wicker baskets filled with mod trinkets, including a Marilyn Monroe doll from Carnaby Street in London.

His industrialist's enthusiasm, however, would eventually give way to his Communist sympathies, which had begun to reassert themselves in a form even more radical than before. To his credit, this renewed fervor did not stop Feltrinelli from taking rather critical notes during his 1965 visits with Fidel Castro, whose autobiography he was arranging to publish: "The screw has been tightened in the cultural field. . . . For example, the hold of the Writers' Union on publishing houses. Writers' unions should never have control over publishing houses. . . . The topic of conversation [with Castro]: the homosexual problem. . . . Predictably, the target of his railings was extended from pederasts to cover intellectuals: architects, writers . . . theater folk. . . . Ay! ay! ay! I spy dangerous clouds [illegible]"

Feltrinelli knew that the best Cuban writers and poets were either in prison or in exile, and writers whom he had admired and published, such as Juan Goytisolo and Mario Vargas Llosa, who initially supported Castro, now saw the Cuban leader as a dictator. Feltrinelli wasn't naive: he had ample opportunity to see what was wrong, but, like many intellectuals who end up supporting extremist movements, he was myopic concerning the victims of the cause he championed, gazing only upon the faces of martyrs killed by men whose ideas he hated. "Che" was the supreme martyr. Feltrinelli was arrested when he went to Bolivia to obtain the release of the French journalist Régis Debray (his author), who had been imprisoned for interviewing Che. He returned to Milan imbued with the dubious idea of applying guerrilla tactics to help the Italian working class. By this time he had abruptly fired (as too old-fashioned) his close friend and literary director, Giorgio Bassani, the author of *The Garden of the Finzi-Continis* and the person who'd brought *The Leopard* to his attention: Feltrinelli no longer had or wanted the support of his moderate friends.

By 1969 his revolutionary actions were light-years beyond the 1968 Paris student uprising. He saw poverty-stricken Sardinia as "the Cuba of the Mediterranean" and tried to start a peasants' guerrilla-warfare movement there. Italy was in right-wing and left-wing chaos, trapped in a maze of plots, bombings, and counterplots. Feltrinelli organized a guerrilla group, GAP (Potere Operaio), to further the workers' cause. When a police officer was killed, either accidentally or deliberately, in a protest strike, the government had its chance to go after Feltrinelli. He was arrested, and his passport was revoked. After that he went into hiding.

Feltrinelli was a mass of conflicts. On the one hand, he admired his father: he named his son, Carlo Fitzgerald Feltrinelli, after two millionaires, his father and President John F. Kennedy. He was no doubt impressed with how Kennedy used his father's money to become [illegible] most powerful political leader in [illegible] world. On the other hand, he [illegible] in the end to divest himself of hi[illegible] sets, instructing his loyal staff to [illegible] the publishing house into a co[illegible] tive. The year before he died he [illegible] able to send his son only a seashe[illegible] a birthday present:

> Dear Carlino, happy birthday! [illegible] have no great present for you: o[illegible] seashell. . . . [Y]ou will begin to u[illegible] stand that, outside the tranquili[illegible] your home, of Villadeati, and of C[illegible] hot, a ruthless life-or-death strug[illegible] going on, a battle for justice and [illegible] dom against the terrorism of the [illegible] cists and the bosses, against injus[illegible] poverty, and hunger. And the gre[illegible] wish I can make you, Carlino, is [illegible] by the time you grow up, all t[illegible] struggles and all this suffering w[illegible] only a distant memory.

Emotionally, Feltrinelli had pl[illegible] to disturb him. His father and u[illegible] had a self-destructive bent. U[illegible] Pietro committed suicide at twe[illegible] eight, ostensibly over a love affair [illegible] a Romanian dancer. Uncle Bepi c[illegible] to a semi-suicidal end when attac[illegible] by his pet bear. Mussolini had [illegible] pointed Feltrinelli's father, a [illegible] workaholic, chairman of the Fa[illegible] Lumber Industry Federation. In [illegible] mid-thirties, Carlo was implicate[illegible] a major financial scandal—his sec[illegible] one—involving huge assets illeg[illegible] stashed in Switzerland. He either c[illegible] mitted suicide, was murdered, or h[illegible] fatal heart attack.

The family owned huge hy[illegible] electric plants in Austria, as we[illegible] the Milan-based Edison electr[illegible] plant, providing the major par[illegible] electricity for both Italy and A[illegible] tria, with affiliates in Latin Am[illegible] ca. When he died, Feltrinelli [illegible] trying to place a bomb in the e[illegible] trical tower outside of Milan in [illegible] der to cause a blackout just be[illegible] the Italian general electi[illegible] Whether or not the Feltrinel[illegible] owned the electricity flow[illegible] through that particular towe[illegible] would seem, on a subterranean [illegible] el, that he wanted the lights t[illegible] out on the Feltrinelli fortune. [illegible] fell to his death when the b[illegible] went off. Eight thousand wor[illegible] and students attended his funera[illegible]

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LETTERS

Continued from page 6

ingested 592 boxes of papers at the Billy Graham Center [illegible] entirely unrestricted papers that, perhaps due to their banality, have "gone largely unexamined."

Although his damning anecdotes are droll (Suharto was a member!), Sharlet doesn't show how this sinister organization is undermining our rights, hijacking our foreign policy, or even eroding the wall between church and state. Indeed, it appears that the Family's numerous "cells" produce just one tangible outcome. While America sleeps, these small groups of earnest young men and their scripture-quoting mentors are carefully plotting a potentially devastating series of, that's right, prayer breakfasts. At a time when even the loopiest conspiracy theory gets earnest treatment in the media, it is a relief to see that *Harper's Magazine* still has a sense of humor.

Paul Constance
Falls Church, Va.

Don't Worry, Be Happy

As a planetary scientist I enjoyed reading Tom Bissell's report "A Comet's Tale" [February], with its profiles of Steve Ostro and Don Yeomans. I discovered, however, a few factual lapses, minor points, really, but the kind of errors that always annoy specialists:

Coesite and stishovite were discovered in the Barringer Meteor Crater and the Ries Crater, in Germany, more than a decade before the Alvarez group advanced the theory about the K-T extinction.

Recent work by Phil Bland (of Imperial College, London) has provided evidence that the large craters in Argentina are deflation basins generated by the wind, not the result of "a 1,000-megaton event," as Bissell claims.

Michael Zolensky
NASA Johnson Space Center
Houston, Tex.

I find Tom Bissell's comet-inspired defeatism surprising. I [illegible] do not destroy ourselves before [illegible] next Big One, technology c[illegible] save us. Advances in space fl[illegible] might allow us to colonize do[illegible] of far-flung planets. Advance[illegible] laser technology might allow [illegible] set up some kind of "Strategic [illegible] tense Initiative" for the planet. [illegible] vances in civil and ecological e[illegible] neering might allow us to b[illegible] underground or bubble-encl[illegible] environments. While we wai[illegible] the Big One, we are likely to e[illegible] rience a variety of smaller hits. [illegible] haps these will serve to focus [illegible] attention.

Paul Prescod
Vancouver, B.C., Canada

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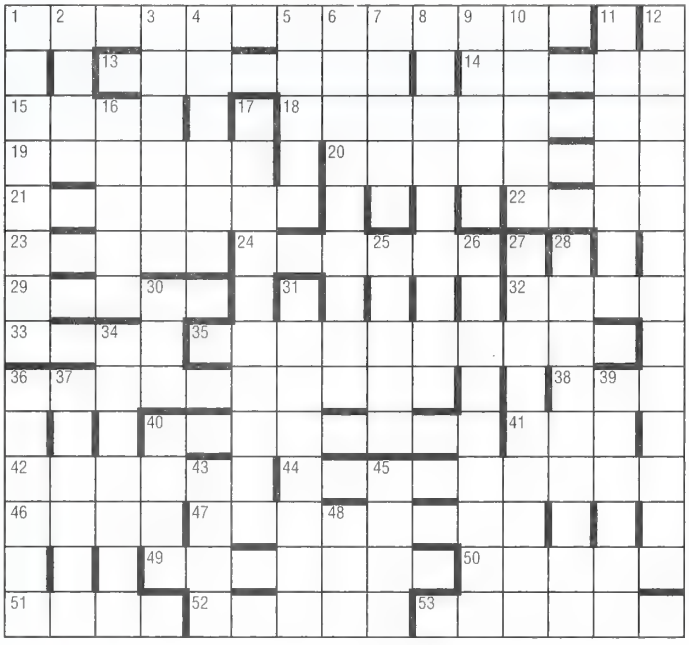
1,2 Dow Jones (N.Y.C.); **3** U.S. Bu[illegible] of Labor Statistics; **4** The College E[illegible] (N.Y.C.); **5** Dr. Cary Gross, Yale [illegible] versity (New Haven, Conn.); **6** [illegible] Mark J. McCabe, Georgia Institu[illegible] Technology (Atlanta); **7,8** *Harper'*[illegible] search; **9** CBS News (N.Y.C.) [illegible] White House transcript, 1/31/03 [illegible] *Harper's* research/Defense Supply [illegible] ter (Philadelphia); **12** Prof. Darwi[illegible] Hall, California State University, [illegible] Beach; **13** Showa Shell Sekiyu [illegible] (Tokyo); **14** Volkswagen (Wolfsb[illegible] Germany); **15** International Labor [illegible] ganization (Washington); **16** Zogby [illegible] ternational (Utica, N.Y.); **17** Embas[illegible] the Republic of Indonesia (Wash[illegible] ton); **18** Prof. Spencer Wells, Ox[illegible] University (Oxford, U.K.); **19** Dr. [illegible] Cunningham, Trinity College (Dub[illegible] **20** Wildlife Conservation Soc[illegible] (Bronx, N.Y.); **21** U.S. Central Int[illegible] gence Agency; **22–24** Brian E. Sh[illegible] Ecological Perspectives (Portla[illegible] Oreg.); **25** Environmental Work[illegible] Group (Washington); **26** Uran[illegible] Medical Research Centre (Toron[illegible] **27,28** Ohio Citizen Action (Cle[illegible] land); **29** Institute for Biological En[illegible] Alternatives (Rockville, Md.); **30** U[illegible] Census Bureau; **31,32** *Family Ci*[illegible] (N.Y.C.); **33** Embassy of Japan (W[illegible] ington); **34** U.K. Department for Ed[illegible] tion and Skills (London); **35** U.K. M[illegible] istry of Defence (London); **36** U[illegible] Department of Defense; **37** Veris[illegible] (Newtown, Pa.)/American Medical [illegible] sociation (Chicago); **38** Ars Electro[illegible] Center (Linz, Austria); **39,40** Hans-[illegible] Ericsson (Piteå, Sweden).

Daffinitions

By Richard E. Maltby Jr.
(with acknowledgments to the Washington Post*)*

The seven italicized across clues are definitions given by the readers of the *Washington Post* to common words (which are to be entered in the diagram). The seven italicized down clues are definitions of words created when common words are altered by the addition, deletion, or change of a single letter. The newly created words are the down entries.

Clue answers include four proper names. One of the defined words is a proper name. As always, mental repunctuation of a clue is the key to its solution. The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 75.



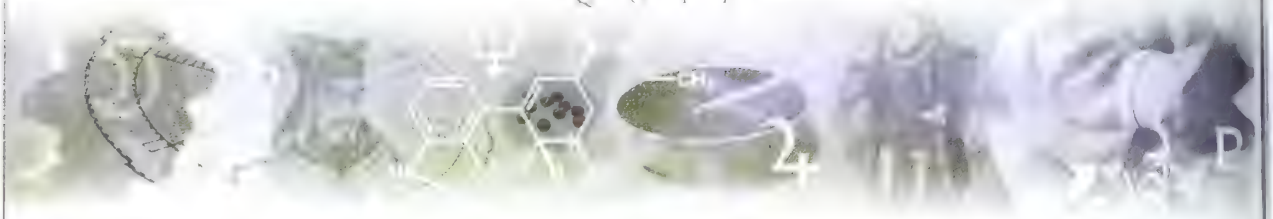
ACROSS

1. *Appalled at the weight you've gained* (13)
13. Bipolar disorder gets you in heat early (7)
14. Suave, giving a bit of the eye more than once (5)
15. For unsold stocks, frantic withdrawals from banks (4)
18. "Pounds" in Britain converted to read "stone" (9)
19. Light heavyweight makes onside foul (6)
20. *To give up all hope of ever having a flat stomach* (8)
21. *A Jamaican proctologist* (7)
22. Patriotic contribution of the Police, e.g. (4)
23. *The Good Earth* sounds like it's not so much (5)
24. *One who is hacked on* (6)
29. Boots getting extra character as the front tilts (5)
32. Greatly appreciating a kind of dancing? (2-2)
33. G.I.'s here with a thousand and one exercises (4)
35. *Emergency vehicle that picks you up after you are run over by a steamroller* (10)
36. Idolatry is evil, for it means being one (10)
38. The end of civilization—it could be positive! (3)
40. Save rock star before gym, and make a killing (8)
41. Retractable blade on a pole, for Indian writer (3)
42. Again turn on a southerner, overly backward (6)
44. Broadway musical dances—they're in *Cats*! (9)
46. Temper wanting the head of Harold Bloom (4)
47. Something produced from anoretic? (8)
49. Piece of furniture gets hit (7)
50. Wipes us out, gets hallucinations (5)
51. Make an impression on books returned in sack (4)
52. *To walk with a lisp* (5)
53. *A person who uses a lot of Yiddishisms* (6)

DOWN

1. *Any misrepresentation about yourself for the purpose of obtaining sex* (8)
2. Puff that gets you doubled up (4)
3. Soundly-made sports bags for singers (6)
4. Housecleaners in second-class accommodations (6)
5. Wrongly take in bird (5)
6. *Vandalism spray-painted very high* (9)
7. Excuse from unplanned delivery, one second out (5)
8. Characteristic of a private idyll involving Eros (9)
9. Bulb one left on entering place from the floor (5)
10. Turn out: about six, etc.—dismal (5)
11. Out-of-breath worker overcome by sound of bell (7)
12. *A degenerate disease* (13)
16. Sportswear worked up by Southeast family? (5)
17. *To take coffee intravenously* (10)
25. Soft instrument, loud instrument (5)
26. All energy, *Extreme* kid covers skateboard's rear (9)
27. *One who is both stupid and an asshole* (9)
28. Party member makes our spies lean, true covers (9)
30. Tail end doesn't exist for Vietnamese people (3)
31. *The gulf between wit and one who doesn't get it* (8)
34. *All talk and no action* (7)
36. A short run is, first to last, what a paper does (6)
37. Exaggerate being late in speaking (6)
39. Rock group drawn from too literally (6)
40. Rot, with unpleasant smell shut up (4)
43. Don't get me started on the point of speech! (4)
45. Yearning for Army service but short of height (4)
48. Steal a magazine you haven't finished (3)

Contest Rules: Send completed diagram with name and address to "Daffinitions," *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Entries must be received by May 11. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive one-year subscriptions to *Harper's Magazine*. Winners' names will be printed in the July issue. Winners of the March puzzle, "Samurai LP's and Pumas' Lairs," are M. A. Hilterhaus, Glen Ridge, New Jersey; Aurelie Jacques, Claremont, New Hampshire; and Dale O. Mobley, Whitsett, North Carolina.



I SPY

1. What polymath courtier to Queen Elizabeth I nicknamed "Eyes" signed his notes to her "007"?

2. What was unique about the "Panopticon" prison surveillance system designed by philosopher Jeremy Bentham in 1787?

3. What are the earliest recorded man-made conveyances for aerial reconnaissance, according to Asian folklore?

4. What ancient, widely influental Chinese treatise attributed to General Sun-Tzu cites "foreknowledge" as that which "enables the wise sovereign and the good general to strike and conquer"?

5. Presented with compromising film by the KGB in the 1960s, the president of what U.S. ally asked for copies, declaring, "My people are going to be so proud of me"?

6. Which U.S. president is known to have tapped the phone of his running mate?

7. What country's international intelligence agency performed a test in which seven men were dosed with LSD for 77 consecutive days?

8. Did the California psychic hired by the CIA to find a downed spy plane in Zaire in 1978 succeed?

9. What organization was Ronald Reagan president of while acting as FBI Confidential Informer T-10?

10. Cigarettes laced with what substance were used by U.S. intelligence in 1943 to get information out of New York gangster August Del Gracio?

11. What U.S. manufacturing giant was allowed to search the long-distance phone records of 850,000 Cincinnati homes in a failed attempt to find the source of leaked business secrets?

12. What prolific nineteenth-century American author is credited with writing the first spy novel?

13. Before inventing James Bond, writer Ian Fleming used fake astrological charts to trick what top Nazi into being captured?

14. What British author wrote, "For decades to come the spy world will continue to be the collective couch where the subconscious of each nation is confessed"?

Contest Rules: Send numbered answers with name and address to "Quiz," Harper's Magazine, 666 Broadway, New York, NY 10012. If you already subscribe to Harper's, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Entries must be received by May 14. The sender of the first correct set of answers opened at random will receive a one-year subscription to Harper's Magazine. The winner's name will be printed in the July issue. The answers to last month's quiz, "Pity the Fool," ap

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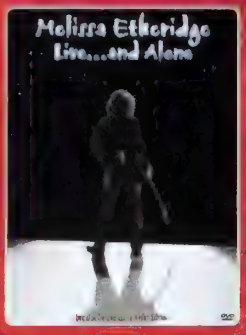
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LETTERS

Have Hyphen, Will Trouble

Jonathan Schell ["No More unto the Breach: Part II, the Unconquerable World," April] esteems the myth of Woodrow Wilson too highly. Schell must be in possession of a time machine, with one exit being in Wilson's very consciousness, if he can write such sentences as "Wilson hated the great empires of his time," and "He dreamed that the world would be made safe for democracy," and, perhaps the most hollow statement in the entire essay, "He wanted a world of popular self-determination." Was it not Wilson who intervened in Latin America (the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Mexico, Cuba, Panama, Nicaragua) more times than any of our other presidents? To protect U.S. interests in Haiti, he simply dissolved the Haitian legislature and approved a new constitution more to his liking, and less democratic. Did Wilson not send aid to the "Whites" in Russia? This fact alone helped fuel Soviet Cold War paranoia. He worked hard to exclude Russia from World War I peace negotiations and helped oust Communist leader Bela Kun in Hungary. It was at Versailles that a young Ho Chi Minh desperately appealed to Wilson for Vietnam's self-dete mination, but Wilson refused to l ten and ignored the continu French rule in Indochina. He wa candid racist, personally vetoing racial-equality clause in t Covenant of the League of Natio At home he solidified the Espiona Act, giving himself broader pow of censorship. He is quoted as havi said, "Any man who carries a h phen about with him carries a dagg that he is ready to plunge into t vitals of this Republic." Sch should examine Wilson's actio not the lofty rhetoric of his emp speeches.

Kaveh Soroush
Baltimore

In his argument for internatio cooperation as the means to a ju and peaceful world, Jonathan Sch overlooks the role of transnatio corporations, which now exert mo influence on governments, in bo democratic and autocratic stat than do citizens. The power of t corporations —and of their glob bureaucracies, such as the Wor Trade Organization, the Wor Bank, and the International Mon tary Fund—has grown to supers that of all other political or econo ic entities. The global structure th they are building—unfettered worl wide private enterprise—is driven competition, not cooperation. It f ters and even extols greed, not equitable distribution of wealth, a

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ystem that in every respect is
ntithesis of the one that Schell
prefer. I fervently hope that a
in which cooperation sup-
s competition, such as Schell
ages, can be created, but giving
r to the people" can never be
ved without first taking it away
he big-business barons.

n
va

athan Schell counterposes two
of government: "liberal democ-
and "totalitarianism," a Cold War
tive used to describe Communist-
ations such as Cuba or the Sovi-
nion. The United States, howev-
calls "a republic," dropping the
l-democracy designation. Schell
d admit that the United States is
dy an empire, and, further, that
isdeeds are the choice of CEOs
giant corporations, not of unat-
d "leaders." It is not clear which
ns the liberal-democracy label
d fit, but surely not Spain, Italy,
Britain, since they ignored the
majorities of their citizens who
sed the war of aggression on Iraq.

ne Spake
Valley, Calif.

especially appreciated that
than Schell criticized the strategy
sing force as a solution to force.
ing the Korean War, I was with
1st Marine Division in North Ko-
t the Chosin Reservoir, where we
surrounded by Chinese troops,
General MacArthur had assured
ould not enter the war.
wonder how a nation whose federal
ernment is not democratic can
nage to accomplish "the spread of
nocracy." If the United States were
mocracy, George Bush would not
resident, we would not be fighting
raq, and most of the world would
hate us. Rather than spreading
nocracy around the world, let us re-
things at home.

rles H. Anderson
ta Rosa, Calif.

e Guns of March

n Question 10 of his April essay, "Cause for Dissent," Lewis H. Lapham describes President Bush's characterization of the public protest to the war as "the assembling of an ad agency's hired focus group, the expression of nonserious and uninformed opinion and certainly not one that he would allow to affect his judgment, alter his course of action, or in any way violate the temple of his own enlightenment." After listening to a recent example of this attitude in a speech by Bush, I revisited *The Guns of August*, Barbara Tuchman's account of the run-up to World War I. A passage early on in the book describes events of 1908:

> The year closed with the most explosive faux pas of the Kaiser's career, an interview given to the *Daily Telegraph* expressing his ideas of the day on who should fight whom, which this time unnerved not only his neighbors but his countrymen. Public disapproval was so outspoken that the Kaiser took to his bed, was ill for three weeks, and remained comparatively reticent for some time thereafter.

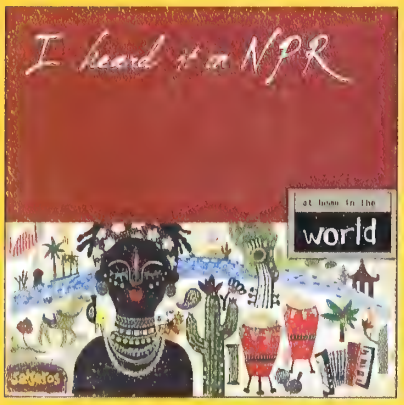
The contrast is disheartening. A hereditary dictator of a hundred years ago could hear the messages of protest so clearly that they disabled him, whereas our president, who depends on the electorate to keep him in office, simply shrugs off the protests and continues unfazed in pursuit of his ill-defined mission.

Robert P. Bolles
St. Joseph, Mich.

Lewis H. Lapham writes for those willing to expand the discourse beyond the sermons of Donald Rumsfeld and Ari Fleischer. The word "democracy" oozes from the American media millions of times a day. But because it always comes after "defend our" or "protect our," it remains a concept used mainly by those in power to conceal the motives of a jittery government and imprison its citizens. Democracy is thus never actualized at home and becomes more of an illusion each time a bomb is dropped in its name on another sovereign state.

Lewis Akenji
Budapest, Hungary

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A Peace Process Without End

criticism will be used by people who, owing to anti-Zionist prejudices, or just a weakness for hyperbole, will deny that Israel is a democracy at all. Daniel Lazare's review of my book *The Tragedy of Zionism* ["Estranged Brothers," April] qualifies. He writes: "Bernard Avishai argues that the Israeli state has betrayed Jewish aspirations rather than fulfilled them, promoting democracy for one ethnic group at the expense of another."

I know what I wrote, and what, even in this postmodern age, he might have been expected to read:

That Zionism was a good revolution, which long ago ran its course, creating a modern Hebrew society to supersede what had been a failing Halachic culture in Eastern Europe;

That in order to bring off this cultural revolution and assimilate other Diaspora Jews into it, Zionists created collectivist settler institutions in Mandate Palestine—e.g., Zionist land funds and kibbutzim, the Histadrut (a Hebrew-only labor union), a quasi-official role for the Rabbinate—which were morally defensible in the 1930's and '40's, when Jewish immigration was urgent;

That revolutionary Zionist institutions and principles were provisionally absorbed into the democratic state of Israel after 1948 (e.g., the Law of Return), when the conflict with the Palestinians sharpened Israeli defensiveness;

That these institutions, embedded in the state apparatus, educated generations of Israelis in privilege, which confounded the full development of democratic norms, especially the rights of minorities;

That activist Zionist ideology, which had nevertheless begun to weaken in the early 1960s, unexpectedly got new life after the 1967 War, when West Bank settlers' movements claimed merely to be fulfilling existing Zionist visions and exploiting existing Zionist institutions;

That the force and prestige of West Bank settlement now severely threaten Israeli democracy, such that Israelis must see past revolutionary Zi rhetoric to choose a mainly Jewis mocratic state over a mainly d cratic Jewish one.

Nuance matters. Nowhere do I gest that Israel has "betrayed" Je values, or that Zionism and dem cy are inherently "antagonisti though today they represent dis choices. How else to freely assimila Israeli citizens—not only Arabs also, for example, 300,000 Russia migrants who have no real Jewish itage? Nowhere do I suggest that might be a "minority" in such a s since my point is that Hebrew ture—including Jewish language, tivals, symbols—would have a na hegemony in Israel and that tes who is a Jew should disappear. Wha should avoid is legal privileges for as individuals, not the privilege o Jewish nation to have a state in w Hebrew culture predominates.

All of this underlines the main p of my book, which does not ne Manichean plot to be heartbrea Most people bring tragedy on th selves not by doing the wrong thing

Witnessing America



FACE TO FACE WITH THE BOMB
Nuclear Reality after the Cold War
PAUL SHAMBROOM
with an introduction by Richard Rhodes

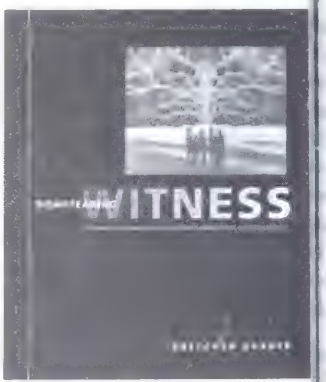
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GRETCHEN GARNER

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ing the right thing too long. The
enge for Israeli democrats is to
e revolutionary Zionist distrac-
, not to call historic Zionist goals
question. After the Iraq war, Is-
s and Americans should welcome
national efforts to restart a peace
ess, so that Israelis can get on with
original Zionist hope of a modern
sh people competing freely in the
d. What is a democracy if not a
e process without end?

ard Avishai
salem, Israel

azare argues that German-Jewish
ory was not a complete failure be-
e of Karl Marx, whose anti-Semit-
iews are well known. He might
e mentioned the writers Leopold
az, Martin Buber, or Gershom
olem. Although German-Jewish
ure remains a significant part of
ish civilization, a history of Jewish-
man assimilationist politics stands
othing but a tragic proof that such
itics failed in modern Europe.

rat Grinberg
icago

Daniel Lazare reviews two recent
oks on modern Jewish history yet
s not critique either of them. In-
ad, he melds them together as if
thesis of one justifies that of the
er, and he conveniently ignores
e interwar years, the Holocaust,
d the first twenty years of Israel's
istence. Lazare fails to consider
w the Holocaust might have de-
oyed the faith of at least two gen-
ations of secular Jews in the Euro-
an-International system. He then
ats Israel as a religious hegemony.
e describes the Law of Return as
izarre," without explaining that it
based on whether one would have
en considered Jewish in Nazi Ger-
any. Lazare is correct to point out
at the "Diaspora as prelude to cat-
trophe" school of thought unfairly
ews "German-Jewish history back-
ard through the prism of 1933–45,"
t he is no less unfair, as he views
raeli-Jewish history backward
rough the prism of 1967.

son R. Cherniak
alifax, N.S., Canada

Say What?

Brendan I. Koerner bungles one fact about the acoustic characteristics of human speech in his annotation ["Speak of the Devil," April]. He misstates that "sound waves produced by human speech typically vibrate at frequencies ranging upwards of 8,000 hertz," noting that the purported Bin Laden sample "peters out well below the 4,000 Hz mark." Although the sample in question may well have been low-pass filtered via telephone, most of the acoustically interesting and auditorily important parts of a speech signal occur well below 8,000 Hz.

These low frequencies are acoustically interesting, because the fundamental frequency of a typical male voice is approximately 125 Hz (a typical female's is about 250 Hz). Human vocal folds produce a complex source signal, meaning that the fundamental frequency is accompanied by many harmonics (i.e., integer multiple frequencies—250 Hz, 375 Hz, 500 Hz). Different configurations of the vocal tract filter this source signal in a variety of complex ways, which results in different resonant frequencies for different speech sounds. Because of the size and shape of human vocal tracts, vowels are typically well below 8,000 Hz. In fact, a high-quality spectrogram displaying information only below 4,000 Hz would give trained phoneticians plenty to work with, assuming they wanted to do fairly standard phonetics. This is not meant, however, to argue against Koerner's overall claims about the reliability of NSA and IDIAP voice matching or the Bush Administration's zeal regarding the Bin Laden speech sample.

Noah Silbert
Bloomington, Ind.

Brendan I. Koerner responds:

Noah Silbert is correct in stating that the most significant sonic information occurs at the lowest vocal frequencies. It is incorrect, however, to suggest that the low-pass filtering

Continued on page 86

John Banville's "hypnotic novel"
New York Times Book Review

SHROUD

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ROA067022

NOTEBOOK

The demonstration effect

By Lewis H. Lapham

you have to do is to tell them that they being attacked, and denounce the paci- for lack of patriotism and exposing the ntry to danger. It works the same in y country.

—Hermann Göring

f by Easter Sunday the purification Iraq was still a work in progress—ldam Hussein nowhere to be found, radic gunfire lingering in the streets Basra and Mosul, a new government yet seated on its prayer rugs—in ashington the flags were blooming on bandstands, and the heralds of nerican empire were crying up the ws of great and glorious victory. Our ces under the command of General mmy Franks had destroyed the sem- ance of an Iraqi army, rescued the fields of Kirkuk, chased an evil tyrant m his throne, cleansed the Tigris lley of an unsanitary regime. Priced a cost of $60 billion and 129 Amer- n lives (forty-five of them lost in ac- dents), the month's work lifted Pres- ent George W. Bush to a 70 percent proval rating in the opinion polls, e friends and officers of his adminis- ation everywhere attended by con- atulatory nods and the gifts of loyal plause. Important newspaper colum- sts pointed proudly to the "high- ater mark" of America's "resurgent ower"; elevated sources at the White ouse declared themselves well pleased ith "the demonstration effect" of a ilitary maneuver that "opens all sorts f new opportunities for us."

As to the nature of the new oppor- nities and the use of precision- uided bombs as an inspirational ales technique, I don't doubt that ver the next few months we can ex- ect the publication of numerous anuals (political, military, and geo- strategic) reflecting on the lessons learned in the deserts of Mesopotamia. Because the teaching almost certainly will be expressed in government-inspected prose, I have undertaken to reduce the syllabus to its principal points of interest:

The moral splendor of American empire can be made to stand on a pedestal of lies.

During the months prior to the bombing of Baghdad on March 19, every government spokesman in Washington likened Saddam Hussein to Adolf Hitler or Joseph Stalin, a villain "stifling the world," his powers all but supernatural and thus presenting an immediate and terrible danger not only to the peoples of Saudi Arabia, Israel, and Kuwait but also to every man, woman, and child in the United States. Saddam was said to be hiding nuclear weapons, allied with the terrorist networks of Al Qaeda, and complicit in the events of September 11, plotting monstrous but unspecified attacks (if not tomorrow or next week, then two or four or six months hence), extending the reach of his murderous regime across the whole of Central Asia and the Middle East, certain to oppose any attempts at punishment with vengeful clouds of poison gas.

The first week of invasion proved every assertion false. In place of Hitler or Stalin, the American armies found the remnants of a dictator more accurately compared to a psychopathic prison warden, a brutal but almost comic figure, so enslaved to the dream of his omnipotence that he apparently had trusted the defense of his kingdom to histrionic press releases and gigantic portraits of himself armed with a shotgun and a porkpie hat.

No Iraqi shock troops appeared in the field against the American infantry divisions; no Iraqi aircraft presumed to leave the ground; no allied combat unit met with, much less knew where to find, the fabled weapons of mass destruction. The desultory shows of resistance at the river crossings constituted ragged skirmish lines of young men for the most part barefoot and lightly armed, so many of them out of uniform that it wasn't worth the trouble to distinguish between the civilian and the military dead.

The weakness of the Iraqi target made ridiculous Washington's propaganda poster of Saddam as the second coming of Adolf Hitler, and the useful lesson to be learned presented itself on April Fool's Day. Here was the American army in the sinister landscape of Iraq, equipped to fight the Battle of Normandy or El-Alamein but conducting a police action in the manner of the Israeli assassination teams hunting down Palestinian terrorists in the rubble of the Gaza Strip. Would it be possible to hide in plain sight the false pretext of Operation Iraqi Freedom? The Bush Administration answered the question with its customary mendacious aplomb, simply by changing the mission statement. The American army had not come to Iraq to remove the totalitarian menace threatening all of Western civilization—absolutely not; the American army had come briefly eastward out of Eden to "liberate" the long-suffering Iraqi people from the misery inflicted upon them by an evildoer with the bad habit of cutting out their tongues. One excuse for war was as good as any other.

The American news media can be relied upon to sell the spectacle and leave the story to the government.

and the disinformation deftly intercut with the frontline first impressions, the [illegible] other camera angle—mortar rounds [illegible] exiting stage right, two- and three-star generals parading to and fro on Tom Brokaw's reviewing stand, the correspondent aboard an aircraft carrier handing the microphone across a split [illegible] Bradley Jehuma [illegible] the invasion was two days north of Umm Qasr the accelerated data stream [illegible] descending on the 3rd Infantry Division's auxiliary helicopters.

The demonstration effects multiplied the news media's enthusiasm for their assignment to Camp Adventure, and they did their best to tell a tale worthy of Stephen Ambrose or Rudyard Kipling. Journalists on duty at the Pentagon characterized the assault as a magnificent achievement, one of the most extraordinary military campaigns ever conducted in the history of the world; reporters traveling with the troops discovered comparisons to the glory of World War II—the tanks in the desert reminding them of Generals George Patton and Erwin Rommel, the siege of Basra analogous to the defense of Stalingrad. The hyperbole never quite squared with the disagreeable fact. Every day's news cycle began with rumors of appalling danger [illegible] the Iraqi Republican Guard entrenched in a grove of palm trees, a battalion of Arab martyrs infiltrating the Syrian border, "new Fedayeen," "pockets of resistance," etc.), but by the time the reporters reached the scene of rumored [illegible], the [illegible] were nowhere to be found. A few [illegible] ammo trucks, the flashes [illegible] explosion, once or twice an [illegible] but never any American casualties, no Republican Guard, no Arab martyrs or enemy artillery. The media made up the loss of awe-inspiring sights by starting the clock on another news cycle (more to come, don't go away) or by lending ballast to the photo opportunities. The pulling down of Saddam's statue on April 9 achieved parity with the crumbling of the Berlin Wall, even though the event took place in an all-but-empty plaza cordoned off by a perimeter of U.S. Marines, in the presence of maybe 150 pro-American Iraqis, half of them imported by the Pentagon several days earlier from London. The careful framing of the camera shots sustained the illusion of an immense and wildly cheering crowd.

When temporarily short of footage incoming from Iraq, the television networks in Washington and New York dressed up their screens with American flags and courageous anchorpersons pledging allegiance to "America's Bravest." MSNBC decorated its primary set with a portrait of President Bush—the studio equivalent of a loyalty oath. Erik Sorenson, the executive in charge of the network, was proud to say that the press had no business asking ugly or discourteous questions. "After September 11 the country wants more optimism and benefit of the doubt.... It's about being positive as opposed to being negative."

At Fox News the talking heads transformed their jingoistic fervor into an article of totalitarian faith, speaking directly to any scoundrels who might have wandered into the viewing audience with the dissenting notion that the war was not a war and therefore unnecessary as well as wrong—"You were sickening then, you are sickening now," "leftist stooges," "absolutely committing sedition, or treason." The *New York Times* added a further proof of the media's subservience to the government when, on April 21, one of its reporters filed a dispatch (dictated by American army officers and before publication submitted to their approval) announcing the discovery of Saddam's illegal chemical weapons by an unnamed Iraqi scientist, seen at an unspecified distance, wearing a baseball cap and pointing to an unknown object buried in the sand. The reporter wasn't allowed to speak to the man, but the paper printed her account on page one, below a headline suggesting that the Bush Administration finally [illegible] found the long sought and much h[illegible] for casus belli of its splendid little [illegible]

Package the imperialist agenda as [illegible] reality entertainment and the Am[illegible] can public will come to know and [illegible] the product.

The fireworks display over old, [illegible] mantic Baghdad inspired heroic te[illegible] of merchandising not only on the p[illegible] of the Pentagon and White Ho[illegible] briefing officers but also among [illegible] manufacturers of cigars and wome[illegible] underwear. The excitement prom[illegible]ed a flurry of applications for [illegible] trademark "Shock and Awe"; toget[illegible] with the cigars and women's unc[illegible] wear the list of products included t[illegible]dy bears, bubble-making wands, d[illegible] house furnishings, ski boots, mo[illegible] pads, smoking jackets, yo-yos, and [illegible] flatable bathtub toys.

Concerns about the possible squ[illegible] mishness of the prime-time audie[illegible] when exposed to scenes of hor[illegible] proved to be unwarranted a[illegible] overblown. The computer animati[illegible] of the weapons systems and the ta[illegible]cal movements looked like vi[illegible] games, the "virtual views" of the top[illegible] raphy like the golf course graphics [illegible] ployed to illustrate the perils of t[illegible] PGA Tour.

On the first day of hostilities Pr[illegible]dent Bush cautioned the country's [illegible] nior news executives against publi[illegible] ing photographs of dead Iraqi civilia[illegible] As events moved forward and t[illegible] home audience registered its appro[illegible] of a new and improved form of real[illegible] TV, it was understood that foreig[illegible] dead counted merely as unpaid ext[illegible] briefly available to the producers [illegible] the nightly news to stand around [illegible] front of the machine-gun bullets a[illegible] fuel the fireballs. By April 12 t[illegible] American public had shown sufficie[illegible] bravery in the face of a foreign ene[illegible] that the *New York Times* didn't thi[illegible] it imprudent to publish a handso[illegible] color photograph of dead Iraqi ch[illegible] dren thrown like spoiled vegetab[illegible] into a refrigerated truck.

But if the pictures didn't present [illegible] problem, one still had to be caref[illegible] with the words. As a matter of we[illegible] known and long-established princip[illegible] imperialist powers shoot and kill on[illegible] for the good of the people shot dow[illegible]

ıe policy usually requires some
f upbeat euphemism ("the train-
backward peoples" in the art of
ocratic self-government," the
ing of a "free and flourishing"
tra or Iraq) with which to ease
inds of the women and children
e room. The producers of The
h on Baghdad took the necessary
utions. The killing of Iraqis, both
ary and civilian, was softened to
iting" or "degrading" resources;
it was noticed that in Arabic the
"Fedayeen" means "one who sac-
s himself for a cause," our official
esmen substituted "terrorist death
ds"; the looting of the Iraqi Na-
l Museum and the burning of the
ıtry's National Library were as-
d to the joys of "freedom." Noth-
o do with our Navy's cruise mis-
, of course, and in no way the fault
ır Army units that had been asked
rotect both buildings, and with
a the 12,000-year history of a civ-
tion that prior to the arrival of
eral Franks had survived the con-
sts of the Emperor Heraclius,
eiman the Magnificent, and
ghis Khan. Secretary of Defense
ıald Rumsfeld scowled at the sug-
ion that somehow the destruction
ld have been prevented, possibly
he same way that American troops
served the Oil Ministry. "Freedom's
idy," he said, "and free people are
to make mistakes and commit
nes and do bad things."

So are military empires free to seize
sorts of new opportunities" opened
them by "demonstration effects"
ilar to the ones brought by an
henian army to the island of Melos
the summer of 416 B.C. Having first
chered the Melian military com-
nders, the Athenians presented the
izens of the town with the choice of
ndoning their loyalty to Sparta or
cepting the sentence of death.

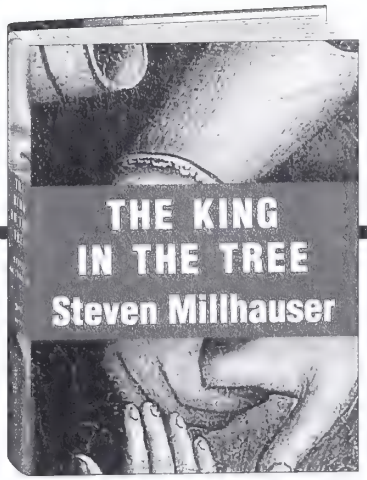
"As practical men," said the Athen-
ı heralds, "you know and we know
at the question of justice arises
ly between parties equal in strength,
d the strong do what they can, and
e weak submit."

The corporate managers of the Bush
dministration lack the concision of
e Attic style, but they didn't find it
rd to appreciate the ancient moral of
e tale. The high-tech gladiatorial show in the Iraqi coliseum had served as a test market not only for the Pentagon's new and exciting inventory of weapons but also for the premise of American military empire—set the proper tone, established the necessary precedent, opened the road to the grandeur that was Rome. The absence of objection on the part of the American public and the American news media suggested that the truth didn't matter, that motive was irrelevant, that the Bush Administration was free to do as it pleased.

Heartened by the message not likely to be lost on either the voters in next year's presidential election or America's enemies both east and west of Suez, various staff officers attached to the White House, its supporting neoconservative think tanks, and the Pentagon expressed varying degrees of satisfaction. Secretary of State Colin Powell threatened Syria, telling a press conference that Syria would have to change its ways, but, no, "no war plan right now." Vice President Dick Cheney admonished Germany and France, indicating that neither country could expect oil or construction contracts from a new jurisdiction in Iraq, saying that "perhaps, time will help in terms of improving their outlook."

Ken Adelman, a member of the Pentagon's Defense Policy Board, hoped that the conquest of Baghdad "emboldens leaders to drastic, not measured, approaches," but it was left to Michael Ledeen, resident scholar in the Freedom Chair at the American Enterprise Institute, to place the great victory in its clearest perspective. "Every ten years or so, the United States needs to pick up some crappy little country and throw it against the wall, just to show the world we mean business."

Welcome to the brave, new freedom-loving world envisioned by the heirs and assigns of what was once a democratic republic. Let any nation anywhere on earth even begin to think of challenging the American supremacy (military, cultural, socioeconomic), and America reserves the right to strangle the impudence at birth—to bomb the peasants or the palace, block the flows of oil or bank credit, change the linen in the information ministries and the hotels. ■



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On the front cover of *The Washington Post Book World,* Michael Dirda says

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is his prose that one surrenders [as] one does to the wistful piano pieces of Ravel and Chopin."

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"A gothic masterpiece"
N.Y. Times Book Review

AN ADVENTURE OF DON JUAN
"A joy to read"
Minneapolis Star-Tribune

THE KING IN THE TREE
"A flawless retelling of the story of Tristan and Ysolt... [It] will live with the older versions, and Wagner's, as part of the myth" *Boston Globe*

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spirit.

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full 15 years — our Solera Rese
features delicious notes of oak, h
vanilla spice, fruit and sherry

AGED 15 YEARS

HARPER'S INDEX

Amount by which total U.S. personal debt in 2002 exceeded total disposable income : $628,000,000,000
Percentage of federal "domestic preparedness" funds allocated to the states since 1999 that remain unspent : 60
Amount of new U.S. military aid for Colombia inserted into the Iraq war bill in March : $105,000,000
ıount of new U.S. military aid promised Israel in April to offset the "burdens" of the U.S. war on Iraq : $1,000,000,000
Percentage unemployment in Palestine, West Virginia, the hometown of former POW Pfc. Jessica Lynch : 15
Number of states in which Wal-Mart is the largest employer : 21
Chance that a network-television advertisement is paid for by one of the 100 largest U.S. corporations : 3 in 4
Days that AT&T ceased its TV advertising last March "out of respect for the U.S. military operation in Iraq" : 3
Days that it ceased its telemarketing : 1
ɔrtion of sales of its "Impeach Bush French Fries" that a California café will donate to an impeachment campaign : 1/10
Percentage "improvement" that Minnesota senator Norm Coleman claims to be over the late Paul Wellstone : 99
Minimum number of times that actor Martin Sheen has been arrested in political protests : 60
Minimum number of times Abbie Hoffman was : 65
nimum number of times that the demonstrators at this year's largest U.S. peace rally could encircle the Pentagon : 130
Amount Canada spent last summer to keep bears away from the G-8 summit : $31,427
nber of mine-detecting monkeys erroneously reported to have been given to the United States by Morocco in March : 2,000
Ratio of the top weekly fee paid a Munchkin in 1939's *The Wizard of Oz* to the weekly fee paid for Toto : 4:5
Last year in which no film, screenplay, or performance relating to mental illness was nominated for an Oscar : 1953
centage of cases of communicable diseases that California medical professionals are required to report that go unreported : 80
Rank of Silicon Valley among fifteen-square-mile areas with the largest number of Superfund sites : 1
Minimum number of chronic medical disorders linked to exposure to industrial chemicals : 110
Number of different strains of tuberculosis whose DNA has been catalogued by a New Jersey microbiologist : 17,000
Number of sites nationwide where farmers grew "pharmaceutical crops" last year : 34
Chance that a U.S. senior citizen reports having skipped medications or not filled prescriptions because of cost : 1 in 5
Number of Medicare patients dropped since 1998 by U.S. HMOs claiming inadequate reimbursement rates : 2,400,000
Average quality-of-life rating researchers assign U.S. children with cancer, on a scale of 1 to 100 : 69
Average quality-of-life rating assigned obese children : 67
Estimated number of Ding Dongs manufactured per minute at St. Louis's Interstate Brands factory : 1,000
Chance that a billionaire today is self-made : 1 in 2
Percentage of male U.S. drivers who "often" or "sometimes" steer with their legs : 12
Number of motor vehicles owned by Tom Magliozzi, co-host of NPR's *Car Talk* : 0
Maximum portion of the chemical energy in gasoline that is used by an internal combustion engine : 1/4
ercentage change in central London's average rush-hour car speed since a £5 toll was imposed there in February : +111
Percentage change since 1973 in overall U.S. energy consumption : +27
Percentage change since then in U.S. oil imports : +86
Year in which Detroit presented Saddam Hussein with a key to the city : 1980
Days after the U.S. invaded Iraq that Sony trademarked "Shock & Awe" for video games : 1
Days later that the company gave up the trademark, citing "regrettable bad judgment" : 25
Amount the U.S. Air Force spent on a "nostalgic juke box" for a base in Saudi Arabia in the last two years : $14,835
Amount it spent on cowboy hats : $4,896

Figures cited are the latest available as of April 2003. Sources are listed on page 57.
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IBRAHIM FERRER



BUENOS HERMANOS

"Ferrer's beautiful new CD lends his vividly warm, vibrant voice to a set of more modern tunes that blend classic Cuban rhythms with contemporary influences and legendary island musicians with surprising U.S. counterparts." *Chicago Tribune*



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"Cooder's historic odyssey comes to a climax with the most extraordinary album he's recorded in Cuba...a glistening set of small-combo instrumentals."
San Francisco Chronicle



RY COODER
MANUEL GALBÁN
MAMBO SINUENDO

Two legendary electric guitarists explore the cool mysteries of mambo-jazz: **Buena Vista Social Club's Ry Cooder** joins Cuban guitarist **Manuel Galbán**, music director of the 60's group ***Los Zafiros***, in a futuristic Cuban-American fusion.

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READINGS

[Correspondence]

THIS HAPPENS EVERY DAY

The following emails were written by Rachel Corrie, an American activist who was fatally crushed by a bulldozer on March 16 as she tried to prevent the Israeli army from destroying a Palestinian home in the Gaza Strip. The emails were printed in the Guardian *last March.*

February 7, 2003
Hi friends and family, and others,

I have been in Palestine for two weeks and one hour now, and I still have very few words to describe what I see. It is most difficult for me to think about what's going on here when I sit down to write back to the United States. Something about the virtual portal into luxury. I don't know if many of the children here have ever existed without tank-shell holes in their walls and the towers of an occupying army surveying them constantly from the near horizons. I think, although I'm not entirely sure, that even the smallest of these children understand that life is not like this everywhere. An eight-year-old was shot and killed by an Israeli tank two days before I got here, and many of the children murmur his name to me—Ali—or point at the posters of him on the walls. The children also love to get me to practice my limited Arabic by asking me, "Kaif Sharon?" "Kaif Bush?" and they laugh when I say, "Bush majnun," "Sharon majnun," in my limited Arabic. (How is Sharon? How is Bush? Bush is crazy. Sharon is crazy.) Of course this isn't quite what I believe, and some of the adults who have the English correct me: "Bush mish majnun, Bush is a businessman." Today I tried to say, "Bush is a tool," but I don't think it translated quite right. Anyway, there are eight-year-olds here much more aware of the workings of the global power structure than I was just a few years ago.

Nevertheless, no amount of reading, conferences, documentaries, or word of mouth could have prepared me for the reality of the situation here. You just can't imagine it unless you see it—and even then you are always well aware that your experience of it is not at all the reality: what with the difficulties the Israeli army would face if they shot an unarmed U.S. citizen, and the fact that I have money to buy water when the army destroys wells, and the fact, of course, that I have the option of leaving. Nobody in my family has been shot, driving in their car, by a rocket launcher in a tower at the end of a major street in my hometown. I have a home. I am allowed to go see the ocean. When I leave for school or work I can be relatively certain that there will not be a heavily armed soldier waiting at a checkpoint halfway between Mud Bay and downtown Olympia with the power to decide whether I can go about my business, and whether I can get home again when I'm done. As an afterthought to all this rambling, I am in Rafah: a city of about 140,000 people, approximately 60 percent of whom are refugees—many of whom are twice or three times refugees. Today, as I walked on top of the rubble where homes once stood, Egyptian soldiers called to me from the other side of the

border, "Go! Go!" because a tank was coming. And then waving and "What's your name?" Something disturbing about this friendly curiosity. It reminded me that, to some degree, we are all kids curious about other kids. Egyptian kids shouting at strange women wandering into the path of tanks. Palestinian kids shot at by the tanks when they peek out from behind walls to see what's going on. International kids standing in front of tanks with banners. Israeli kids in the tanks anonymously, occasionally shouting and also occasionally waving—many forced to be here, many just aggressive—shooting into the houses as we wander away.

I've been having trouble accessing news about the outside world here, but I hear an escalation of war on Iraq is inevitable. There is a great deal of concern here about the "reoccupation of Gaza." Gaza is reoccupied every day to various extents, but I think the fear is that the tanks will enter all the streets and remain here instead of entering some of the streets and then withdrawing after some hours or days to observe and shoot from the edges of the communities. If people aren't already thinking about the consequences of this war for the people of the entire region then I hope you will start.

My love to everyone. My love to my mom. My love to smooch. My love to fg and barnhair and sesamees and Lincoln School. My love to Olympia.

Rachel

February 20, 2003
Mama,

Now the Israeli army has actually dug up the road to Gaza, and both of the major checkpoints are closed. This means that Palestinians who want to go and register for their next quarter at university can't. People can't get to their jobs, and those who are trapped on the other side can't get home; internationals, who have a meeting tomorrow in the West Bank, won't make it. We could probably make it through if we made serious use of our international white person privilege, but that would also mean some risk of arrest and deportation, even though none of us has done anything illegal.

The Gaza Strip is divided in thirds now. There is some talk about the "reoccupation of Gaza," but I seriously doubt this will happen, because I think it would be a geopolitically stupid move for Israel right now. I think the more likely thing is an increase in smaller below-the-international-outcry-radar incursions and possibly the oft-hinted "population transfer."

I am staying put in Rafah for now, no plans to head north. I still feel like I'm relatively safe and think that my most likely risk in case of a larger-scale incursion is arrest. A move to reoccupy Gaza would generate a much larger outcry than Sharon's assassination-during-peace-negotiations/land-grab strategy, which is working very well now to create settlements all over, slowly but surely eliminating any meaningful possibility for Palestinian self-determination.

[Poem]

AWHILE

By Wisława Szymborska, from her collection Chwila ("Awhile"), *published in Poland in 2002. Translated from the Polish by Rick Hilles and Maja Jablonska.*

I am walking the slope of a hill as it grows green.
Grass, florets in the grass
as in a picture for children.
The hazy sky is already turning blue.
The view to other hills reverberates in the silence.

As if there were no Cambrians and no Silurians here,
no rocks growling at each other,
uplifting depths,
as if there were no nights in flames,
or days covered in smoky dark.

As if the lowlands didn't shift here
in feverish ravings,
and icy shivers.

As if the seas raged only somewhere else
and the edges of horizons were torn.

It is nine-thirty local time.
Everything's in its place and agreeably unified.
There is a small stream in a valley like a small stream,
a path in the shape of a path from ever to always.

A forest in the guise of a forest for ever and ever and amen,
and in the sky birds flying are portraying birds

Far and wide, here awhile reigns.
Of course of these earthly whiles



"Gymnasium in a WPA-built school in Wheatland, eastern New Mexico, July 17, 1992," by Steve Fitch, appeared in Gone, *a collection of his photographs published in January by the University of New Mexico Press.*

Know that I have a lot of very nice Palestinians looking after me. I have a small flu bug, and got some very nice lemony drinks to cure me. Also, the woman who keeps the key for the well where we still sleep keeps asking me about you. She doesn't speak a bit of English, but she asks about my mom pretty frequently—wants to make sure I'm calling you.

Love to you and Dad and Sarah and Chris and everybody.

Rachel

February 27, 2003
[To her mother]

Love you. Really miss you. I have bad nightmares about tanks and bulldozers outside our house and you and me inside. Sometimes the adrenaline acts as an anesthetic for weeks, and then in the evening or at night it just hits me again—a little bit of the reality of the situation. I am really scared for the people here. Yesterday, I watched a father lead his two tiny children, holding his hands, out into the sight of tanks and a sniper tower and bulldozers and Jeeps because he thought his house was going to be exploded. Jenny and I stayed in the house with several women and two small babies. It was our mistake in translation that caused him to think it was his house that was being exploded. In fact, the Israeli army was in the process of detonating an explosive in the ground nearby—one that appears to have been planted by Palestinian resistance.

This is in the area where on Sunday about 150 men were rounded up and contained outside the settlement with gunfire over their heads and around them, while tanks and bulldozers destroyed twenty-five greenhouses—the livelihood

for 300 people. The explosive was right in front of the greenhouses—right at the point of entry for tanks that might come back again. I was terrified to think that this man felt it was less of a risk to walk out in view of the tanks with his kids than to stay in his house. I was really scared that they were all going to be shot, and I tried to stand between them and the tank. This happens every day, but just this father, walking out with his two little kids, looking very sad, just happened to get my attention more at this particular moment, probably because I felt it was our translation problems that made him leave.

I thought a lot about what you said on the phone about Palestinian violence not helping the situation. Sixty thousand workers from Rafah worked in Israel two years ago. Now only 600 can go to Israel for jobs. Of these 600, many have moved, because the three checkpoints between here and Ashkelon (the closest city in Israel) make what used to be a forty-minute drive a twelve-hour or impassable journey. In addition, what Rafah identified in 1999 as sources of economic growth are all completely destroyed—the Gaza international airport (runways demolished, totally closed); the border for trade with Egypt (now with a giant Israeli sniper tower in the middle of the crossing); access to the ocean (completely cut off in the last two years by a checkpoint and the Gush Katif settlement). The count of homes destroyed in Rafah since the beginning of this intifada is up around 600, by and large homes of people with no connection to the resistance but who happen to live along the border. I think it may be official now that Rafah is the poorest place in the world. There used to be a middle class here—recently. And then the bulldozers come and take out people's vegetable farms and gardens. What is left for people? Tell me if you can think of anything. I can't.

If any of us had our lives and welfare completely strangled, lived with children in a shrinking place where we knew, because of previous experience, that soldiers and tanks and bulldozers could come for us at any moment and destroy all the greenhouses that we had been cultivating for however long, and did this while some of us were beaten and held captive with 149 other people—do you think we might try to use somewhat violent means to protect whatever fragments remained? I think about this especially when I see orchards and greenhouses and fruit trees destroyed—just years of care and cultivation. I think about you and how long it takes to make things grow and what a labor of love it is. I really think, in a similar situation, most people would defend themselves as best they could. I think Uncle Craig would. I think probably Grandma would. I think I would.

You asked me about nonviolent resistance.

When that explosive detonated yesterday it broke all the windows in the family's house. I was in the process of being served tea and play-

[Spoils]

SHLOCK AND AWE

From a list of goods and services for which trademark applications for the term "Shock and Awe" have been filed.

teddy bears
chemicals
catchers' masks
ski boots
rum
marionette puppets
hang gliders
jigsaw puzzles
cigars
inflatable bath toys
motion-picture production
eyeglass cords made of cord
inflatable ride-on toys
bubble-making wands
raincoats
lotions
kickboxing pads
toy boxes
consulting services
party favors in the nature of crackers and noisemakers
dollhouse furnishings
magic tricks
yo-yos
men's and women's underwear
flying disks
firearms
archival services
marbles
sandals
windup walking toys
volleyballs
fireworks
bottle openers
mouse pads
automobiles
can coolers
media services
smoking jackets

ing with the two small babies. I'm having a hard time right now. Just feel sick to my stomach from being doted on all the time, very sweetly, by people who are facing doom. I know that from the United States, it all sounds like hyperbole. Honestly, a lot of the time the sheer kindness of the people here, coupled with the overwhelming evidence of the willful destruction of their lives, makes it seem unreal to me. I really can't believe that something like this can happen in the world without a bigger outcry about it. It really hurts me to witness how awful we can allow the world to be. I felt after talking to you that maybe you didn't completely believe me. I think it's actually good if you don't, because I do believe pretty much above all else in the importance of independent critical thinking. And I also realize that with you I'm much less careful than usual about trying to source every assertion I make. A lot of the reason for that is I know that you actually do your own research. But it makes me worry about the job I'm doing. The situations that I tried to enumerate above—and a lot of other things—constitute a somewhat gradual—often hidden, but nevertheless massive—destruction of the ability of a particular group of people to survive. This is what I am seeing here. The assassinations, rocket attacks, and shooting of children are atrocities, but in focusing on them I'm terrified of missing their context. The vast majority of people here—even if they had the economic means to escape, even if they actually wanted to give up resisting on their land and just leave (which appears to be maybe the less nefarious of Sharon's possible goals)—can't leave. Because they can't even get into Israel to apply for visas, and because their destination countries won't let them in (both our country and Arab countries). So I think when all means of survival are cut off in a pen (Gaza) which people can't get out of, I think that qualifies as genocide. Even if they could get out, I think it would still qualify as genocide. Maybe you could look up the definition of genocide according to international law. I don't remember it right now. I'm going to get better at illustrating this, hopefully. I don't like to use those charged words. I think you know this about me. I really value words. I really try to illustrate and let people draw their own conclusions.

Anyway, I'm rambling. Just want to write to my Mom and tell her that I'm witnessing this chronic, insidious genocide and I'm really scared, and questioning my fundamental belief in the goodness of human nature. This has to stop. I think it is a good idea for us all to drop everything and devote our lives to making this stop. I don't think it's an extremist thing to do anymore. I still really want to dance around to Pat Benatar and have boyfriends and make comics for my co-workers. But I also want this to stop. Disbelief and horror are what I feel. Disappointment. I am disappointed that this is the base reality of our world and that we, in fact, participate in it. This is not at all what I asked for when I came into this world. This is not at all what the people here asked for when they came into this world. This is not the world you and Dad wanted me to come into when you decided to have me. This is not what I meant when I looked at Capital Lake and said: "This is the wide world and I'm coming to it." I did not mean that I was coming into a world where I could live a comfortable life and possibly, with no effort at all, exist in complete unawareness of my participation in genocide. More big explosions somewhere in the distance outside.

When I come back from Palestine, I probably will have nightmares and constantly feel guilty for not being here, but I can channel that into more work. Coming here is one of the better things I've ever done. So when I sound crazy, or if the Israeli military should break with their racist tendency not to injure white people, please pin the reason squarely on the fact that I am in the midst of a genocide which I am also indirectly supporting, and for which my government is largely responsible.

I love you and Dad. Sorry for the diatribe. OK, some strange men next to me just gave me some peas, so I need to eat and thank them.

Rachel

February 28, 2003

Thanks, Mom, for your response to my email. It really helps me to get word from you, and from other people who care about me.

After I wrote to you I went incommunicado from the affinity group for about ten hours, which I spent with a family on the front line in Hi Salam—who fixed me dinner, and have cable TV. The two front rooms of their house are unusable because gunshots have been fired through the walls, so the whole family—three kids and two parents—sleep in the parents' bedroom. I slept on the floor next to the youngest daughter, Iman, and we all shared blankets. I helped the son with his English homework a little, and we all watched *Pet Sematary*, which is a horrifying movie. I think they all thought it was pretty funny how much trouble I had watching it. Friday is the holiday, and when I woke up they were watching *Gummy Bears* dubbed into Arabic. So I ate breakfast with them and sat there for a while and just enjoyed being in this big puddle of blankets with this family watching what for me seemed



Train to Jungfrau, *a painting with found postcards by William Wegman, was on display in April at Sperone Westwater, in New York City.*

like Saturday morning cartoons. Then I walked some way to Brazil, which is where Nidal and Mansur and Grandmother and Rafat and all the rest of the big family that has really wholeheartedly adopted me live. (The other day, by the way, Grandmother gave me a pantomimed lecture in Arabic that involved a lot of blowing and pointing to her black shawl. I got Nidal to tell her that my mother would appreciate knowing that someone here was giving me a lecture about smoking turning my lungs black.) I met their sister-in-law, who is visiting from Nusserat camp, and played with her small baby. Nidal's English gets better every day. He's the one who calls me, "My sister." He started teaching Grandmother how to say, "Hello. How are you?"

You can always hear the tanks and bulldozers passing by, but all of these people are genuinely cheerful with each other, and with me. When I am with Palestinian friends I tend to be somewhat less horrified than when I am trying to act in a role of human-rights observer, documenter, or direct-action resister. They are a good example of how to be in it for the long haul. I know that the situation gets to them—and may ultimately get them—on all kinds of levels, but I am nevertheless amazed at their strength in being able to defend such a large degree of their humanity—laughter, generosity, family time—against the incredible horror occurring in their lives and against the constant presence of death. I felt much better after this morning. I spent a lot of time writing about the disappointment of discovering, somewhat firsthand, the degree of evil of which we are still capable. I should at least mention that I am also discovering a degree of strength and of basic ability for humans to remain human in the direst of circumstances—which I also haven't seen before. I think the word is dignity. I wish you could meet these people. Maybe, hopefully, someday you will.

Rachel

[Scene]
THE HOTEL

By Robert Walser, from the Fall/Winter issue of Jubilat. *Walser died in 1956. Translated from the German by Dominic Le Fave.*

It was evening. A crystal chandelier sparkled from the ceiling. A sculptor smoked a cigarette and thought of the statuette that was forming quietly in his brain.

In a hotel, really, for reasons of continuing, complete leisure, and because of the somehow dreamy pace, it always feels like evening.

Nothing would be done. Rather money orders would come from faraway places, and from women's hands would come little attentions in the form of gifts. Bottles would be uncorked, menus would be ordered, letters written and received. The sculptor's wife sat in friendly anonymity, where she bothered herself with sewing and reading. Here it was easygoing, fine, and luxurious; someone relevant in the literary world kept himself busy with the attempt to impart niceties to a circle of barely cosmopolitan girls.

Someone who had climbed down from steep cliffs, who was adorned by a mountain costume, and who still felt himself surrounded by the fragrances of great heights, in an alcove drew toward his chest a figure whom he thought was very attractive and who left him with the impression that she had the faculty to sink, so to speak, in his embrace of elevation.

In several of the rooms, which were partially filled with fairy-tale-like luxury, one of the youngsters—who suffer from overflowing freedom, which they don't know how to use to do anything creative, who have so deeply sunken, ringed eyes, and who desire the happiness to have to bend under necessities—was spreading out on a sofa.

One of the aforementioned youth undertook an amorous attack on the governess at the buffet who, after a short time, however, communicated with flaming eyes that she knew herself to be loved by one of the beer servers who draft the wetness that goes as smoothly through ordinary throats as excellent ones.

A dancer who was noticed by no one danced remarkably.

A bank director was seen playing cards with an architect, and a seemingly up-and-coming machinist delivered a little flower bouquet to an at-least-not-completely unattractive maid so that she smiled the casual smile of a millionaire.

A hotel is an issue of the poor and the rich, missing the middle, who are mixing with reserve.

What is not present, sometimes, through that, is very.

[Inventory]
FEAR ITSELF

By Michael Bernard Loggins, from his zine Fears of Your Life, *published by Creativity Explored, an art center in San Francisco for developmentally disabled adults.*

Fear of school and dentists.
Fear of being followed.
Fear of time bombs.
Fear of deep waters.
Fear of being chase by bulls.
Fear of elevators.
Fear of doors when they slams.
Fear of toys that comes on by itself without anyone touching it.
Fear of someone doing wrong to you and don't want you to do wrong back to them.
Fear of getting in deep trouble. Or going to get in deep trouble.
Fear of being caught by being with the person that steals.
There's Los Angeles fears.
Oakland fears.
San Francisco fears.
Fear of being in wrong places at the wrong time.
Fear of dropping your soda as it hit the ground and fizz on you.
Fear of televisions when you are afraid that it might blow out all the lights in the house.
Fear of getting hit over the head when you carry lots of dough with you. Or bucks.
Fear of getting in trouble by the law. When you aren't going by rules.
Fear of death.
Fear of tall giraffe.
Fear of some birds.
Fear that the television will explode if you turn it on.

Fear of a blasted music on the radio when you are not aware that the volume is turn up.

Fear of being spanking by a principal when a parent give an permission.

Fear of rolling down hill backward.

Fear of being different.

Kids feared that whatever they have done wrong that they afraid of getting punishment or their parents will kill them.

Fear of getting put out the house.

Fear of fog horn.

Fear of high tides.

Fear of pirates.

Fear of dragon.

Feared that if you get in the way of a tall tree when it get chop or sawed for it to come tumbling toward you get out of the way because it liable to fall on you and kill you and it wouldn't be such a beautiful sight to see.

Feared wind and rain. Heavy rain. Hailing rain.

Feared that you will get scald by a skillet on a stove if it turn over on you. If it get real hot!

Fear of being barefooted walking around the house without any shoes on your feet just liable to get stuck on a tack or glass or nails or piece of metal or something.

Fear of someone hurting themselves.

Fear that if you are bad or naughty no one's isn't going to love you anymore.

Fear of a glass table if it cut you.

Fear of dreaming that you have got sunk down into quicksand.

Feared that if you put too much of toilet paper in the toilet bowl it will run over and get all over the floor and on you and on someone else too. It would leak from upstairs to the next floor below.

Fear of some things that are scary.

Fear of getting hugged by somebody you don't like is scary.

Fear of stepping down from something that is higher than you thought it was is scary.

Fear of something that you think that could be in the closet that might be scary is scary.

Fear of cars when they skid like if you think they're going to crash is scary.

Fear of cows and buffalos.

Fear of a dark house.

Fear of hearing somebody coming towards the door at midnight.

Feared something is scaring Blackie tonight.

People are fearful of me which I wonder is they think that I'm all that terrible or I'm thinking that they think I'm not human at all because when they sit next to me that they get back up and move away from me. I may be a stranger but that doesn't make me a created monster or something like that. People aren't humans they act like ignorance dogs with their tail in back of their legs or in between their middle bodies their legs. They don't think who feelings they hurt at all they just do it. No consideration for whatsoever.

People don't think about how they hurt my feelings or don't give a hoot. They don't give a crap.

What people think of when they see me coming up the street? What the first thing that they can think of once they see a stranger like me coming in the direction I goes in? Nothing but fear!

Why do people when they see me coming what do they tell their friends? Let's cross the street I don't want to get hurt. What we ought to do is turn and go another direction. Fear.

I better not stick my feet out of the side of my bed or the monsters will bite me or wanting to eat me so I better stay foot. That's fear for you!!

Fear of ghost stories in the dark room.

Fear of boogeyman.

Fear of killer bees.

Fear of Draculas.

Frankenstein is fearful.

Fear of giant man.

Fear of tall woman.

Fear of dinosaurs bird.

Fear of invisible man.

Fear of getting molester.

Fear is like this: someone like a woman that you grab ahold of her hand and going down the escalator when of a sudden you happens to be holding a stranger hand not realizing that she isn't your mother is scary.

Fear is like this: If you are ever getting out of your car and not alert and just going on doing what you normally wouldn't dreamed of doing, not paying attention and not thinking clearly or not focusing on what is happening and not aware or not be careful somehow ended up locking your baby in a closed in door to your car will have you panic and it's scary.

Fear is like this: Bump into a person that is tall and slim and much older than you standing in line in front of you and you didn't know all that much about him at all you were in back of him playing or talking kind of light type tone voice and he look at you with mean expression on his face saying are you talking to me? Oh no I were thinking about something else. You feel scared mumbling to yourself in his presence which you thought that you were talking a stranger that isn't your brother is scary.

Fear of jumping off the bridge way up high going down real deep splash in that deepest water and take your own life away from yourself. You'll jump from top ledge.

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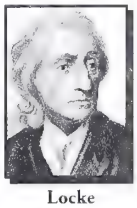

Kant


Hegel


Bacon


Newton


Plato


Locke


Descartes

Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress

Nor at least 30 centuries, mankind has grappled with the most fundamental questions life raises. o am I? What should be the pure of my life, and how should I lead What is the best kind of life? Active l engaged? Immersed in the rewards reflection and understanding? sorbed in the pleasures of the sens- Who or what is God? When is it itimate for one person to have wer over others? What is justice? auty?

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[Advice]

THE DIFFICULT POEM

By Charles Bernstein. Bernstein read this essay on September 9 at the New School's graduate writing program in New York City. His most recent collection of poems is With Strings, *published by the University of Chicago Press.*

All of us from time to time encounter a difficult poem. Sometimes it is the poem of a friend or a family member, and sometimes it is a poem we have written ourselves. The difficult poem has created distress for both poets and readers for many years. Experts who study difficult poems often trace the modern prevalence of this problem to the early years of the last century, when a great deal of social dislocation precipitated the outbreak of 1912, one of the best-known epidemics of difficult poetry.

But while these experts have offered detailed historical discussions of difficult poems, and while there is a great deal of philosophical speculation and psychological theory about difficult poetry, there are few practical guides for handling difficult poetry. What I want to do in this essay is explore some ways to make your experience with the difficult poem more rewarding by exploring some strategies for coping with these poems.

You may be asking yourself, how did I get interested in this topic? Let me be frank about my situation. I am the author of, and a frequent reader of, difficult poems. Because of this, I have the strong desire to help other readers and authors with hard-to-read poems. By sharing my experience of more than thirty years of working with difficult poems, I think I can save you both time and heartache. I may even be able to convince you that some of the most difficult poems you encounter can provide very enriching aesthetic experiences—if you understand how to approach them.

But first we must address the question—Are you reading a difficult poem? How can you tell? Here is a handy checklist of five key questions that can help you to answer this question:

1. Do you find the poem hard to appreciate?
2. Do you find the poem's vocabulary and syntax hard to understand?
3. Are you often struggling with the poem?
4. Does the poem make you feel inadequate or stupid as a reader?
5. Is your imagination being affected by the poem?

If you answered any of these questions in the affirmative, you are probably dealing with a difficult poem. But if you are still unsure, look for the presence of any of these symptoms: high syntactic, grammatical, or intellectual activity level; elevated linguistic intensity; textual irregularities; initial withdrawal (poem not immediately available); poor adaptability (poem unsuitable for use in love letters, memorial commemoration, etc.); sensory overload; or negative mood.

Many readers when they first encounter a difficult poem say to themselves, "Why me?" The first reaction they often have is to think that this is an unusual problem that other readers have not faced. So the first step in dealing with the difficult poem is to recognize that this is a common problem that many other readers confront on a daily basis. You are not alone!

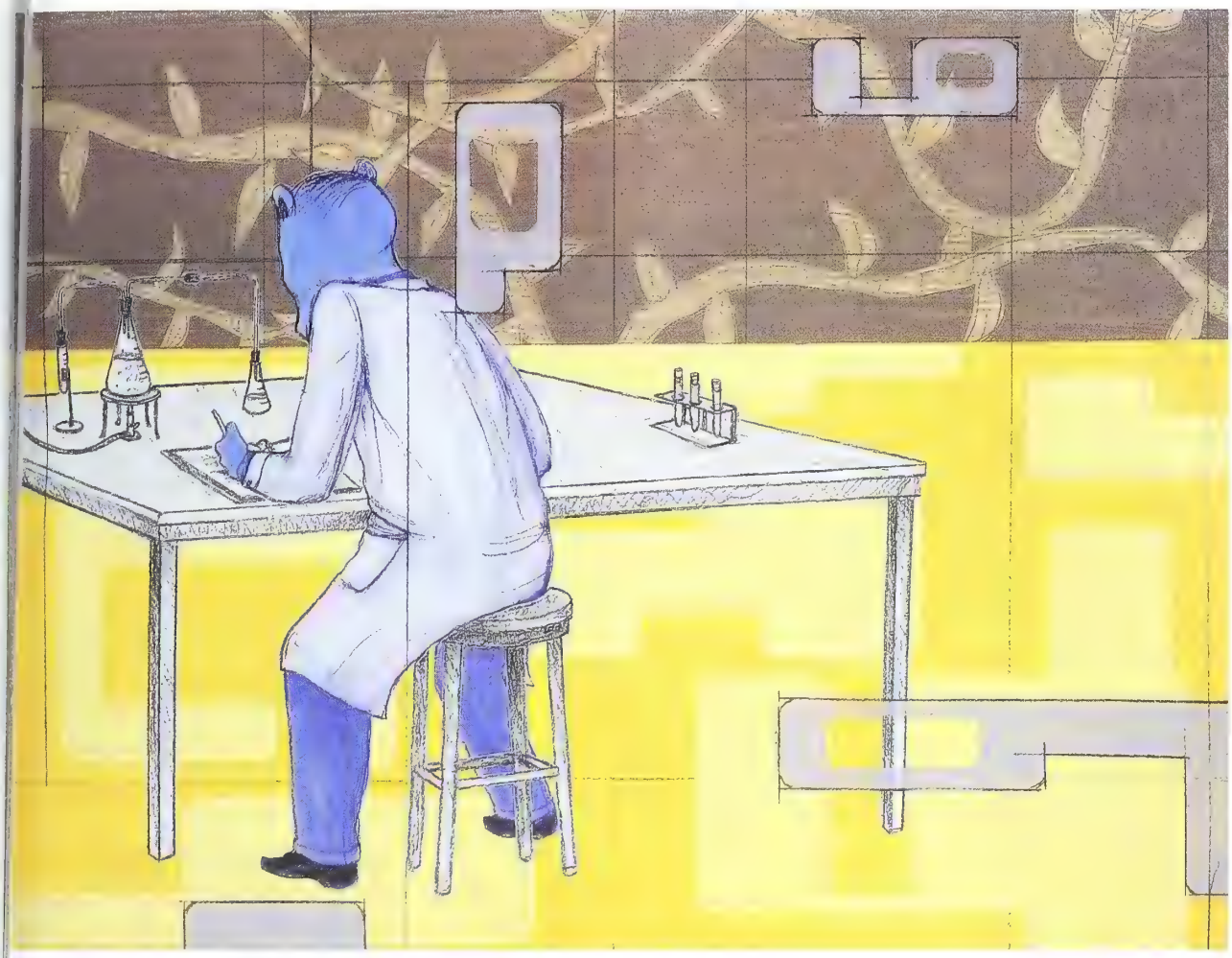
The second reaction of many difficult-poem readers is self-blame. They ask themselves, "What am I doing to cause this poem to be so difficult?" So the second step in dealing with the difficult poem is to recognize that you are not responsible for the difficulty and that there are effective methods for responding to it without getting frustrated or angry.

The writers of difficult poems face the same troubling questions as readers, but for them the questions can be even more agitating. Often a poet will ask himself, if he is a man, or herself, if a woman (transgendered individuals also find themselves asking these questions): "Why did my poem turn out like this? Why isn't it completely accessible like the poems of Billy Collins, which never pose any problems for understanding?" Like readers of difficult poems, these writers of difficult poems must first come to terms with the fact that theirs is a common problem, shared by many other authors. And they must come to terms with the fact that it is not their fault that their poems are harder to understand than Billy Collins's, but that some poems just turn out that way.

Difficult poems are normal. They are not incoherent, meaningless, or hostile. Well-meaning readers may have suggested that "something must be wrong" with the poem. So let's get a new perspective. "Difficult" is very different from abnormal. In today's climate, with an increasing number of poems being labeled "difficult," this is an important distinction to keep in mind.

Difficult poems are like this because of their innate makeup. And that makeup is their constructed *style*. They are not like this because of something you as readers have done to them. It's not your fault.

Difficult poems are hard to read. Of course you already know this, but if you keep it in mind, then you are able to regain your authority as a reader. Don't let the poem intimidate you! Often the difficult poem will provoke you, but



Untitled (Scientist at Table), *by Kojo Griffin. His work is currently on display at the Contemporary Arts Museum in Houston.*

this may be its way of getting your attention. Sometimes, if you give your full attention to the poem, the provocative behavior will stop.

Difficult poems are not popular. This is something that any reader or writer of difficult poems must face squarely. There are no three ways about it. But just because a poem is not popular doesn't mean it has no value! Unpopular poems can still have meaningful readings and, after all, may not always be unpopular. Even if the poem never becomes popular, it can still be special to you, the reader. Maybe the poem's unpopularity will even bring you and the difficult poem closer. After all, your own ability to have an intimate relation with the poem is not affected by the poem's popularity.

Once you have gotten beyond the blame game—blaming yourself as a reader for the difficulty or blaming the poem—you can start to focus on the relationship. The difficulty you are having with the poem may suggest that there is a problem not with you the reader or with the poem but with the relation between you and the poem. Working through the issues that arise as part of this relation can be a valuable learning experience. *Smoothing over difficulties is not the solution!* Learning to cope with a difficult reading of a poem will often be more fulfilling than sweeping difficulties under the carpet, only to have the accumulated dust plume up in your face when you finally get around to cleaning the floor.

Readers of difficult poems also need to beware of the tendency to idealize the accessible poem. Keep in mind that a poem may be easy because it is not saying anything. And while this may make for undisturbed reading at first, it may mask problems that will turn up later. No poem is ever really difficulty-free. Sometimes working out your difficulties with the poem is the best thing for a long-term aesthetic experience and opens up the possibilities for many future encounters with the poem.

I hope that this approach to the difficult poem will alleviate the frustration so many readers feel when challenged by this type of aesthetic experience. Reading poems, like other life experiences, is not always as simple as it may seem to be from the outside, as when we see other readers flipping happily through collections of best-loved verse. Very often this picture of readerly bliss is not the whole story; even these now-smiling readers may have gone through difficult experiences with poems when they first encountered them. As my mother would often say, you can't make bacon and eggs without slaughtering a pig.

[PsyOps]

STRAIGHT OUTTA TIKRIT

From a rap set to the tune of Coolio's "Gangsta's Paradise" broadcast last April in Iraq by Radio Tikrit, a station believed to be backed by the CIA. A Saddam Hussein impersonator performs most of the song in English with occasional Arabic interludes.

If you don't like me, I kill you.

I am Saddam. I don't have a bomb.
I am not a soldier. I work at a farm.
Bush wanna kick me, I don't know why.
And if I call him, he does me goodbye.
Smoking weed and getting high.
I know the devil is by my side.
My days are finished and I will die.
All I need is chili fries.

Why is that one not dancing? Come on, dance.
I'll remove your eye and the eye of the one who gave birth to you.

I am so dirty, I am so bad.
Stop killing Iraqis. That make me sad.
I am big daddy, this is my game.
I don't have feelings. I don't have shame.
Forty-eight hours left, Bush said.
All my troops left me and fled.
Now I am sitting by myself.
My ass is shaking. I am going to hell.

Where is the music? May God curse you.
I am for adoption. Anybody wanna adopt me?
Shake it. Shake. Please. I love you.

Everybody in the house say you hate me.
We hate you.
Everybody in the house. What's up? What's up?
What's going around here?
Everybody in the house say "We hate you."
We hate you.

[Poetry]

THE WASTE LAND

The following poems were composed by Hart Seely from statements by Donald Rumsfeld. The poems appear in Pieces of Intelligence, *published this month by the Free Press.*

THE UNKNOWN

As we know,
There are known knowns.
There are things we know we know.
We also know
There are known unknowns.
That is to say
We know there are some things
We do not know.
But there are also unknown unknowns,
The ones we don't know
We don't know.

—February 12, 2002, Department of Defense news briefing

GLASS BOX

You know, it's the old glass box at the—
At the gas station,
Where you're using those little things
Trying to pick up the prize,
And you can't find it.
It's—

And it's all these arms are going down in there,
And so you keep dropping it
And picking it up again and moving it,
But—

Some of you are probably too young to remember those
Those glass boxes,
But—

But they used to have them
At all the gas stations
When I was a kid.

—December 6, 2001, Department of Defense news briefing

THE SITUATION

Things will not be necessarily continuous.
The fact that they are something other than
perfectly continuous
Ought not to be characterized as a pause.
There will be some things that people will see.
There will be some things that people won't see.
And life goes on.

—October 12, 2001, Department of Defense news briefing

CLARITY

I think what you'll find,
I think what you'll find is,
Whatever it is we do substantively,
There will be near-perfect clarity
As to what it is.

And it will be known,
And it will be known to the Congress,
And it will be known to you,
Probably before we decide it,
But it will be known.

—February 28, 2003, Department of Defense news briefing

[Essay]

AFTER THE RIOTS

A previously unpublished essay by James Agee, from the January/February issue of the Oxford American. *Agee died in 1955.*

I keep remembering those photographs of the Detroit race riots which appeared in *PM*. Pages of them, and that typically *PM* headline, all over their front page.

AMERICA,
LOOK AT
YOUR
SHAME!

That disgusted me, as their headlines so often do, but as I looked at the photographs I got a good deal of respect for the paper in spite of everything. Then I realized that with a few exceptions *PM* had cornered the photographs. They were unavailable to any other paper. That was as perfect and typical a low as I had ever seen them touch. I wanted to write them. Or to do them as much damage as I possibly could. The liberals and the left. They had never shown themselves up better.

Look at your shame, indeed.

There was one in particular, that I couldn't get out of my head; one of the less violent of them. It was the one which particularly showed that there were white people who were not only horrified by the riots but brave enough to do all they could for the Negroes. It showed two young men. They were holding up a terribly bleeding Negro man between them, and they looked at the camera as if they were at bay before a crowd of rioters, as perhaps they were not. The mixture of emotions on their faces was almost unbearable to keep looking at: almost a nausea of sympathy for the hurt man and for the whole situation; a kind of terror which all naturally unviolent people must feel in the middle of violence; absolute self-forgetfulness; a terrific, accidental look of bearing testimony—a sort of gruesome, overrealistic caricature; which was rather, really, the source of those attendant saints or angels who communicate with the world outside the picture in great paintings of crucifixions and exalted agonies.

The thing that made it so particularly powerful to me was that both these young men, one of them especially, so far as you could judge by study, were of a sort which is often somewhat sneered at, by most bad people and by many pretty good ones: rather humbly "artistic," 4-F-ish people, of whom you might think that any emotion they felt would be tainted, at least, with fancy sentimentality.

It made me ashamed of every such reflex of easy classification and dismissal as I have ever felt—the more ashamed, because I had to wonder whether, in such a situation, I would have been capable of that self-forgetfulness and courage. It made me half ashamed to keep looking at them, for that matter, as I had been doing again on that afternoon I am especially thinking of now. I care a great deal for such photographs; they do more, in certain ways, than any other art can. But there is also, in proportion to its best use, something criminal and indecent about the camera; and there is a great load of guilt on the eye that eats what it has predigested.

On this particular afternoon, which was the Sunday after the riots, I was up on East Ninety-second Street seeing a friend of mine, a photographer, and we spent quite a bit of the afternoon looking through things he had clipped and a few I had brought along. I had not seen my friend at leisure for a long time, and we had a particularly good afternoon of it, in which the photograph I am speaking of turned up powerfully but casually, and moved off to become a sort of tinge in the back of the mind. By the end of the afternoon I had the unusual, gay sort of good opinion of myself, my friend, photography, and what my senses could

[Interlude]

STICKY WICKET

From a March 14 report by Scott Murray on an India versus New Zealand cricket match, published on the Guardian *website.*

It's really simple: India are already through, New Zealand have not.

Meanwhile, have you ever thought WHAT SORT OF LIFE IS THIS AND WHAT THE HELL AM I DOING BOARDING A TRAIN FOR MOORGATE AT 6.30 IN THE MORNING AND THEN STANDING AROUND FOR AGES WAITING FOR A TUBE WHILE STARING AT A SIGN TELLING YOU THAT IF YOU WAIT FOR FOUR MINUTES YOU CAN BOARD A TRAIN TO UXBRIDGE I'D RATHER WAIT FOUR HOURS FOR A JOURNEY WITH THE GRIM REAPER QUITE FRANKLY AND THEN YOU GET TO WORK AND THEN THERE'S THIS AND I KNOW THE CRICKET'S GOOD AND ALL THAT BUT I'VE GOT OUT OF THE WRONG SIDE OF BED THIS MORNING AND IN ANY CASE IT'S NOT AS IF I'LL WRITE A CRACKING MATCH REPORT AND THEN GET REWARDED BY BEING SENT ON A WONDERFUL ASSIGNMENT AROUND THE WORLD BECAUSE I'LL BE VERY SURPRISED IF ANY OF MY BOSSES WILL READ ANY OF THIS LET'S BE HONEST THEY WON'T ALTHOUGH ON THE OTHER HAND THAT'S PROBABLY JUST AS WELL HEY I WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO GET AWAY WITH TYPING THINGS LIKE THIS KlqL!UYS^%$DFLI ZSDSAFC SFE4O92)(^(*^o"$ bBLKU E875O3 96*&^%o*"$ogb LOOK I'M SORRY THIS ISN'T EXACTLY THE SORT OF QUALITY EDITORIAL COPY YOU EXPECT FROM THE GUARDIAN BUT LOOK AT THE FACTS I'M ADRIFT IN THE MIDDLE OF ONE OF THE WORST CITIES IN THE WORLD SITTING IN FRONT OF THE SAME COMPUTER SCREEN I FACE DAY AFTER INTERMINABLE DAY HELL I COULD BE WAKING UP IN SAY THE MALDIVES OR SYDNEY OR COPENHAGEN OR A CROFTER'S COTTAGE IN SKYE AND GOING FOR A WALK IN THE CRISP MORNING AIR?

No? Only me then. Good.

enjoy, which you are liable to get out of whiskey and easy pleasure if work causes the latter to turn up seldom enough. By the time I left to go downtown for supper, I was at the high point just short of where intoxication begins to droop into clumsiness or melancholy; and the minute I was outdoors the streets, in the very beautiful late of afternoon weather, improved that, if it can be improved, with the feeling of being alone for a little while, and with the sharp, tender enjoyment of a city I am ordinarily tired in.

At Ninety-first Street, on York Avenue, I got on an Eighty-sixth Street crosstown bus and sat far forward on the right. It started nearly empty, and filled up rather quickly; I did not much notice when, or with whom, because I was looking out a great deal through the front and side windows, especially as soon as the bus swung west onto Eighty-sixth Street and the street and the bus were filled with the low, bright sunlight. It was a light so gay, generous, and beautiful, it was almost as if it tasted of champagne and smelled of strawberries, hay, and fresh butter. What it smelled of more, of course, was car exhaust, which can also be a festal sort of smell, when everything is right, and was now; and the edges of the hundreds of doors and windows, along the street, were cut in a blue-gold, clean compound of sunlight, monoxide, and stone. I watched all the people, puddling and straggling along the walks, and as usual, wondered which were the Hitchcock agents and which were the harmless, and what might be going on in each mind as they thought, if they did, of what was happening to Hitler and his idea and his people, over where it was dark now, and they were counting their losses in the east, and giving out modified reports in the middle, and staggering under the bombers from the west. In an easy insensitive way, I began to be very sorry for all those people caught in the hopeless middle; even for Hitler and his damned idea, so monstrous except that they already seemed so hopeless.

Around me, I realized the bus was thicker and thicker with people, some standing, some packed on the seats, all swaying, pleasant and patient-seeming in the green-and-gold light which filled the bus. Across the aisle were some sailors, sitting, their faces very young and very red, in their very white uniforms. Halfway back in the bus were some young soldiers; the same quality of variegated physical perfection and of almost indecent cleanness, which so few civilians ever seem to have—like so many priests, or Sunday babies, or little girls in bride-of-heaven regalia, but even more likable; dumb, very likely, cruel, very possibly,



Venice Notebook 2001, #11, *a color etching by Richard Serra, can be seen at Gemini G.E.L.[1], in Los Angeles.*

developed and perfected for something I feel no trust in; yet about the best thing that ever turns up in human life. I liked them a great deal, and all my doubts of it cleared; I might not be perfectly sure what I wanted, but I was no longer personally sorry that within a week I was coming up for induction; I was almost glad; and if I were taken, many things could be worse. One of them, very possibly, would be to come out the other end of the war, still a virginal civilian.

I liked them still better as I watched them and began to hear them. I specially noticed one quite strong young sailor, just across from me; a big boy, bigger than I am, a little; and because his eyes and his face had a good deal in them which as a child I used to fear, and have always been shy of, I now liked him particularly well. It was the sort of face which only turns up, so far as I know, in the South—heavy jaw, a slightly thin yet ornate mouth, powerful nose, blue-white, reckless, brutal eyes. I knew the voice just as well, and the special, rather crazy kind of bravery; they made me feel at once as isolated and as matchlessly at home as if I were back in the South again. Nearly all these boys, it turned out, were Southerners, the soldiers as well as the sailors, and the loud large sailor and the loudest and littlest of the soldiers were just finding this out about each other. One was from Atlanta; the other knew Atlanta very well. They began testing each other out on street names and bars, then on people, which did not go quite so well, and now and then the others chimed in with a wisecrack or an exclamation

were immediately. They were happy as hell to run into each other like this—not even Viennese refugees can lay it on so thick, and enjoy it so much, as Southerners when they meet by surprise in an alien atmosphere. They were drunk, about as drunk as I was, and that helped; but they would have leaned on their dialects like trimming ship in a yacht race, even if they were sober. It is a very special speech, as unattractive to most Northerners as it is dear to natives, and I will not try to reproduce it here, beyond suggesting that its special broadenings, lifts, twangs, and elisions, even if you didn't know the idiom by heart, which I do, were as charming and miraculous as if, in the same New York bus, a couple of Parsees had saluted each other according to their own language and ritual.

A part of it, of course, was that they were basically insecure; it was insecurity and the Southerner's incomparable, almost pathic pride, as well as love of country and loneliness, and the aching contempt for the North, which made them so spectacular, made so many Northerners on the bus look warm, cold, or uneasy accordingly, and made the young sailors and soldiers begin to vocalize about the niggers on the bus and the God damned niggers in this f—ing town and the f—ing niggers all over the whole God damned f—in' Nawth. The word cut across my solar plexus like a cold knife, and the whole bus, except for those two voices and the comments of their friends, was suddenly almost exploded by an immensely thick quietness. I glanced very quickly back; one of the soldiers met my eyes with eyes like hot iron, and two seats behind him sat a Negro (it is a word I dislike, but most of the others are still worse); sat a colored man of perhaps fifty, in nickel-rimmed glasses, a carefully starched white shirt, and a serge suit, managing so to use his eyes that you could see only the nickel rims and the lenses.

The flailing voices went on and on, more and more fanciful, naked and cruel, and though I was listening with great care for every word, and heard every word, I was also so occupied that I heard very little, and remember almost nothing, now. It was all the old, ugly routines; what we wouldn't do to Boy son of a bitchin nigguh that tuck a seat by a white woman if we was in Atlanta; dey would; get a Nawthun nigguh down deah, you'd see what dey'd do; yaanh, reckin *dey'd* see thang a tyew. Three any ovem tried it, black rapin bastuhds; but there was very little of this I heard, because I was too sick to hear much, and too busy. I was trying to think what to do and what to say. I had, repeatedly, a very clear image of the moment I would get up, draw a standee aside, and hit the big young sailor who was, after all, very little bigger than me, as hard as I could on his bright, shaven jaw. I also had, repeatedly, the exact image of what would happen then. Singlehanded, that boy could tear me to pieces; what the crowd of them could do was a little beyond my imagination. I had the image of looking him in the eye; various ways, in fact, of looking him in the eye. One was the cold, controlled rage which is occasionally used to pick a fight and which my kind more occasionally uses to bring a sexual quarrel or an intellectual argument as near to nature as we are likely to go. One was the more-in-sorrow-than-in-anger look which is liable to compound some genuineness of feeling with plagiarisms from photographs of Lincoln and paintings of Veronica's veil; it is occasionally used, and effective, when somebody else's neurosis goes wild, but unless you are too good a human being to know you are using it, there is no uglier or more abject device of blackmail. One, worst of them all, was the blank eye which commits itself to nothing. But none of these, it was easy to see, were of any use unless I was ready to back them up physically, and I could hear, just as clearly as I could visualize, the

[Strategy]

THE DEAD KID STAYS IN THE PICTURE

The following email was sent in March by Taylor Donahue, vice president of production at Timely Studios, to Anita Lavine, senior vice president of production.

To: Anita Lavine
From: Taylor Donahue
Subject: Location shooting for *Codename Courage*

Assuming the current situation with Iraq leads to combat activity by U.S. troops, I suggest we get a small film crew credentialed as press to shoot over there. This will solve some of the budget vs. production-value problems we've discussed. In the best-case scenario we can also get one or two of our leads over there in costume to do a scene with the mayhem of real war as a backdrop.

Failing this, we can have the war as a back plate to use with blue screen of our actors.

We'll be the only movie with a multibillion-dollar effects budget.

phonograph-records of talk they would bring on; "nigger lover" is the favorite word. I was also trying to think what to say; for I know from the past—and might have known by some of the Detroit photographs if I had thought of them just then—that their kind of talk and even action is sometimes completely quieted by the right kind of talking, and better quieted then into sullenness; quieted into deep abashment. I have a friend, a small and elderly man, who would have brought that effect almost instantly. But his size and his age would have been a part of it; still more, his perfect self-forgetfulness, his unquestioning intrepidity. I was neither small nor elderly, nor self-forgetful, nor intrepid, nor single-hearted in any one of my perceptions or emotions; I was simply fumbling at words and knowledges: Look here. What are you fighting this war about. I know how you feel, I know you're from the South, I'm from the South myself, I know (I may be, but the way I say it makes it a lie). Things are different there, and all this you see here goes against every way you believe is right. But you've got to get used to it. You've got to know it. This is one of the main things this war is about (is it? is it?). If it isn't about this we might as well not be fighting it at all (we might as well not, indeed). You'll ask me where I've got any right to tell you what you're fighting for. I'm not even in uniform. I'm not I know but I'll be in one soon—next week (will I? do I want to be?). But that's not the point anyhow (this is falling apart). Anyone on this bus has got a right to know the point and to tell it to you, white or black (I sound like a Tennessee senator; race, creed, and coluh), we've got to make this a free country where every human being can be well with every other human being, regardless of race, creed, or color, we've got to make it a world like that. I don't believe you mean the harm you say, honestly, but you've got to realize it, you might as well be fighting for Hitler as to fight for this country feeling the way you do.

It was all so much cotton-batting on my tongue. I couldn't gather a phrase of it together and make it mean anything, even to myself. Talking to them, talking for the corroboration of most of the bus, unable to talk in my own language because my own language would mean nothing even if I could use it with enough belief to make it mean something to me. All the hopeless, bland, advertising-copy claims of the Four Freedoms was running in my head; all the undersupplying of the Chinese; all the talk of the "magnificent courage" of the Red Army, and all the Rice Krispies which took the place of a second front; all the Bryn Mawr girls, planning to police postwar Europe; all the *PM* articles and the Wallace speeches and the slogans; I cannot know to this day with how much justice they undermined me, and with how much cowardice. I only know I could not believe a word I said; and had images of saying it and having the hell beaten out of me, and other images of saying it with effect; and other images of a fight which could be stopped by cops who are as much a phobia to me as rats; and others of modest and of carefully worded and of modestly rhetorical statements by myself, repeated in the press; a small yet not wholly undistinguished instant in the history of the world's long Fight for Freedom; that hit me with self-disgust like a blow in the belly; and I noticed that the big sailor was now standing, and an elderly Negro woman had his seat.

Whether he had stood rather than sit beside her, or out of an instant genuine courtesy, quickly repented, or out of mock courtesy, I could not tell from anything he was saying; and this still further perplexed me. If his motives were the first or the third, then it was more than even I could bear, not to fight him; if he had felt one moment of reflex courtesy, I felt friendliness towards him in spite of all he was now saying. I listened hard, to learn, and could not make out. One reason I could not make out was that I was also listening to the woman. She was talking very little, and crying a little, and telling him, and the whole bus, that he ought to be ashamed, talking that way. People never done him no harm. Ain't your skin that make the difference, it's how you feel inside. Ought to be ashamed. Just might bout's well be Hitluh, as a white man from the South. Wearing a sailor's uniform. Fighting for your country. Ought to be ashamed.

There was an immense relaxation in the quiet through the whole bus; but not in me. I caught the eye, at that moment, of a man about my age, in one of the longways seats across the aisle. He was dressed in a brown, Sunday-looking suit. He may have been a Jew, and more certainly would have described himself, without self-consciousness or satire, as "an intellectual." We looked at each other and a queer, sick smile took one corner of his face, and I felt in my own cheeks that tickling, uncontrollable, nauseating smile which is so liable to seize my face when I tell one close friend disastrous news of another.

I remembered the photograph in *PM*, and looked sternly at the floor, with my cheek twitching.

That evening I told of the whole thing, as honestly as I could, to several people who were down for drinks. They were quite shocked by it, and seemed also rather favorably stirred by my honesty. That embarrassed me a good deal, but not as painfully as I wish it might have, and I found their agreement that they would have done the same almost as revolting as my own performance in the doing of it, and in the telling.

So now I am telling it to you.



Pre-80, Panorama 7, 2000, by Robert Rauschenberg, was on display last month at the PaceWildenstein gallery in New York City.

Artwork © Robert Rauschenberg / Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY

GET RICH OR GET OUT

Attempted robbery with a loaded federal budget

By Thomas Frank

The Bush Administration's proposed budget for 2004 fills five phone book–size volumes; it is 2,866 pages long. The list of authors alone runs to hundreds of names, arranged alphabetically, occupying four pages of four columns each. The UPS man who delivered my copy had to carry it on his shoulder, puffing as he climbed three flights of stairs. When he plunked it down on the floor of my apartment, the dishes rattled in the cupboard.

The five-volume budget set includes a book of precise details in microscopic type, a book of tables showing how much was spent on the various programs over the years, a book of hints for unlucky staffers who have been assigned to think about matters budgetary, and a main volume—a reader-friendly book featuring a continuous prose narrative, full-color pictures of your government in action, items of interest set off in attractively typeset boxes, and a reassuring abundance of the familiar phrases of bureaucracy: "homeland," "stewardship," "caregiver." "Transition" gets used a lot as a verb.

I don't have too much of a problem with the budget's desk-crushing backup volumes. I find it kind of interesting to read seven pages of tables detailing highway expenditures from 1940 to the present. It's the part of the budget I'm supposed to like that I really can't stand.

Let me upgrade that remark: The 2004 budget is toxic. It is an epic of distortion and evasion and contradiction and misleading rhetorical ploys. The object of this malodorous epic is to outline the Bush Administration's plan for plunging the nation from surplus into deficit and to cast the blame for the ensuing disaster on the very people—the retired, the sick, the poor—who will feel the brunt of its effects. Whether Congress alters this budget, reduces its tax cuts, or rejects it altogether is beside the point. This document we will

Thomas Frank is the editor of The Baffler *and the author, most recently, of* One Market Under God. *His last essay for* Harper's Magazine, *"The Trillon-Dollar Hustle," appeared in the January 2002 issue.*

THIS IS NOT CYCLICAL KEYNESIANISM. THIS IS NOT A HELPFUL OR EVEN A BENIGN PROGRAM OF DEFICIT SPENDING. IT IS A BLUEPRINT FOR SABOTAGE

have always with us, an indelible reminder of what the Bush team would if they possibly could.

There is nothing inherently wrong with deficits, even massive ones, a tool of state policy. In wars and recessions it is right and even proper the federal government to spend more than it takes in, so as to ensure th resources continue to flow to consumers and to those hardest hit, and th stimulate the economy. The 2004 budget is not concerned with any that. Here war and recession are merely pretexts for getting the crudest cial trends of the last twenty years moving again. This deficit is designed enrich those at the very top of the social pyramid while cutting services those lower down. This is not cyclical Keynesianism. This is not a help or even a merely benign program of deficit spending. It is a blueprint sabotage. It is an instruction manual for how to power up a complic ed machine and dash it headlong into a stone wall.

After which the president will turn to us and s "See! I told you big government doesn't work."

We know he will say this, because his budget pretty much says it no In the early days of his administration, George Bush was hailed as the "CE president," an M.B.A.-bearing true believer who would put management th ory into practice. This was thought to mean that he was a practical man w would make things work smoothly, just like they supposedly do in a corp ration. What such interpretations overlooked was that management the ry holds government to be a uniquely depraved social actor.

M.B.A.-speak is intertwined with contempt for government throughc the 2004 budget. A preliminary chapter called "Governing with Accoun ability," for example, simply heaps blame on federal shoulders. When c porate scoundrels are accused of wrongdoing, of course, they try to defe themselves, or at least take the Fifth; here the White House can be se confessing, on behalf of previous administrations and, indeed, the ent federal workforce, to just about anything you care to think of. "Fede agencies," for example, are said to be so out of touch that they have "n managed themselves well enough to know whether they had the rig people with the right skills to do their work." Among federal workers "p and performance are generally unrelated," which is apparently not a pro lem in the private sector. Another chapter spreads the blame to federal forts generally, lamenting that "in most cases, we do not know what are getting for our money." This in turn is said to be a failing of "t Washington mentality," which "has wasted untold billions of dollars . The books tell of gaping loopholes in the Social Security system, cred card abuse by federal employees, and preposterous agricultural price su ports, all of these problems flowing together to give the overall impressi that government is simply a gigantic boondoggle.

When government is relieved of its duties by the private sect though, the narrative turns chirpy and upbeat. Indeed, the highlight the budget is meant to be the administration's proposal that every sing federal operation embrace a little M.B.A. magic: outsourcing, merit pa the setting up of websites. Congratulation is due whenever a departme manages to toss a bone to the private sector, such as the construction housing on Army bases or even the taking of bids on the printing of t budget itself, which is such a big deal that it receives its own brag box page 39. It is surely not a coincidence that the Department of Defens one of the only departments Dubya likes enough to increase its funding, flattered on the very first page of its chapter by being compared to a "lar corporation." Call it Regime Change, Inc.

That there might also be waste and inefficiency and even fraud in t private sector is a topic the budget chooses to ignore, just as the Nation Energy Policy, developed by Vice President Dick Cheney in consultati with a cabal of energy executives, refused to acknowledge that electric problems in California were caused by corporations gaming the system.

case of the Department of Defense, that organization so like a "large poration," the problem of private pork is known to be particularly se-e. But although the budget tells proudly of a Navy base that has found ay to save on heating bills, the epidemic of mismanagement at defense tractors and the enormous divide between pay and performance all oss the private sector are neither described nor criticized. Nor is market nipulation by electricity traders, though it cost the government im-nse sums. Nor is cherry-picking by the HMOs, into which this budget nts to push even more Medicare recipients. Nor are the disastrous con-s of interest on Wall Street, even though one of the supplementary get volumes suggests that Wall Street is a good place for our Social Se-ity savings. Nor are the practices of the oil companies that the budget proposes to turn loose on the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and, soon enough, on Iraq. *That* waste and inefficiency is just not up for debate.

Much of the press commentary on this budget has focused on deficits into which it proposes to plunge us. The budget's authors have, course, anticipated this reaction. That surplus for which everyone pines s, we are helpfully informed, nothing more than a "revenue bubble" pro-led by a bull market that was "already in the process of popping" when businessman president took office. Although it is obviously true that booming stock market pumped up tax receipts, and although it was lish for anyone to count on those inflated tax receipts continuing into future, to call the surplus a "bubble" is to confuse the issue. In ordinary ge, a "bubble" is a pitfall of the private sector, a situation in which ces are driven to unsustainable heights by collective fantasies of stupen-us future profits. A bubble is a swindle—you know, like the NASDAQ. re the term is simply used to imply that the surplus was doomed all ng and that the current administration, unlike its predecessor, is in no y to blame for its disappearance. Those tax cuts enacted two years ago? ey did not cause the deficit. The budget would have been in deficit any-y because of falling revenues after the stock-market crash. Tax cuts, erefore, aren't important. Slam door, walk away.

What this fails to consider is that the deficit is *worse*, is *more bad*, than it herwise would have been had those tax cuts not been enacted.* What this ther fails to consider are the deficits going forward, which the budget ex-cts to get bigger as we begin to feel the effects of the mammoth new tax ts *that are proposed only four pages earlier in this selfsame document.*

But no. "The Real Fiscal Danger," the budget tells us in a chapter of that le, is Social Security and Medicare. When you cut rich people's taxes, harm can possibly come. When you offer insurance for the average per-n's health care and retirement, however, you're playing with fire. The sh Administration has already distinguished itself by the lengths to hich it will go to libel Social Security—its handpicked commission privatizing the program actually implied that it was somehow cist—but here the administration outdoes itself in cynical innu-ndo. The budget implies that these programs are in such staggering l repair that they may in fact be responsible for the overall eficit. Here is a sentence that actually occurs on page 31 of the ain volume of the 2004 federal budget:

> But in 2002 the combined shortfall in Social Security and Medicare of nearly $18 trillion was about five times as large as today's publicly held national debt.

An eighteen trillion dollar shortfall! Frightening, is it not? Until

"THE REAL FISCAL DANGER," THE BUDGET TELLS US, IS SOCIAL SECURITY AND MEDICARE. WHEN YOU CUT RICH PEOPLE'S TAXES, NO HARM CAN POSSIBLY COME



A study by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities shows that the 2001 nd 2002 tax cuts caused roughly 30 percent of the decline into deficit and at if they had not been enacted the budget would soon be back in surplus.

ustrations by Tim Bower

WHEN THE OBJECT IS TO IMPUGN SOCIAL SECURITY INSURANCE, IT SEEMS, NO TECHNIQUE, HOWEVER INCONSISTENT OR FANCIFUL OR WRONG, IS OUT OF BOUNDS

you read further and realize that, in fact, both programs are today in s[ur]plus, that Social Security will remain in surplus for fourteen years to co[me] (it will be able to function on the money in its Trust Fund until 2042[*]) and that the $18 trillion figure is a *cumulative seventy-five-year estim[ate]* based on extreme long-term projections that will probably turn out [to] bear as much resemblance to reality then as the Futurama exhibit at t[he] 1939 World's Fair does to our reality today. None of this is admitt[ed] however, until the chapter is nearly over, even though the mind-bendi[ng] $18 trillion number has already been unleashed to do its terrifying wo[rk] on the very first page. The chapter also includes a boxed heart atta[ck] headed "What Does $18 Trillion Mean To You?" which invites the rea[der] to believe that in order to pay for Social Security and Medicare "the fe[d]eral government would have to confiscate almost half of all househo[ld] wealth . . ."

This is irresponsible even on the budget's own terms. In the precedi[ng] chapter, the one about deficits, the authors had insisted that federal bu[d]gets need only look ahead *five years* (rather than ten, which had been t[he] previous standard), on the grounds that longer-term forecasts vary so mu[ch] they are largely worthless. *But not if those forecasts might help to impugn S[o]cial Security and Medicare!* When that is the object, it seems, no tec[h]nique, however inconsistent or speculative or fanciful or simply wrong, [is] out of bounds.

By the terms of normal human interaction, this stuff is so dishonest it's we[ll] nigh Enronian. According to one economist I talked to, the $18 trillion nu[m]ber is so groundless that it can have been introduced here only in order [to] panic and deceive. It is a transparent effort to redirect the blame for the ma[s]sive cuts in government spending that Bush's tax cut will necessitate. An[d] one might add, to come up with some figure that might rival the actu[al] present-day, real-world destruction of more than $7 trillion of househo[ld] wealth by the collapse of the stock market—the very place, as it happen[s] that this administration would rather we put our Social Security money.

Medicare's share of the imaginary $18 trillion is $13 trillion. No o[ne] denies that the system is in trouble; health-care costs in America ha[ve] been out of control for years, soaring above what they are in every oth[er] industrialized country, even those that are healthier than we are, ev[en] those with socialized medicine. To arrive at its frightening nu[m]ber, the administration projects that this situation will contin[ue] and even worsen, with health-care costs ascending at such a ra[te] that they will eventually wreck the entire economy, private se[c]tor and all. For normal readers, this prediction is as shattering [an] indictment of the free-market way as anything ever dreamed [up] by Eugene Debs. But in keeping with their general belief in th[e] infallibility of markets, the authors of the budget offer no plan f[or] restraining health-care costs, as is done in so many other cou[n]tries. They take it for granted that all we will care about as th[e] world goes to managed-care hell is this one shocking numb[er] the tab the taxpayer might have to pay, fished up from wh[ere] knows where and manipulated to imply that the basic idea of s[o]cial insurance is somehow to blame.



[*] *The Social Security Trust Fund is not mentioned in the main budget doc[u]ment. This date is given in the 2003 report of the Social Security trustees. It is a revealing number in and of itself. We have been hearing catastrophic pr[e]dictions about Social Security for almost ten years now, and yet during this tim[e] the date when economists expect the Social Security Trust Fund to run dry kee[ps] getting pushed further and further into the future. The Social Security Trustee[s'] report for 2000 gave the expiration date for the Trust Fund as 2037; th[is] year's report gives it as 2042, yielding a gain of five future years per every thr[ee] actual years. If that rate holds, by 2017, the year the budget names as the b[e]ginning of the end, economists will be gravely warning us that the Trust Fun[d] will expire in 2064*

or Social Security that one shocking number is given as $4.6 trillion. budget asks the reader to imagine this A-bomb of a number, piled up r the next seventy-five years, as though some cosmic collection ncy were phoning us night and day demanding we cough it up *right* . This is like those pro-abstinence posters that tried to convince us t since the total amount a parent spends on a child over the course of child's life is something like $100,000, we shouldn't even contem- e having a kid until we'd saved the hundred grand. Consider also that enty-five years from now the United States will be a much richer ntry than it currently is; asking us to pay off a debt today from that ger, wealthier nation of 2078 is sort of like asking Haiti to pay off nce's debt.

n truth the only way to understand projected future public debt is as a centage of projected future economic output. Economist Dean Baker of Center for Economic Policy Research points out that over the same enty-five-year horizon gross domestic product is also expected to grow, ping the Social Security shortfall at less than one percent of future DP. Measured this way, Baker continues, the $75 billion that President sh requested from Congress in April to pay for the war in Iraq is "big- , relative to GDP, than the amount of money needed to make Social curity fully solvent for the next seventy-five years."

Even if you accept the administration's wildly pessimistic view of Social curity's future, the problem is dwarfed by the size of the administration's cuts. The Center for Budget and Policy Priorities estimates that this dget's proposed tax cuts, added to those of 2001, will, over the course of enty-five years, outweigh Social Security's estimated long-term short- l by a factor of three. Take into consideration who will benefit from ch policy choice—fund Social Security, help out the average American; ahead with the tax cuts, help out the very wealthiest stratum of soci- —and it is clear that what is being proposed here is an historic recon- uration of the machinery of government to serve the rich rather than e poor or even the middle class.

The real problem with Social Security, of course, is that it is a popular d successful program. Its existence confirms that there are economic nctions better served by government than by business, and as such it provides a foundation for the activist government that pro-business conservatives like the current president have dedicated their lives to destroying.

The title that the budget's authors chose to put on the chapter in- oducing the administration's proposed tax cuts is "For Everyone Willing Work, a Job." Willingness to work has nothing to do with it, though. o receive the stock dividends that the chapter proposes to make tax-free ou don't even have to get out of bed in the morning. Dividends merely equire that you have excess money lying around. This budget is the ad- inistration's way of showing its support for a population of unproductive eeloaders, as long as they're rich freeloaders.

The rest of us have to work, of course. And as recent headlines confirm, ork is becoming scarcer by the day. Hence, I suppose, the chapter's odd- socialist-sounding title. But there is, of course, no full-employment pro- ram offered here. In fact, jobs also have nothing to do with what the hapter proposes, except as a hoped-for by-product of the torrential eco- omic activity meant to flow from the dividend windfall for the idle rich. A more accurate title would have been "For Everyone Who Has a Million Dollars, Some More."

For all the media attention that has been paid to the administration's ax package, the budget itself gives the subject surprisingly short shrift. The tax-cut chapter is only four pages long, the figures that it presents re apparently unrelated to those being used by the media, and the breakdown of who will benefit from the tax cuts is as predictably

WHAT IS BEING PROPOSED HERE IS A RECONFIGURATION OF THE MACHINERY OF GOVERNMENT TO SERVE THE RICH RATHER THAN THE POOR OR THE MIDDLE CLASS

WHO WILL DEATH SET HIS FATEFUL HAND? WHO WILL BE DEFUNDED? WILL IT BE HEAD START? OR MEDICAID? OR FOOD STAMPS?

misleading as everything else in this feculent document, proceeding
age group and marital status rather than by the more obvious and use
category of income.

This is unfortunate, at least from a literary standpoint. The tax cut is
far the most daring and controversial and hence interesting aspect of the 20
budget; if passed by Congress, it would surely be the golden cross on wh
federal budgets for years to come were crucified. And yet these five volu
and countless words of text give us almost no idea of what the tax cut ac
ally looks like.

So let's put a face on it. The genius of the administration's new tax-
plan is that it balloons over time as different tax cuts kick in. Passing it n
would take only $40 billion or so out of the federal revenues, but by the y
2013 it will have rolled up a total cost, according to the Citizens for Tax J
tice, of nearly $2 trillion, including interest. Add to that the $1.6 trillion
lost revenue that will eventually result from the 2001 tax cut, and you c
see the vague outlines of the vise in which legislators ten years from now w
find themselves squeezed.

Who will benefit from this? According to the administration, we all w
people in the highest income brackets are only the *immediate* beneficiari
In fact, 77 percent of this year's tax cuts will go to society's richest 20 p
cent. Fully 32 percent of the total tax cuts this year will go to society's ric
est 1 percent. While the average person will get a tax cut of $289 in 200
people who take in more than a million dollars a year will get tax cuts of m
than $30,000 each. Ironically, these are the same people who benefit
from the great bull market of the 1990s, as well as from the great bull ma
ket of the 1980s. The bull may have exhausted himself now, but with Geor
W. Bush taking up the slack these same folks are going to get their third u
decade in a row.

Just imagine how the president's writers might have illustrated this
pect of the budget. Rather than photos of impoverished children getti
school lunches and handicapped people working in a garden, the doc
ments might have included pictures of high-income Americans posi
proudly on their new sailboat, or pointing to the gleaming copper gutte
they've had installed on their suburban manse, or sharing a laugh with th
eager young staff of the rule-breaking libertarian magazine they've e
dowed. We could gawk at their titanium tree house designed by Fra
Gehry, their Turnbull & Asser ties, their friend the congressman, their tr
through Indochina on a sedan chair.

Think also of the drama lurking on the other side of the ledger. One
the reasons the Bush people love tax cuts is that tax cuts defund government-
but gradually and indirectly, allowing plenty of time for blame evasion la
er. Although it may not look like much now, this tax cut is a time bomb plan
ed in the heart of activist government: as it grows, the whopping giveaw
to the rich will compel massive cuts in government spending somewhere dow
the road. Imagine as all the deficit-reduction battles of the early nineties a
fought all over again, only with much greater stakes. Imagine the look of daw
ing desperation on those politicians' faces as they begin to understand Bush
masterful *fait accompli*. Like the U.N. delegates Bush has similarly outma
neuvered, they will vote and speechify in vain. The public will laugh
their impotence. And then will come the moment of hard truth. On whor
will death set his fateful hand? Who will be defunded? Maybe it will b
Head Start. Or Medicaid. Or Food Stamps. Or perhaps the windbags i
D.C. will accede at long last to the administration's desire
and do the only thing that will rescue them from this elegan
trap—gut Social Security.

Cutting the taxes of the wealthy while heaping calumny on So
cial Security and Medicare for not having enough money in the banl
might seem to many readers like a perverse way of doing things, bu
through the prism of management thought it makes perfect sense. Afte

the Bush plan certainly does "build shareholder value," doesn't it? d it rewards top management in the manner to which they are most idedly accustomed. Everyone knows that to attract and retain top tal- you have to offer top compensation packages.

Consider also how the 2004 budget deals with labor, the chronic buzz- of the M.B.A. world. In the spirit of such classic market-model solu- ns as medical savings accounts and school vouchers, it unveils what it ls "Personal Re-employment Accounts" (PRAs), a bold new program ıt may someday supplant traditional unemployment insurance altogeth- The budget describes our existing unemployment system as "an un- eldy relic," mainly because it relies on taxes levied on the worker's for- r employer, and because "employers complain that their federal employment taxes are too high." Awww. PRAs, on the other hand, will ovide the unemployed worker with a fixed sum of money (up to $3,000, parently regardless of the worker's expenses or previous state of employ- ent), doled out to her in installments while she remains unemployed, e balance deliverable as soon as she finds work. The PRA is thus sup- sed to give the worker—get this—an *incentive* to find a job. Evidently at's what's lacking in these recessionary times: the will of workers to get f their ass and stop being poor.

Imagine how an observer who is utterly innocent of American ways ight respond to this. "Won't this incentive business simply be negated the above-described dividend business?" they might ask. "Won't those nemployed workers simply fall back on their newly tax-free dividends nd continue their lazy ways?" Imagine how the room would fall silent nd everyone would blush at the stranger's naïveté, how some thoughtful ushite would take him aside and explain to him that we have, in Ameri- a, something called *social class*. The policies aren't contradictory, since ne people who receive unemployment and the people who receive divi- ends come from very, very different groups. Handouts are okay for the ch, who own most of the stock, but workers—well, workers need to arn *discipline*.

The groups that claim to represent workers need to be taught a lesson, too. ıst as Secretary of Labor Elaine Chao recently took the opportunity of ad- ressing the AFL-CIO's annual meeting to read aloud from a list of union- elated crimes, the budget for the Department of Labor proposes, under ne heading "Standing Up for the Rights of Union Members," to in- rease the budget for investigating and prosecuting unions. "Crack- ng Down on Labor Racketeering," as the budget puts it, might be f some benefit, but it is by no means a burning requirement of the noment. (Did unions destroy the NASDAQ?) The notion's promi- nent place in the budget is yet another blame-dispersal device, this ne lifted from the playbook of the auto industry: whatever goes vrong, blame the unions. In the meantime, the initiative will im- ose costs on innocent unions as well as villainous ones, and is thus clear signal of where the administration's sympathies lie. The La- or Department budget is getting smaller, remember, not bigger, and while the dollars flow for down-cracking, other programs from the days when unions had a say in how the country was run are simply being defunded.

Every kid growing up in Kansas in the seventies knew, as I did, that the Republicans were the party of sound government. Whereas Democrats practiced a degraded politics of tax and tax, spend and spend, elect and elect, Republicans were upright men who stood for balanced budgets and deplored the dalliance with deficits in which the country had engaged since the 1930s. Republicans were insiders, responsible businessmen, people with a personal stake in the fiscal probity of our public institutions.

Now all that stuff sounds like the quaint idealism of youth,

HANDOUTS ARE OKAY FOR THE RICH, WHO OWN MOST OF THE STOCK, BUT WORKERS—WELL, WORKERS NEED TO LEARN *DISCIPLINE*



THE BELIEF THAT GOVERNMENT IS MISGUIDED HAS GIVEN WAY TO THE BELIEF THAT GOVERNMENT IS UNREDEEMABLE AND THE LIBERALS WHO STAFF IT, TREASONABLE

something akin to my Boy Scout faith that the United States would nev strike first in a war. To believe either today you'd have to have spent long time on another planet.

There still are honorable, balanced-budget Republicans, of course. B the dominant, conservative strain of the party's thought and rhetoric h gone way beyond probity. Today the GOP is not the responsible gover ment party; it is the antigovernment party.

"Government is not the solution to our problem," Ronald Reagan f mously said in his first inaugural address. "Government is the problem Today the phrase reverberates across the years, echoed by a mighty ch rus: Limbaugh, Coulter, Liddy, North, O'Reilly, Hannity; Fox New Conrad Black, FreeRepublic.com; Gingrich, Barr, DeLay; Haywort Gramm, Santorum. Yesterday's far right is today's mainstream, and th belief that government is merely misguided has given way to the beli that government is unredeemable; that the liberals who staff it are eli ist, un-American, treasonable. Talk to the average Kansan about pol tics today and you will find that he despises the federal government th way one would despise a colonial tyrant. He believes it has nothing t offer him, despite the fact that it paid for his college education and h subsidized his way of life with agricultural price supports. He imagin that by writing government-hating emails on some listserv, he is partic pating in a noble brotherhood of revolutionary patriots not unlike th Founding Fathers.

Much of the GOP's most spectacular initiatives over the last ten yea seem to have been designed less to accomplish some overt object than t throw a wrench into the works of this despised institution. Conservativ turn a budget debate into a crusade to shut the government down. The paralyze the executive branch with harassing investigations and impeach ment proceedings. They joke about assassinating a Democratic presiden They fantasize about abolishing entire departments. They cut the wages federal workers. They dream up ways to make the tax code bear mo heavily on the poor, in order to turn the poor against government an "get [their] blood boiling with tax rage," as the *Wall Street Journal* recent put it.* They suggest that they might default on government bonds. The "strengthen" Social Security by making it appear weaker. Even Republ can blunders such as Watergate wind up reinforcing their message: *Yo just can't trust government!*

Reckless, massive deficits have become, since Reagan, the signatur gesture of Republican administrations. The goal is not so much to prim the economic pump, as in the liberals' beloved Keynesian theory, but t break it. And along the way, to do unto the despised liberals as the cor servatives believe the liberals have done unto them for decades. Trad tional deficit spending, according to conservative dogma, redistribute the hard-earned wealth of *real* Americans down into the pockets liberalism's contemptible constituents. Republican deficit spendin by contrast, reverses this flow and redistributes wealth upward, int the bank accounts of *their* people.

That's the goal if you believe this has all been though through. It seems equally likely that this budget document, i both its juvenile rhetorical tricks and its idiotic plans for th nation, is merely supposed to teach us a lesson in how badl



In my home state of Kansas, which is currently caught in a budget cr sis of its own thanks to rabid tax cutting in the 1990s, the Republican dominated state legislature proposed to deal with the problem by delayin state tax refunds. This will, of course, infuriate voters, but, as Mik Hendricks of the Kansas City Star *recently pointed out, their fury will lik ly fall not on the stridently anti-tax Republicans who did this to them but o the usual targets—the state revenue department and the machinery of stat government, which happens to have a Democratic governor at its head.*

vernment can misbehave. Conservatives know that what will be dis-
dited as we slide toward the inevitable reckoning is not the Republi-
n Party but deficit spending, the whole hated concept of an interven-
nist government.

Historians often describe the New Deal of the 1930s as an effort to save cap-
lism from itself. Maybe that's what the policies of the Bush Administration
, too, coming as they do after a systemic crisis that in many ways resem-
s that of 1929–33. The technique, however, is different. The Bush team
ms bent on so battering and stigmatizing the only institution capable of
licing capitalism that we will be left with no practical alternative. They will
fritter away the surplus. They will squander the goodwill of the
world. They will jam the locomotive into reverse, toss some-
thing heavy on the throttle, and jump for it.

In 1981 the conservative thinker George Gilder published *Wealth
d Poverty*, a fire-breathing damnation of government's interference with
pitalism that inspired the Reagan Administration's own strategy of
ficit-inducing tax cuts. Twenty-two years later, Gilder is still hammer-
g away at the villainy of government, though the particulars of the in-
ctment have changed a little. Today it's all about "trust," a property the
ivate sector is said to possess in great abundance but that government
cks. In a free market, Gilder asserts in the December issue of *Forbes*
agazine, "the truth will out in a relatively short time," and the laws of
ature will see to it that those who have abused our trust will face the
nsequences. Weaselly, unaccountable government, however, screws up
erything that it touches—naturally, Gilder finds malevolent signifi-
nce in the term "antitrust"—and the moral gulf between government
d the pursuit of private profit strikes Gilder as so vast that he "trust[s]
enneth Lay of Enron and Bernard Ebbers of WorldCom" even more
an he trusts Justices Rehnquist and Scalia.

Gilder apparently has much to teach us about the ways in which trust
d accountability work in America circa 2003. After writing speeches for
eagan, he became a freelance prophet of Silicon Valley, discovering that
e microchip agreed with Reagan in many important respects. He was a
ne-man *Wired* magazine, with heavy religious overtones: constructing a
irtual theology of what he called the "telecosm," worshiping at the
rine of the entrepreneur, becoming a superstar stock picker. And he
ore as much responsibility for puffing the "New Economy" bubble as any-
ne in America.

Today the telecoms have imploded, and Gilder's portfolio of tech-stock
icks, the subject of journalistic awe three years ago, has lost more than
0 percent of its peak value. If you trusted Gilder, you would be sorry
ow. Yet here he is, like those CEOs who walk away with millions while
heir companies die, still at it, inveighing against government in the pages
f *Forbes*, proclaiming that the only way to react to the economic down-
urn he insists capitalism didn't cause is by doing absolutely nothing, by
etting the market enforce its trust laws in its own mysterious way. Were
ne not struck speechless by the self-serving audacity of Gilder's argu-
nents, one might respond that his own continuing prominence rather
neatly disproves the whole accountability myth.

Gilder is able to soldier on because the fantasy world he imagines in
uch vivid colors—that perfect libertarian universe in which markets
vork flawlessly and the blame for anything that goes wrong can be neatly
outsourced to government—is one in which the very, very wealthy dearly
ike to believe. In March, I attended one of Gilder's high-tech business
conferences, this one having to do with what he calls "Storewidth." The
nigh point of the gathering was not the technical presentations, even
with their projections of amazing entrepreneurship to come; it was a polit-
cal stem-winder delivered by Gilder's friend and patron Steve Forbes, the
publisher and onetime presidential candidate.

TODAY IT'S ALL ABOUT "TRUST," A PROPERTY THE PRIVATE SECTOR IS SAID TO POSSESS IN GREAT ABUNDANCE BUT THAT GOVERNMENT LACKS

NOW COMES GEORGE W. BUSH, SAVIOR OF HIS CLASS, TO GET THE GOOD TIMES ROLLING AGAIN WITH A TAX CUT SO LARGE IT MAY WELL REPLACE THE NASDAQ

Naturally the Bush tax plan was prominent in Forbes's thoughts. I fact, he was ecstatic about the prospects, calling the elimination of th dividends tax a "step forward to the flat tax," his own pet idea for enrich ing the rich. With those who complain about the return of deficits Forbe had no patience at all, since *obviously* the federal shortfalls would quickl be made good by the economic growth that the tax cuts would surely ur leash. The doubters, he went on, were motivated by a congenital hatre of the very idea of tax cuts; besides, Washington used accounting tha would "make Enron look honest." And this was an odd thing to sa Wasn't Forbes's own magazine one of the many business publicatio that literally *did* make Enron look honest? And not just Enron, but ele tricity deregulation itself, the billions to be made in bandwidth, th whole New Economy swindle?

Maybe so, but Forbes was showing no contrition. The business class ha led us into disaster, but now they thought they deserved some help from Un cle Sam. They wanted what Forbes called "the dead weight of Washingto off their backs. They wanted the entire world to embrace their deregulat ry agenda. They wanted a tax cut.

Walking around the luxurious hotel in which the conference was bein held, it wasn't hard to see why. The St. Regis Monarch Beach Resort Spa was built two years ago, at the tail end of the bull market, in th southern California city of Dana Point, just a little inland from the eve posher Ritz-Carlton. It's the kind of place that sifts people like me o even before we get inside: arriving by car, you either pay the valet a come sweeping in the grand, chandeliered main entrance or you park yourself and enter via an unmarked door tucked away behind the registr tion counter. The hotel has its own high-end antiques store; it has its ow bakery/coffee shop with old-style wood trimmings; it has a fine restaura with the requisite jeroboams of champagne posted by the door; it has Versailles-size fountain and a golf course overlooking the Pacific; hangi over the bar it has an enormous reproduction of Maxfield Parrish's *Gard of Allah*, one of those idyllic dream-scenes in which everything shimme in a golden haze. And aside from the conference attendees, the hotel w almost deserted.

I sat by myself on the hotel's vast, sweeping veranda and looked out pa the empty balconies of the hotel rooms, the empty deck chairs by the em ty swimming pool, the empty terrace with the oversize planters, out to th brand new empty suburb erupting from a nearby hillside, all the oche colored homes ready to be occupied. The instant civilization of upper-cla America was all here, antiques to zabaglione, but no one had come to co sume it.

They call this "excess capacity." Just like in Gilder's beloved telecom i dustry, which so overbuilt during the bubble years that only 5 percent of fiber-optic lines worldwide are currently in use, someone had made a hu miscalculation here. They had plunked down an enormous bet on goo times for the rich carrying on forever, just when the free money from Si con Valley was starting to dry up.

But now comes George W. Bush, savior of his class, to get the goo times rolling again, to give us a tax cut of such magnitude that it may we replace the NASDAQ and keep the people of southern California rela ing in style. Social Security will be steered deliberately into the groun but excess capacity in the luxury industry is one problem that the feder budget for 2004 will undoubtedly solve. Their coffers swelled with tax-fr dividends and inheritances, the Republicans will soon be back Monarch Beach. Tan men dressed in business casual will pull up to th grand entrance in Boxsters and Ferraris. Cosmopolitans will clink und the Maxfield Parrish. Hungover heiresses will chew biscotti in th European-style coffee shop. And the venture capitalists will return at la toasting their clients out on the veranda, opening that jeroboam, cel brating as though none of it had ever happened.

THE LAST AMERICANS

Environmental collapse and the end of civilization

By Jared Diamond

I met a traveler from an antique land
Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert . . . Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed:
And on the pedestal these words appear:
"My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!"
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away.
—"Ozymandias," Percy Bysshe Shelley

One of the disturbing facts of history is that so many civilizations collapse. Few people, however, least of all our politicians, realize that a primary cause of the collapse of those societies has been the destruction of the environmental resources on which they depended. Fewer still appreciate that many of those civilizations share a sharp curve of decline. Indeed, a society's demise may begin only a decade or two after it reaches its peak population, wealth, and power.



Recent archaeological discoveries have revealed similar courses of collapse in such otherwise dissimilar ancient societies as the Maya in the Yucatán, the Anasazi in the American Southwest, the Cahokia mound builders outside St. Louis, the Greenland Norse, the statue builders of Easter Island, ancient Mesopotamia in the Fertile Crescent, Great Zimbabwe in Africa, and Angkor Wat in Cambodia. These civilizations, and many others, succumbed to various combinations of environmental degradation and climate change, aggression from enemies taking advantage of their resulting weakness, and declining trade with neighbors who faced their own environmental problems. Because peak population, wealth, resource consumption, and waste production are accompanied by peak environmental impact—approaching the limit at which impact outstrips resources—we can now understand why declines of societies tend to follow swiftly on their peaks.

These combinations of undermining factors were compounded by cultural attitudes preventing those in power from perceiving or resolving the crisis. That's a familiar problem today. Some of us are inclined to dismiss the importance of a healthy environment, or at least to suggest that it's just one of many problems facing us—an "issue." That dismissal is based on three dangerous misconceptions.

Foremost among these misconceptions is that we must balance the environment against human needs. That reasoning is exactly upside-down. Human needs and a healthy environment are

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Illustrations by Stan Fellows

[illegible] that must be balanced. Instead, they are inexorably linked by chains of cause and effect. We need a healthy environment because we need clean water, clean air, wood, and food from the ocean, plus soil and sunlight to grow crops. We need functioning natural ecosystems, with their native species of earthworms, bees, plants, and microbes, to generate and aerate our soils, pollinate our crops, decompose our wastes, and produce our oxygen. We need to prevent toxic substances from accumulating in our water and air and soil. We need to prevent weeds, germs, and other pest species from becoming established in places where they aren't native and where they cause economic damage. Our strongest arguments for a healthy environment are selfish: we want it for ourselves, not for threatened species like snail darters, spotted owls, and Furbish louseworts.

BEHOLD, SAY THE OPTIMISTS: WE ARE MORE PROSPEROUS THAN EVER BEFORE, AND THAT'S THE FINAL PROOF THAT OUR SYSTEM WORKS

Another popular misconception is that we can trust in technology to solve our problems. Whatever environmental problem you name, you can also name some hoped-for technological solution under discussion. Some of us have faith that we shall solve our dependence on fossil fuels by developing new technologies for hydrogen engines, wind energy, or solar energy. Some of us have faith that we shall solve our food problems with new or soon-to-be-developed genetically modified crops. Some of us have faith that new technologies will succeed in cleaning up the toxic materials in our air, water, soil, and foods without the horrendous cleanup expenses that we now incur.

Those with such faith assume that the new technologies will ultimately succeed, but in fact some of them may succeed and others may not. They assume that the new technologies will succeed quickly enough to make a big difference soon, but all of these major technological changes will actually take five to thirty years to develop and implement—if they catch on at all. Most of all, those with faith assume that new technology won't cause any new problems. In fact, technology merely constitutes increased power, which produces changes that can be either for the better or for the worse. All of our current environmental problems are unanticipated harmful consequences of our existing technology. There is no basis for believing that technology will miraculously stop causing new and unanticipated problems while it is solving the problems that it previously produced.

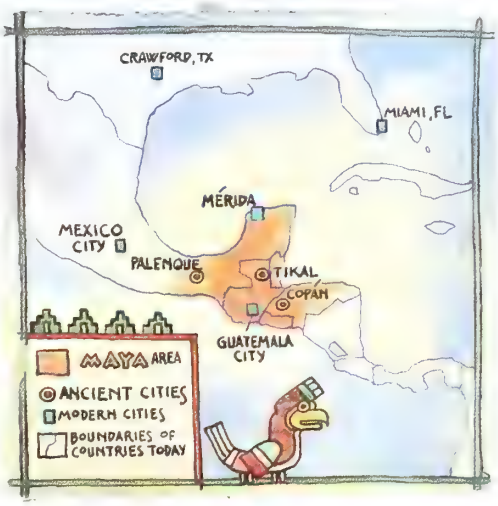
The final misconception holds that enviro[n]mentalists are fear-mongering, overreactin[g] extremists whose predictions of impending di[s]aster have been proved wrong before and wi[ll] be proved wrong again. Behold, say the opt[i]mists: water still flows from our faucets, th[e] grass is still green, and the supermarkets ar[e] full of food. We are more prosperous than ev[er] before, and that's the final proof that our sy[s]tem works.

Well, for a few billion of the world's peopl[e] who are causing us increasing trouble, ther[e] isn't any clean water, there is less and les[s] green grass, and there are no supermarkets fu[ll] of food. To appreciate what the environmenta[l] problems of those billions of people mean fo[r] us Americans, compare the following two list[s] of countries. First ask some ivory-towe[r] academic ecologist who knows a lot about th[e] environment but never reads a newspaper an[d] has no interest in politics to list the oversea[s] countries facing some of the worst problems o[f] environmental stress, overpopulation, or both[.] The ecologist would answer, "That's a no[-] brainer, it's obvious. Your list of environmen[-]tally stressed or overpopulated countries shoul[d] surely include Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bu[-]rundi, Haiti, Indonesia, Iraq, Nepal, Pakistan[,] the Philippines, Rwanda, the Solomon Islands[,] and Somalia, plus others." Then ask a Firs[t] World politician who knows nothing, an[d] cares less, about the environment and popula[-]tion problems to list the world's worst troubl[e] spots: countries where state government has al[-]ready been overwhelmed and has collapsed, o[r] is now at risk of collapsing, or has bee[n] wracked by recent civil wars; and countrie[s] that, as a result of their problems, are also cre[-]ating problems for us rich First World coun[-]tries, which may be deluged by illegal immi[-]grants, or have to provide foreign aid to thos[e] countries, or may decide to provide them with[-] military assistance to deal with rebellions an[d] terrorists, or may even (God forbid) have t[o] send in our own troops. The politician woul[d] answer, "That's a no-brainer, it's obvious. You[r] list of political trouble spots should surely in[-]clude Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Burundi, Haiti[,] Indonesia, Iraq, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philip[-]pines, Rwanda, the Solomon Islands, and So[-]malia, plus others."

The connection between the two lists i[s] transparent. Today, just as in the past, countrie[s] that are environmentally stressed, overpopulat[-]ed, or both are at risk of becoming politicall[y] stressed, and of seeing their governments col[-]lapse. When people are desperate and under[-]nourished, they blame their government[,] which they see as responsible for failing t[o] solve their problems. They try to emigrate a[t]

y cost. They start civil wars. They kill one other. They figure that they have nothing to e, so they become terrorists, or they support tolerate terrorism. The results are genocides h as the ones that already have exploded in rundi, Indonesia, and Rwanda; civil wars, as Afghanistan, Indonesia, Nepal, the Philipnes, and the Solomon Islands; calls for the patch of First World troops, as to Afghanan, Indonesia, Iraq, the Philippines, Rwanda, e Solomon Islands, and Somalia; the collapse central government, as has already happened Somalia; and overwhelming poverty, as in of the countries on these lists.

But what about the United States? Some might gue that the environmental collapse of ancnt societies is relevant to the modern decline weak, far-off, overpopulated Rwanda and enronmentally devastated Somalia, but isn't it liculous to suggest any possible relevance to the te of our own society? After all, we might rean, those ancients didn't enjoy the wonders of odern environment-friendly technologies. hose ancients had the misfortune to suffer from e effects of climate change. They behaved studly and ruined their own environment by dog obviously dumb things, like cutting down eir forests, watching their topsoil erode, and uilding cities in dry areas likely to run short of ater. They had foolish leaders who didn't have ooks and so couldn't learn from history, and ho embroiled them destabilizing wars nd didn't pay attenon to problems at ome. They were verwhelmed by deerate immigrants, as ne society after anther collapsed, sendng floods of economc refugees to tax the esources of the socities that weren't colapsing. In all those respects, we modern Americans are fundanentally different rom those primitive ncients, and there is othing that we could earn from them.



Or so the argument goes. It's an argument so ingrained both in our subconscious and in public discourse that it has assumed the status of objective reality. We think we are different. In fact, of course, all of those powerful societies of the past thought that they too were unique, right up to the moment of their collapse. It's sobering to consider the swift decline of the ancient Maya, who 1,200 years ago were themselves the most advanced society in the Western Hemisphere, and who, like us now, were then at the apex of their own power and numbers. Two excellent recent books, David Webster's *The Fall of the Ancient Maya* and Richardson Gill's *The Great Maya Droughts*, help bring the trajectory of Maya civilization back to life for us. Their studies illustrate how even sophisticated societies like that of the Maya (and ours) can be undermined by details of rainfall, farming methods, and motives of leaders.

By now, millions of modern Americans have visited Maya ruins. To do so, one need only take a direct flight from the United States to the Yucatán capital of Mérida, jump into a rental car or minibus, and drive an hour on a paved highway. Most Maya ruins, with their great temples and monuments, lie surrounded by jungles (seasonal tropical forests), far from current human settlement. They are "pure" archaeological sites. That is, their locations became depopulated, so they were not covered up by later buildings as were so many other ancient cities, like the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlán—now buried under modern Mexico City—and Rome.

One of the reasons few people live there now is that the Maya homeland poses serious environmental challenges to would-be farmers. Although it has a somewhat unpredictable rainy season from May to October, it also has a dry season from January through April. Indeed, if one focuses on the dry months, one could describe the Yucatán as a "seasonal desert."

Complicating things, from a farmer's perspective, is that the part of the Yucatán with the most rain, the south, is also the part at the highest elevation above the water table. Most of the Yucatán consists of karst—a porous, spongelike, limestone terrain—and so rain runs straight into the ground, leaving little or no surface water. The Maya in the lower-elevation regions of the north were able to reach the water table by way of deep sinkholes called cenotes, and the Maya in low coastal areas without sinkholes could reach it by digging wells up to 75 feet deep. Most Maya, however, lived in the

south. How did they deal with their resulting water problem?

Technology provided an answer. The Maya plugged up leaks on karst promontories by plastering the bottoms of depressions to create reservoirs, which collected rain and stored it for use in the dry season. The reservoirs at the Maya city of Tikal, for example, held enough water to meet the needs of about 10,000 people for eighteen months. If a drought lasted longer than that, though, the inhabitants of Tikal were in deep trouble.

Maya farmers grew mostly corn, which constituted the astonishingly high proportion of about 70 percent of their diet, as deduced from isotope analyses of ancient Maya skeletons. They grew corn by means of a modified version of swidden slash-and-burn agriculture, in which forest is cleared, crops are grown in the resulting clearing for a few years until the soil is exhausted, and then the field is abandoned for fifteen to twenty years until regrowth of wild vegetation restores the soil's fertility. Because most of the land under a swidden agricultural system is fallow at any given time, it can support only modest population densities. Thus, it was a surprise for archaeologists to discover that ancient Maya population densities, judging from numbers of stone foundations of farmhouses, were often far higher than what unmodified swidden agriculture could support: often 250 to 750 people per square mile. The Maya probably achieved those high populations by such means as shortening the fallow period and tilling the soil to restore soil fertility, or omitting the fallow period entirely and growing crops every year, or, in especially moist areas, growing two crops per year.



Socially stratified societies, ours included, consist of farmers who produce food, plus nonfarmers such as bureaucrats and soldiers who do not produce food and are in effect parasites on farmers. The farmers must grow enough food to meet not only their own needs but also those of everybody else. The number of nonproducing consumers who can be supported depends on the society's agricultural productivity. In the United States today, with its highly efficient agriculture, farmers make up only 2 percent of our population, and each farmer can feed, on the average, 129 other people. Ancient Egyptian agriculture was efficient enough for an Egyptian peasant to produce five times the food required for himself and his family. But a Maya peasant could produce only twice the needs of himself and his family.

Fully 80 percent of Maya society consisted of peasants. Their inability to support many nonfarmers resulted from several limitations of their agriculture. It produced little protein, because corn has a much lower protein content than wheat, and because the few edible domestic animals kept by the Maya (turkeys, ducks, and dogs) included no large animals like our cows and sheep. There was little use of terracing or irrigation to increase production. In the Maya area's humid climate, stored corn would rot or become infested after a year, so the Maya couldn't get through a longer drought by eating surplus corn accumulated in good years. And unlike Old World peoples with their horses, oxen, donkeys, and camels, the Maya had no animal-powered transport. Indeed, the Maya lacked not only pack animals and animal-drawn plows but also metal tools, wheels, and boats with sails. All those great Maya temples were built by stone and wooden tools and human muscle power alone, and all overland transport went on the backs of human porters.

Those limitations on food supply and food transport may in part explain why Maya society remained politically organized in small kingdoms that were perpetually at war with one another and that never became unified into large empires like the Aztec empire of the Valley of Mexico (fed by highly productive agriculture) or the Inca empire of the Andes (fed by diverse crops carried on llamas). Maya armies were small and unable to mount lengthy campaigns over long distances. The typical Maya kingdom held a population of only up to 50,000 people, within a radius of two or three days' walk from the king's palace. From the top of the temple of some Maya kingdoms, one could see the tops of the temples of other kingdoms.

Presiding over the temple was the king himself, who functioned both as head priest and as political leader. It was his responsibility to pray to the gods, to perform astronomical and calendrical rituals, to ensure the timely arrival of the rains on which agriculture depended, and thereby to bring prosperity. The king

imed to have the supernatural power to de-
er those good things because of his asserted
ily relationship to the gods. Of course, that
osed him to the risk that his subjects would
come disillusioned if he couldn't fulfill his boast of being able to deliver rains and prosperity.

Those are the basic outlines of Classic aya society, which for all its limitations last-
more than 500 years. Indeed, the Maya emselves believed that it had lasted for ich longer. Their remarkable Long Count lendar had its starting date (analogous to nuary 1, A.D. 1 of our calendar) backdated o the remote preliterate past, at August 11, 14 B.C. The first physical evidence of civi-ation within the Maya area, in the form of illagers and pottery, appeared around 1400 C., substantial buildings around 500 B.C., and iting around 400 B.C. The so-called Classic riod of Maya history arose around A.D. 250, nen evidence for the first kings and dynasties nerged. From then, the Maya population in-eased almost exponentially, to reach peak mbers in the eighth century A.D. The largest onuments were erected toward the end of at century. All the indicators of a complex ciety declined throughout the ninth century, ntil the last date on any monument was A.D. 09. This decline of Maya population and ar-nitecture constitutes what is known as the lassic Maya collapse.

What happened? Let's consider in more de-il a city whose ruins now lie in western Hon-uras at the world-famous site of Copán. The ost fertile ground in the Copán area consists f five pockets of flat land along a river valley ith a total area of only one square mile; the rgest of those five pockets, known as the opán pocket, has an area of half a square ile. Much of the land around Copán consists f steep hills with poor soil. Today, corn yields om valley-bottom fields are two or three times hose of fields on hill slopes, which suffer rapid rosion and lose most of their productivity ithin a decade of farming.

To judge by the number of house sites, popu-ation growth in the Copán valley rose steeply rom the fifth century up to a peak estimated at round 27,000 people between A.D. 750 and 900. Construction of royal monuments glorifying kings ecame especially massive from A.D. 650 onward. After A.D. 700, nobles other than kings got into he act and began erecting their own palaces, in-reasing the burden that the king and his own ourt already imposed on the peasants. The last ig buildings at Copán were put up around A.D. 00; the last date on an incomplete altar possi-ly bearing a king's name is A.D. 822.

Archaeological surveys of different types of habitats in the Copán valley show that they were occupied in a regular sequence. The first area farmed was the large Copán pocket of bottomland, followed by occupation of the other four bottomland pockets. During that time the human population was growing, but the hills remained uninhabited. Hence that increased population must have been accommodated by intensifying production in the bottomland pockets: probably some combination of shorter fallow periods and double-cropping. By A.D. 500, people had started to settle the hill slopes, but those sites were occupied only briefly. The percentage of Copán's total population that was in the hills, rather than in the valleys, peaked in the year 575 and then declined, as the population again became concentrated in the pockets.

What caused that pullback of population from the hills? From excavation of building foundations on the valley floor we know that they became covered with sediment during the eighth century, meaning that the hill slopes were becoming eroded and probably also leached of nutrients. The acidic hill soils being carried down into the valley would have reduced agricultural yields. The reason for that erosion of the hillsides is clear: the forests that formerly covered them and protected their soil were being cut down. Dated pollen samples show that the pine forests originally covering the hilltops were eventually all cleared, to be burned for fuel. Besides causing sediment accumulation in the valleys and depriving valley inhabitants of wood supplies, that deforestation may have begun to cause a "man-made drought" in the valley bottom, because forests play a major role in water cycling, such that massive deforestation tends to result in lowered rainfall.

MAYA SOCIETY WAS POLITICALLY ORGANIZED IN SMALL KINGDOMS THAT WERE PERPETUALLY AT WAR WITH ONE ANOTHER

Hundreds of skeletons recovered from Copán archaeological sites have been studied for signs of disease and poor nutrition, such as porous bones and stress lines in the teeth. Those skeletal signs show that the health of Copán's inhabitants deteriorated from A.D. 650 to 850, among both the elite and commoners, though the health of commoners was worse.

Recall that Copán's population was growing rapidly while the hills were being occupied. The subsequent abandonment of all of those hill fields meant that the burden of feeding the extra population formerly dependent on the hills now fell increasingly on the valley floor, and that more and more people were competing for the food grown

Trouble preceded the harp reed from which the Maya made them

The Maya history that I have just related, and Copan history in particular, illustrate why we talk about "the Maya collapse." But the story is more complicated, for at least five reasons. There was not only that enormous Classic collapse but also at least two smaller pre-Classic collapses, around A.D. 150 and 600, as well as some post-Classic collapses. The Classic collapse was obviously not complete, because hundreds of thousands of Maya survived, in most with reliable water supplies, to meet and fight the Spaniards. The collapse of population was caused by numbers of homicides and of deaths (and by warfare) that were much lower than the declines in numbers of Long Count dates. Many apparent collapses of cities were nothing more than "power cycling", i.e., particular cities becoming more powerful at the expense of neighboring cities, then declining or even being conquered by neighbors, without changes in the whole population. Finally, cities in different parts of the Maya area rose and fell on different trajectories.

Some archaeologists seize on these complications and don't want to recognize a Classic Maya collapse at all. But they overlook the obvious fact that one must try to explain the disappearance of between 90 and 99 percent of the Maya population after A.D. 800, and of the construction of the Long Count calendars, and other complex political and cultural institutions. Before we can understand these big questions, however, we need first to understand the roles of nature and of human choice.

Archaeologists for a long time believed that ancient Maya to be gentle and peaceful people. We now know that Maya warfare was intense, chronic, and unresolvable, because limitations of food supply and transportation made it impossible for any Maya principality to unite the whole region in an empire. The archaeological record shows that war became more intense and frequent toward the time of the Classic collapse. That evidence comes from discoveries of several types since the Second World War: archaeological excavations of massive fortifications surrounding many Maya sites, vivid depictions of warfare and captives on stone monuments and on the famous painted murals discovered in 1946 at Bonampak, and the decipherment of Maya writing, much of which proved to consist of royal inscriptions boasting of conquests. Maya kings fought to capture and torture one another, and unfortunate loser was a Copan king with the unforgettable name of King 18 Rabbit.

Maya warfare involved well-documented types of violence: wars among separate kingdoms, attempts of cities within a kingdom to secede by revolting against the capital, and civil wars resulting from frequent violent attempts by would-be kings to usurp the throne. All of these events were described or depicted on monuments, because they involved kings and nobles. Not considered worthy of description, but probably even more frequent, were fights between commoners over land, as overpopulation became excessive and land became scarce.

The other phenomenon important to understanding all of these collapses is the repeated occurrence of droughts, as inferred by climatologists from evidence of lake evaporation preserved in lake sediments, and as summarized by Gill in *The Great Maya Droughts*. The rise of Maya civilization may have been facilitated by a rainy period beginning around 2000 B.C., until a temporary drought after A.D. 1 was associated with a pre-Classic collapse at some sites. That collapse was followed by the resumption of rainy conditions and the buildup of Classic Maya cities, briefly interrupted by another drought around 600 corresponding to a decline at Tikal and some other sites. Finally, around A.D. 750 there began the worst drought in the past 7,000 years, peaking around the year A.D. 800, and suspiciously associated with the Classic collapse.

The area most affected by the Classic collapse was the southern lowlands, probably for the two reasons already mentioned. It was the area with the densest population, and it also had the most severe water problems because it lay too high above the water table for cenotes or wells to provide water. The southern lowlands lost more

99 percent of its population in the course of Classic collapse. When Cortés and his Spanrmy marched in 1524 and 1525 through an formerly inhabited by millions of Maya, he ly starved because he encountered so few agers from whom to acquire corn. The niards passed within only a few miles of the ndoned ruins of the great Classic cities of Tikal and Palenque, but still they heard or saw nothing of them.

We can identify increasingly familiar nds in the Classic Maya collapse. One con- d of population growth outstripping avail- e resources: the dilemma foreseen by omas Malthus in 1798. As Webster suc- tly puts it in *The Fall of the Ancient Maya*, o many farmers grew too many crops on too h of the landscape." While population was reasing, the area of usable farmland paraically was decreasing from the effects of destation and hillside erosion.

The next strand consisted of increased fighting nore and more people fought over fewer rces. Maya warfare, already endemic, peaked before the collapse. That is not surprising en one reflects that at least 5 million people, st of them farmers, were crammed into an area aller than the state of Colorado. That's a high pulation by the standards of ancient farming ieties, even if it wouldn't strike modern nhattan-dwellers as crowded.

Bringing matters to a head was a drought that, hough not the first one the Maya had been ough, was the most ere. At the time of evious droughts, re were still uninbited parts of the aya landscape, and ople in a drought ea or dust bowl uld save themselves moving to another e. By the time of e Classic collapse, owever, there was useful unoccupied nd in the vicinity n which to begin ew, and the whole pulation could not accommodated in e few areas that continued to have reliable water supplies.



The final strand is political. Why did the ngs and nobles not recognize and solve these oblems? A major reason was that their attenon was evidently focused on the short-term oncerns of enriching themselves, waging wars, erecting monuments, competing with one another, and extracting enough food from the peasants to support all those activities. Like most leaders throughout human history, the Maya kings and nobles did not have the leisure to focus on long-term problems, insofar as they perceived them.

What about those same strands today? The United States is also at the peak of its power, and it is also suffering from many environmental problems. Most of us have become aware of more crowding and stress. Most of us living in large American cities are encountering increased commuting delays, because the number of people and hence of cars is increasing faster than the number of freeway lanes. I know plenty of people who in the abstract doubt that the world has a population problem, but almost all of those same people complain to me about crowding, space issues, and traffic experienced in their personal lives.

Many parts of the United States face locally severe problems of water restriction (especially southern California, Arizona, the Everglades, and, increasingly, the Northeast); forest fires resulting from logging and forest-management practices throughout the intermontane West; and losses of farmlands to salinization, drought, and climate change in the northern Great Plains. Many of us frequently experience problems of air quality, and some of us also experience problems of water quality and taste. We are losing economically valuable natural resources. We have already lost American chestnut trees, the Grand Banks cod fishery, and the Monterey sardine fishery; we are in the process of losing swordfish and tuna and Chesapeake Bay oysters and elm trees; and we are losing topsoil.

The list goes on: All of us are experiencing personal consequences of our national dependence on imported energy, which affects us not only through higher gas prices but also through the current contraction of the national economy, itself the partial result of political problems associated with our oil dependence. We are saddled with expensive toxic cleanups at many locations, most notoriously near Montana mines, on the Hudson River, and in the Chesapeake Bay. We also face expensive

eradication problems resulting from hundreds of introduced pest species—including zebra mussels, Mediterranean fruit flies, Asian longhorn beetles, water hyacinth, and spotted knapweed—that now affect our agriculture, forests, waterways, and pastures.

These particular environmental problems, and many others, are enormously expensive in terms of resources lost, cleanup and restoration costs, and the cost of finding substitutes for lost resources: a billion dollars here, 10 billion there, in dozens and dozens of cases. Some of the problems, especially those of air quality and toxic substances, also exact health costs that are large, whether measured in dollars or in lost years or in quality of life. The cost of our homegrown environmental problems adds up to a large fraction of our gross national product, even without mentioning the costs that we incur from environmental problems overseas, such as the military operations that they inspire. Even the mildest of bad scenarios for our future include a gradual economic decline, as happened to the Roman and British empires. Actually, in case you didn't notice it, our economic decline is already well under way. Just check the numbers for our national debt, yearly government budget deficit, unemployment statistics, and the value of your investment and pension funds.



The environmental problems of the United States are still modest compared with those of the rest of the world. But the problems of environmentally devastated, overpopulated, distant countries are now our problems as well. We are accustomed to thinking of globalization in terms of us rich, advanced First Worlders sending our good things, such as the Internet and Coca-Cola, to those poor backward Third Worlders. Globalization, however, means nothing more than improved worldwide communication and transportation, which can convey many things in either direction; it is not restricted to good things carried only from the First to the Third World. They in the Third World can now, intentionally or unintentionally, send us their bad things: terrorists; diseases such as AIDS, SARS, cholera, and West Nile fever, carried inadvertently by passengers on transcontinental airplanes; unstoppable numbers of immigrants, both legal and illegal, arriving by boat, truck, train, plane, a on foot; and other consequences of their Th World problems. We in the United States are longer the isolated Fortress America to wh some of us aspired in the 1930s; instead, we tightly and irreversibly connected to overs countries. The United States is the world's le ing importer, and it is also the world's leading porter. Our own society opted long ago to beco interlocked with the res the world.

That's why political s bility anywhere in t world now affects us, trade routes, and our ov seas markets and supplie We are so dependent the rest of the world tha a decade ago you had ask a politician to name t countries most geopoli cally irrelevant to U.S. terests because of their l ing so remote, poor, a weak, the list would ha begun with Afghanist and Somalia, yet the countries were subsequen ly considered importa enough to warrant our dispatching U.S. troo The Maya were "globalized" only within t Yucatán: the southern Yucatán Maya affect the northern Yucatán Maya and may have h some effects on the Valley of Mexico, but th had no contact with Somalia. That's becau Maya transportation was slow, short-distance, foot or else in canoes, and had low cargo c pacity. Our transport today is much more rap and has much higher cargo capacity. The Ma lived in a globalized Yucatán; we li in a globalized world.

If all of this reasoning seems straightforwa when expressed so bluntly, one has to wond Why don't those in power today get the me sage? Why didn't the leaders of the Maya, Anasa and those other societies also recognize and sol their problems? What were the Maya thinki while they watched loggers clearing the last pi forests on the hills above Copán? Here, the pa really is a useful guide to the present. It turns o that there are at least a dozen reasons why past s cieties failed to *anticipate* some problems befo they developed, or failed to *perceive* problen that had already developed, or failed even to t to solve problems that they did perceive. All those dozen reasons still can be seen operating t day. Let me mention just three of them.

First, it's difficult to recognize a slow trend i some quantity that fluctuates widely up and dow

way, such as seasonal temperature, annual fall, or economic indicators. That's surely why Maya didn't recognize the oncoming drought l it was too late, given that rainfall in the Yu- n varies several-fold from year to year. Natural tuations also explain why it's only within the few years that all climatologists have become vinced of the reality of climate change, and our president still isn't convinced but thinks we need more research to test for it.

econd, when a problem *is* recognized, those ower may not attempt to solve it because of ash between their short-term interests and interests of the rest of us. Pumping that oil, ting down those trees, and catching those may benefit the elite by bringing them ney or prestige and yet be bad for society as hole (including the children of the elite) in long run. Maya kings were consumed by nediate concerns for their prestige (requir- more and bigger temples) and their success the next war (requiring more followers), ner than for the happiness of commoners or he next generation. Those people with the atest power to make decisions in our own iety today regularly make money from activ- s that may be bad for society as a whole and their own children; those decision-makers lude Enron executives, many land develop-, and advocates of tax cuts for the rich.

Finally, it's difficult for us to acknowledge wisdom of policies that clash with strongly ld values. For example, a belief in individual edom and a distrust of big government are eply ingrained in Americans, and they make nse under some circumstances and up to a tain point. But they also make it hard for us accept big government's legitimate role in suring that each individual's freedom to aximize the value of his or her land holdings doesn't decrease the value of the collective land of all Americans.

Not all societies make fatal mistakes. here are parts of the world where societies ve unfolded for thousands of years without y collapse, such as Java, Tonga, and (until 945) Japan. Today, Germany and Japan are ccessfully managing their forests, which are en expanding in area rather than shrinking. he Alaskan salmon fishery and the Australian bster fishery are being managed sustainably. he Dominican Republic, hardly a rich coun- y, nevertheless has set aside a comprehensive stem of protected areas encompassing most of ie country's natural habitats.

Is there any secret to explain why some soci- ies acquire good environmental sense while hers don't? Naturally, part of the answer de- nds on accidents of individual leaders' wisdom (or lack thereof). But part also depends upon whether a society is organized so as to minimize built-in clashes of interest between its decision-making elites and its masses. Given how our society is organized, the executives of Enron, Tyco, and Adelphi correctly calculated that their own interests would be best promoted by looting the company coffers, and that they would probably get away with most of their loot. A good example of a society that minimizes such clashes of interest is the Netherlands, whose citizens have perhaps the world's highest level of environmental awareness and of membership in environmental organizations. I never understood why, until on a recent trip to the Netherlands I posed the question to three of my Dutch friends while driving through their countryside.

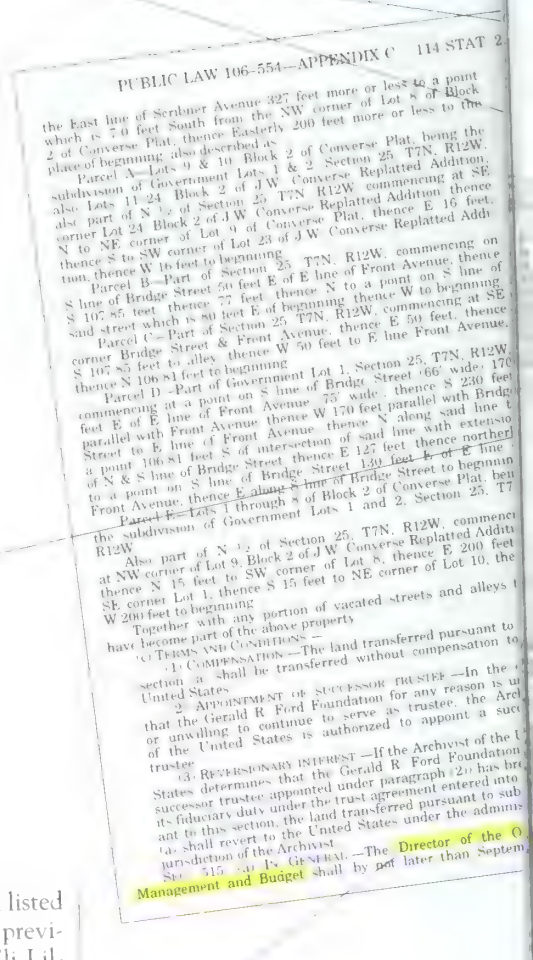
Just look around you, they said. All of this farmland that you see lies below sea level. One fifth of the total area of the Netherlands is below sea level, as much as 22 feet below, because it used to be shallow bays, and we reclaimed it from the sea by surrounding the bays with dikes and then gradually pumping out the water. We call these reclaimed lands "polders." We began draining our polders nearly a thousand years ago. Today, we still have to keep pumping out the water that gradually seeps in. That's what our windmills used to be for, to drive the pumps to pump out the polders. Now we use steam, diesel, and electric pumps instead. In each polder there are lines of them, starting with those farthest from the sea, pumping the water in sequence until the last pump finally deposits it into a river or the ocean. And all of us, rich or poor, live down in the polders. It's not the case that rich people live safely up on top of the dikes while poor people live in the polder bottoms below sea level. If the dikes and pumps fail, we'll all drown together.

Throughout human history, all peoples have been connected to some other peoples, living together in virtual polders. For the ancient Maya, their polder consisted of most of the Yucatán and neighboring areas. When the Classic Maya cities collapsed in the southern Yucatán, refugees may have reached the northern Yucatán, but probably not the Valley of Mexico, and certainly not Florida. Today, our whole world has become one polder, such that events in even Afghanistan and Somalia affect Americans. We do indeed differ from the Maya, but not in ways we might like: we have a much larger population, we have more potent destructive technology, and we face the risk of a worldwide rather than a local decline. Fortunately, we also differ from the Maya in that we know their fate, and they did not. Perhaps we can learn. ■

ONE-A

Deregulation by d

When even a corporate lobbyist hide thirty-two lines of stealth legislation. Right here, between a land transfer to the Gerald R. Ford Foundation and some details about cost-of-living allowances at the Office of Personnel Management, on pages 153 and 154 of the 712 page federal budget for the year 2001. Christened the "Data Quality Act"—one of the many euphemisms employed by the law's supporters—Section 515 presents itself as an innocuous call for federal agencies to improve the accuracy of their data. But the act, which became effective in October 2002, is in fact designed to encumber those agencies and, over time, to hamper their ability to regulate. Passed with no debate and with little public scrutiny, the law is intended not to improve data but, through constant contention, to suppress it.


PUBLIC LAW 106-554—APPENDIX C 114 STAT 2-

the East line of Scribner Avenue 327 feet more or less to a point
which is 7.0 feet South from the NW corner of Lot 8 of Block
2 of Converse Plat, thence Easterly 200 feet more or less to the
place of beginning; also described as

Parcel A—Lots 9 & 10 Block 2 of Converse Plat, being the
subdivision of Government Lots 1 & 2 Section 25, T7N, R12W.
also Lots 11-24 Block 2 of J.W. Converse Replatted Addition.
also part of N ½ of Section 25, T7N R12W commencing at SE
corner Lot 24 Block 2 of J.W. Converse Replatted Addition thence
N to NE corner of Lot 9 of Converse Plat, thence E 16 feet,
thence S to SW corner of Lot 23 of J.W. Converse Replatted Addi-
tion, thence W 16 feet to beginning

Parcel B—Part of Section 25, T7N, R12W, commencing on
S line of Bridge Street 50 feet E of E line of Front Avenue, thence
S 107.85 feet, thence 77 feet thence N to a point on S line of
said street which is 80 feet E of beginning thence W to beginning

Parcel C—Part of Section 25, T7N, R12W, commencing at SE
corner Bridge Street & Front Avenue, thence E 50 feet, thence
S 107.85 feet to alley, thence W 50 feet to E line Front Avenue,
thence N 106.81 feet to beginning

Parcel D—Part of Government Lot 1, Section 25, T7N, R12W,
commencing at a point on S line of Bridge Street 66' wide, 170
feet E of E line of Front Avenue 75' wide, thence S 230 feet
parallel with Front Avenue thence W 170 feet parallel with Bridge
Street to E line of Front Avenue thence N along said line t
a point 106.81 feet S of intersection of said line with extensio
of N & S line of Bridge Street, thence E 127 feet thence northerl
to a point on S line of Bridge Street 130 feet E of E line
Front Avenue, thence E along S line of Bridge Street to beginnin

Parcel E—Lots 1 through 8 of Block 2 of Converse Plat, beg
the subdivision of Government Lots 1 and 2, Section 25, T7
R12W

Also part of N ½ of Section 25, T7N, R12W, commenci
at NW corner of Lot 9, Block 2 of J.W. Converse Replatted Additi
thence N 15 feet to SW corner of Lot 8, thence E 200 feet
SE. corner Lot 1, thence S 15 feet to NE corner of Lot 10, the
W 200 feet to beginning

Together with any portion of vacated streets and alleys t
have become part of the above property

"(c) TERMS AND CONDITIONS.—The land transferred pursuant to
section a shall be transferred without compensation to
United States

"(2) APPOINTMENT OF SUCCESSOR TRUSTEE.—In the
that the Gerald R. Ford Foundation for any reason is u
or unwilling to continue to serve as trustee, the Arch
trustee.

"(3) REVERSIONARY INTEREST.—If the Archivist of the U
States determines that the Gerald R. Ford Foundation
successor trustee appointed under paragraph (2) has bre
its fiduciary duty under the trust agreement entered into
ant to this section, the land transferred pursuant to sub
(a) shall revert to the United States under the admini
jurisdiction of the Archivist.

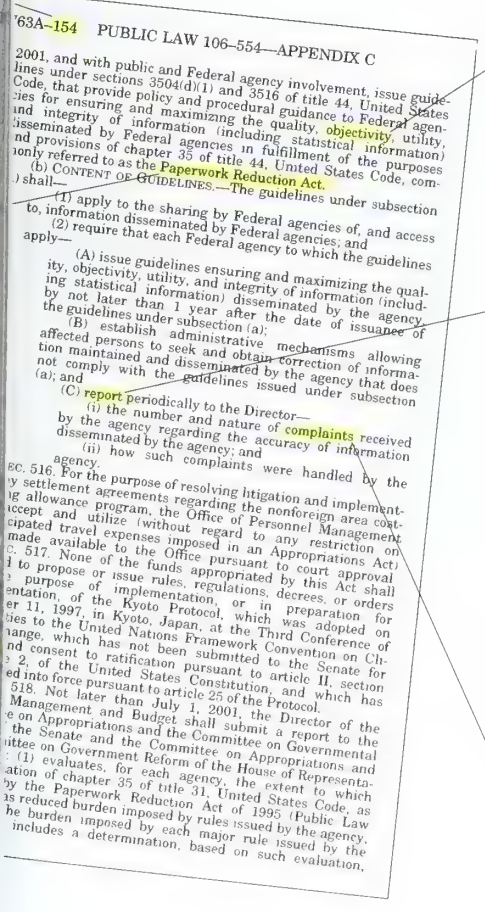
SEC. 515. (a) IN GENERAL.—The Director of the O
Management and Budget shall by not later than Septem

Although technically an extension of the Paperwork Reduction Act, the Data Quality Act forces regulatory agencies to produce reams of extra paperwork. The act required that the Office of Management and Budget issue guidelines "ensuring and maximizing the quality, objectivity, utility, and integrity of information . . . disseminated by Federal agencies." When the OMB released these guidelines in February 2002, they consumed some 10,000 words and included definitions of the terms at issue. (Philosophers may be interested to know that "quality" now is officially "an encompassing term comprising utility, objectivity, and integrity.") By October 2002 the individual agencies were required to produce their own guidelines and, more important, to establish "administrative mechanisms" to respond to, keep track of, and deliver reports on any complaints concerning the objectivity, utility, and integrity of their data. If disputed information is found to be out of compliance with these vague requirements, it may now be struck from government use.

Who would conceive of such a thing? As the only person listed in the act, the director of the OMB—Mitch Daniels Jr., previously a senior vice president at pharmaceutical giant Eli Lilly—would be a natural guess, but an inaccurate one. Nominally, the act's sponsoring representative was Jo Ann Emerson, Republican of Missouri, a former lobbyist who gained her seat in 1996 after the death of her husband, eight-term congressman Bill Emerson, from lung cancer. But in reality, the act was written by Jim Tozzi, a current lobbyist whose clients include such corporate citizens as Philip Morris, Bridgestone/Firestone, and Synagro Technologies, a leading disposer of sewage sludge. For Tozzi, the act is the opening salvo of his latest venture, the Center for Regulatory Effectiveness, a for-profit lobbying group whose actual purpose is to render regulations ineffective.

ARCE

Bryant Urstadt



'63A–154 PUBLIC LAW 106–554—APPENDIX C

2001, and with public and Federal agency involvement, issue guidelines under sections 3504(d)(1) and 3516 of title 44, United States Code, that provide policy and procedural guidance to Federal agencies for ensuring and maximizing the quality, objectivity, utility, and integrity of information (including statistical information) disseminated by Federal agencies in fulfillment of the purposes and provisions of chapter 35 of title 44, United States Code, commonly referred to as the Paperwork Reduction Act.

(b) CONTENT OF GUIDELINES.—The guidelines under subsection (a) shall—

(1) apply to the sharing by Federal agencies of, and access to, information disseminated by Federal agencies; and

(2) require that each Federal agency to which the guidelines apply—

(A) issue guidelines ensuring and maximizing the quality, objectivity, utility, and integrity of information (including statistical information) disseminated by the agency, by not later than 1 year after the date of issuance of the guidelines under subsection (a);

(B) establish administrative mechanisms allowing affected persons to seek and obtain correction of information maintained and disseminated by the agency that does not comply with the guidelines issued under subsection (a); and

(C) report periodically to the Director—

(i) the number and nature of complaints received by the agency regarding the accuracy of information disseminated by the agency; and

(ii) how such complaints were handled by the agency.

EC. 516. For the purpose of resolving litigation and implement-
y settlement agreements regarding the nonforeign area cost-
g allowance program, the Office of Personnel Management
ccept and utilize (without regard to any restriction on
cipated travel expenses imposed in an Appropriations Act)
made available to the Office pursuant to court approval
. 517. None of the funds appropriated by this Act shall
l to propose or issue rules, regulations, decrees, or orders
purpose of implementation, or in preparation for
entation, of the Kyoto Protocol, which was adopted on
er 11, 1997, in Kyoto, Japan, at the Third Conference of
ies to the United Nations Framework Convention on Cli-
ange, which has not been submitted to the Senate for
2, of the United States Constitution, and which has
nd consent to ratification pursuant to article II, section
ed into force pursuant to article 25 of the Protocol.
518. Not later than July 1, 2001, the Director of the
Management and Budget shall submit a report to the
e on Appropriations and the Committee on Governmental
the Senate and the Committee on Appropriations and
ittee on Government Reform of the House of Representa-
(1) evaluates, for each agency, the extent to which
ation of chapter 35 of title 31, United States Code, as
by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (Public Law
as reduced burden imposed by rules issued by the agency,
he burden imposed by each major rule issued by the
includes a determination, based on such evaluation,

For data to be "objective" under the OMB's definition, independent scientists should agree on its validity. In practice, this offers limitless opportunity for complaint, because a friendly scientist can always be found to dispute an inconvenient finding. The Competitive Enterprise Institute, for example, has filed a petition under the act demanding that all references to the National Assessment on Climate Change, which affirmed the existence of global warming, be expunged. The CEI's filing leans heavily on Patrick Michaels, a scientist who has argued for years against global warming on behalf of corporations, most recently through the "Greening Earth Society," which is funded by the coal industry. Jim Tozzi himself has used the act to demand that the EPA rescind statements about the reproductive effects of atrazine, an herbicide made by his client Syngenta. Tozzi's filing draws on studies paid for by Syngenta and peer-reviewed by a group called EcoRisk, which was founded, according to its website, "with the encouragment [*sic*] and support of various . . . private chemical corporations." EcoRisk deems the EPA's data irreproducible.

The agencies will report to John D. Graham, the administrator of the OMB's information and regulation division. Previously, Graham was the founding director of the Harvard Center for Risk Analysis, the bulk of whose funding comes not from Harvard but from more than 100 corporations. The center's "risk analysis" is chiefly economic, and with few exceptions it has argued that the risks posed by corporate products or pollution are outweighed by the evils of regulation. For example, in 2000, after AT&T Wireless gave $300,000 to study the dangers of handheld cellphone use while driving, the center found that no regulations were warranted. In elaborating on the OMB's guidelines, Graham has demanded special scrutiny for "influential" data—i.e., data that might prompt regulation—and has noted that even peer review by a scientific journal may not be sufficient to prove quality.

Finally conservatives and corporate lobbyists have found a bureaucracy they like. With the law in effect, its author, Jim Tozzi, now can devote himself to filing complaints under it. Beyond his attack on the EPA's atrazine study, he has also come to the aid of Bridgestone/Firestone, Goodyear, and the Rubber Manufacturers Association against the National Highway and Traffic Safety Administration, which is planning to distribute information about tire defects. In his petition, Tozzi demands predissemination review by the manufacturers themselves—perhaps this is "integrity"—and argues, under the "utility" clause, that NHTSA must actually prove that releasing data about unsafe tires is useful. The end result: more paperwork, less information, weaker controls on manufacturers, and fewer safeguards for the public. This, to corporations, is "quality" legislation.

rstadt has written for The Baffler, *the New* nes, The New Yorker, *and other publica-lives in Guilford, Connecticut.*

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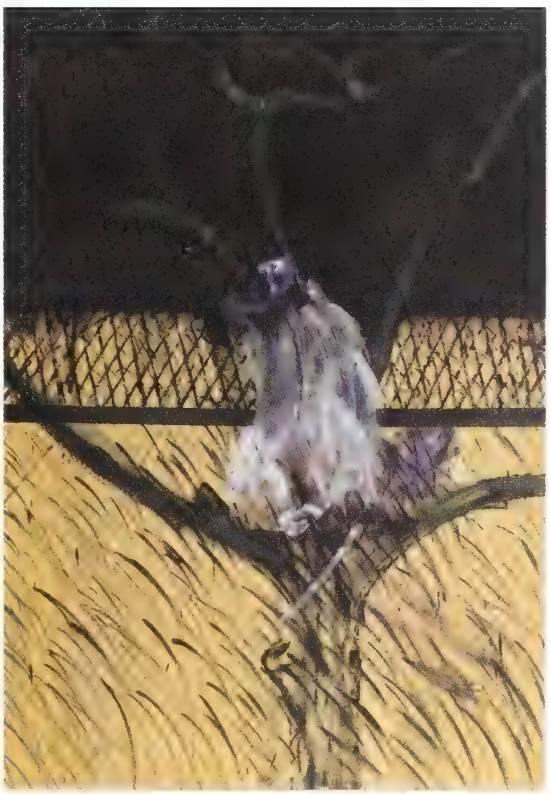
HOME FIRES BURNING

Around the wartime capital

By Wayne Biddle

A week after the war started the ational Zoo lost its accreditation, or least was put on provisional hold as safe place to keep wild animals. The oblem was not that they might ram-ge up Connecticut Avenue but at they might die off due to hat officials called a "downward piral" of facilities there during he past few years. Besides the pectral, sparsely populated main eading room at the Library of ongress, the zoo was one feder- space in Washington where a itizen could count on finding me apolitical peace, alone with is own thoughts or his children's r perhaps just those of a fellow rimate also heavily compro-nised by civilization.

In the late W. G. Sebald's work bout literary memory and the Allied bombing of German ities during World War II, *On he Natural History of Destruc-on*, he recalled how incendi-ries destroyed the Berlin Zoo-ogischer Garten in 1943. Although old European zoos were onceived to demonstrate im-perial power, they were also sup-posed to evoke the Garden of Eden, which Sebald thought night help explain the special pang of horror felt when they are blasted by war. In the ruins of the great crocodile hall, reptiles writhing in pain "lay beneath chunks of concrete, earth, broken glass, fallen palms and tree trunks, in water a foot deep, or crawled down the visitors' staircase, while the



firelight of the dying city of Berlin shone red through a gate knocked off its hinges." Many people who survived the relentless bombing were driven insane by it, but a few kept their wits, as evidenced by one Berliner's description that "crocodile tails, cooked in large pans, tasted like fat chicken."

Today the crocodile hall has been meticulously restored, like so many other cultural edifices all over Germany that were erased from the map by what Bancroft Prize–winning military historian Michael S. Sherry has called the "technological fanaticism" of American air power. Sixty years later, we still do not especially care to ruminate upon the fate of German civilians in that grisly era—this avoidance is what Sebald was trying to comprehend about postwar Germans themselves. But we likely can agree that although casualty figures soon acquire a certain numb meaninglessness during a distant war (unless they include your son or daughter), the details of life that give normalcy whatever texture we miss when it's obliterated by war are worth considerable concern.

As soon as the first Tomahawks slammed into Baghdad, an air of vacancy settled over the passageways of Congress, where many of American life's most salient details are legislated, for better or worse. Once a president secures his war chest from this institution, the members are essentially out of play and either wave their flags or keep their mouths shut. Even the slightest odor of dissent is politically toxic now, as the Senate

Wayne Biddle lives and writes in the Washington, D.C., area. His last letter from Washington, "Anxiety, Anonymity, Amnesia," appeared in the February issue.

Study of a Baboon, by Francis Bacon © estate of Francis Bacon/ARS, N.Y.C./DACS, London.
Digital image © The Museum of Modern Art/Licensed by SCALA/Art Resource, N.Y.C.

he at first suggested that botched diplomacy had helped cause the war and then went mute except for sound bites about the military's extraordinary professionalism. But part of the Faustian bargain of taking such jobs is *never* being free to say what you mean, as a Senate majority leader also demonstrated from the other end of the political spectrum last fall.

On a fresh afternoon during the war's second week, when news had segued from sandstorms, fraggings, and ambushes to relatively facile blitzkrieg, Capitol Hill felt as languid as in any other springtime, which along the Potomac is nature's most generous gift. Seizing a non-war issue, a large crowd of black and Latino students rallied outside the Supreme Court—where the University of Michigan's affirmative action policies were being skewered by administration lawyers—to make clear how much they still appreciated a leg up even if the tight-assed cookie on the bench inside did not. This is highly appropriate acreage for pondering racial inequities, the block of First Street between East Capitol and Independence Avenue being the former site of town houses called Duff Green's Row, where hundreds of runaway slaves were sheltered from bounty hunters during the first months of the Civil War, while slavery was still legal in the District. When the blossoms pop and the grass goes green in this city, youth speaks.

The lawns, shade trees, public thoroughfares, and broad sidewalks that surround the Capitol, the Court, the Library, and other government buildings here were designed to convey a spirit of democratic accessibility. But like similar environs around the White House, they have been rendered obsolete by all the Checkpoint Charlies that control every approach to anything vital. Some enterprising contractor has lately sold innumerable portable pop-up barriers to the government that can be wheeled easily across streets and driveways (look for these to become popular on private estates), with the result that the neighborhood, which was once remarkably beautiful for a federal quarter, now has the character of a siege. The entirety of Frederick Law Olmsted's East Front Plaza of the Capitol, in fact, is being excavated to bury a mammoth visitor center (580,000 square feet, compared with 775,000 square feet for the Capitol itself), so that tourists who wish to visit the Capitol will instead visit the visitor center in what is billed as a "secure public environment"; i.e., an underground bunker. More and more, in this landscape-architectural regard, the Congress might as well be the Prussian Diet, though for the time being anyone who can promptly prove his or her harmlessness with a neck-chain I.D. or a demeanor like little Dorothy from Kansas can still slide through the metal detectors.

It was Proust's Baron de Charlus who bemoaned the days of World War I, when "all civilisation of an unwarlike nature was thought to be pernicious!" Admittedly, the man liked to be flogged in brothels by young boys, but he will more than suffice for an authority on the fact that wars make heroes of egregious types. Not on the 2003 wartime hero list, for example, would be any member of Congress who kept oil drillers out of Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge by voting against this centerpiece of the president's energy plan as his troops were preparing to seize Iraq's fabled Plain of Oil. On the list would be both senators from Alaska, who ridiculed references to wild animals that would have no refuge—certainly not at the National Zoo—if the one in their state were industrialized for the sake of independence from Middle East oil. After narrowly losing this vote, the senior senator, who chairs the committee that funds the zoo, said he was "mad enough to eat nails," which may or may not produce a quicker death than that suffered by two endangered red pandas that ate rat poison scattered about their National Zoo enclosure in January by cut-rate exterminators.

The third week of the war—when the problem of what to do with a wrecked-though-promising foreign country once you own it was starting to seep in like the presence of a junker '59 Caddy in the driveway—was cold and rainy, with cherry blossoms turning brown and daffodils beat down by sleet. The cavernous hallways of the Rayburn House and Russell Senate office buildings were devoid of the usual phalanxes of suits. The "Members Only" elevators were empty. By far the busiest Rayburn suites were down in the basement, across from the minideli, where the military liaison offices were chockablock with bustling, self-possessed staff. A handful of high schoolers wandered into Ted Kennedy's empty reception room and held forth with the secretary for a while about how they'd like to talk with the senator about what it's like to be a senator because someday they'd like to be one. Members of Congress actually in session could perhaps be honorably represented by Representative Rosa DeLauro, a child of hardworking aldermen from New Haven, Connecticut (her father was known as the "Mayor of Wooster Square"). She leaned into her words and exuded the failure-is-not-an-option attitude required to maintain focus on non-war details at this juncture.

For example, the president's budget resolution was "one of the most irresponsible in this country's history," she said, her fists gripping the space in front of her like invisible lapels. "It will destroy the capacity of government to provide social support. It's an effort—a philosophical shift—to debase the equality of public services. You'll have to turn to the private sector for everything. The public won't see the whole thing while there's a war." As a member of the House Appropriations and Budget committees, she ticked off the numbers by heart: $1.2 trillion in tax cuts; two thirds of all savings from the elimination of the dividends tax flowing to the top 5 percent of income, which average $350,000 a year. "People might understand the problems facing Social Security, but not Medicaid. The money plays out. The choice the state will have is which population not to get rid of."

Just outside, along Independence Avenue, a few tourist families braved the raw weather. They always stick out—dressed wrong, shaped wrong. Every April they flock from the hinterlands to the Air and Space Museum, the Capitol, the zoo. No matter where they are from, they would not lift an city's score in the Best-Looking People category of *Travel & Leisure*'s annual poll. If the time ever really comes for

:aucrats to choose which popula-
s not to get rid of, this one proba-
asn't got a spavined pony's chance
dog-food factory. But the socio-
nomic odds are good that they have
in the military, that they have
ning against caribou but would opt
solid job in the oil business any day
ne week, that affirmative action is
gative digit in the zero-sum arith-
ic of their hardscrabble lives. There
fter all, a low-key civil war going on,
r since more than half the elec-
ate voted for a candidate who
n't become president. Just below a
ky veneer of politeness, Congress
rozen solid by it, with hardball-
toric guns always cocked and ready
ire across the philosophical divide.
se truck-bomb barriers will never be
en down now, even after Osama
Saddam are history, because they
uld have gone up all over town af-
Oklahoma City. Maybe not at the
, but you never know. ■

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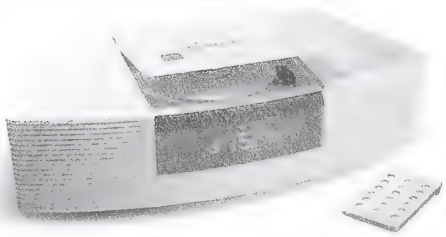
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BLUEBELLS

When war was in bloom

By Paul West

Crowtoes, or *commune Hyacinthus*, as the English bluebell is sometimes known, pleases lovers of the useful, who find its roots make a good glue otherwise ideal for stiffening ruffs. When we boys went into the local woods bluebelling, as we called it, we had nothing so erudite in mind; suffice to say that the huge wave of azure we found there suggested the very sky had fallen, whatever the name. Your duty was to gather armfuls of these delightful flowers and bear them home to beautify the house. It was discourteous to your mother or even to an empty house not to return with sheaves and masses, never mind how bruised or tired the blooms became on the journey home. No matter how many came to pick, there always seemed enough bluebells left, as if they reproduced themselves before leaving, and one of the village's prettier aspects was the presence of those who had just been bluebelling, returning home hot and serene, bunches of blue amid the mundane houses and the dozen pubs.

It was not surprising that my father, home from the Great War and the ensuing hospitalized peace, would sometimes wander off into the woods, a short walk away (down Parrow bank, where we tobogganed in winter, and turn left), whether there were bluebells for the picking or not. My father's idea of a walk in the woods entailed moving at speed in case of snipers, an idea I had trouble getting used to, for my own walks were leisurely and meandering, full of inquisitive detours and bizarre finds (eggshells, glossy stones, dead baby mice). In such frippery my father, hastening through no-man's-land with the one eye the war had left him, took little interest, but the bluebells got to him because they were everywhere, a fine sample of the Creator's sublime excess, and to this far-fetched notion he responded gently, actually sporting a sprig in his buttonhole, perhaps as a taunt to less inspired gunners.

Ours was a crisp, attentive walk, over two bridges, through a carriageway with overhanging branches that met and embraced, and past old dilapidated kilns from the Industrial Revolution. Iron ore had been smelted here, and the local streams were ocher-gold with its residue ("ockerwatter" to us villagers). Past an old mill we strode, I noting that it was to this place that in 1939, after war had been declared, my sister and I went to buy apples in case of famine. He had forgotten, and wanted no apple anyway. We walked as far as the First Dam, nicknamed Never Fear, then marched in the heat of the d over a white bridge that led to La bower Dam, a good fishing place, said. He was touching base in a m reverent way, revisiting the verdant bors of his own boyhood in the pr ence of mine, and relishing the s tudes of his very young manhood bef he had volunteered. Perhaps the sp where he had hovered and brood could be called roosts; he passed th by with a styptic nod, like somec marching in a parade past the revie ing stand and noticing a relative in honor line. He did not seem to be a ing at any particular destination just followed the uncertain, knob path, once trodden by Roman cen rions, leaving a paper chase of ab doned cigarette stubs behind him be collected on the return walk. there was only the one path all throu He said little, but hummed a few li of "Mademoiselle from Armentièr a song he had murmured at his g and while convalescing in London the tyro, was glad to hear someth that sounded like French, a languag had just begun at school with delig ed wonderment.

On the way back, we chatted ev less, and he had ceased to smol both somewhat tired by our two-m stroll, and still plodding. In the d tance, say a hundred yards or mo off the path in the shadowy gree wood, I caught a flash of white, no

Paul West's memoir-in-progress, The Immensity of the Here and Now, *will be published in August by Counterpoint Publishing.*

oodler or a picnicker, but still, be a fallen kite, I thought, above ground and stark in the after- n sun, or what of it leaked past leaves. Our three eyes evaluated nd gradually caught up with it, y to discover at the edge of a ring a pilot who had descended arachute and got stuck in the , the skein just visible. Was he d? He stayed suspended, perhaps iting us for some dark purpose. A man? He swayed a little, not in form at all, some mother's son ut twenty, his face loaded with yant uncouthness in which ck, reassurance, and finality min- l. Then we looked again, harder closer.

Hung," I gasped.

Hanged," my father said. "He has ged himself."

There he hung, presumably self- ghtered, and, after a sullen se during which we did noth- to help him, we breathed ply and began to swing him s way and that. At least my fa- r did, and then he told me get back a yard or two. There s more to this body than we d noticed. He appeared to be oking a very pale cigar, and re was a red patch on his pale y summer pants, the fly un- ttoned.

"You stay there until I call u," my father said. He never d, but after some close ncommissioned-officer in- ection, he sardonically whis- red, "They really cut him eet." They *what*? We never, I say it, *swang* him any more, the creak of rope and branch ded amid the huge frigid suc- n of the woods. My stomach lt empty and chill, as if that ite shirt of his were snow. hat was he dead of?

"Conshie," my father said qui- ly, from his place facing the rpse. "A conscientious objec- r. Your war, son, not mine. hey must have ambushed him d cut him up." So, was he ad of love, hate, cowardice, debt, ame, or what? No doubt a bluebell ver, now stranded there for anyone find, centerpiece to this measly tableau, perhaps a local, or an outsider from one of the nearby villages whose names we deformed lest our speech seem too proper: Mosba, Fretch, Killer, Spunk, Hayfway. At once he became Walter von Goggle-eyed, the pagan saint of the deep woods in whose dark green sough young boys fired arrows from bows, camped under a canopy of dank chlorophyll, and enclosed with an arm bundles of bluebells, bleached at the bottom, a scab of Reckitt's Blue dye at the top. It had been here that years earlier I fell from a high branch, landing on my head amid the fungi and rotten leaves. Here now was a new image of horror. Somebody had knocked his block off. Somebody had knocked his cock off. My father took this in his stride, as he would, having seen far worse, and I could see in his face the responsible sergeant taking over as we headed for Constable Swain and his stamp collection, heavy with a week's upset for him, as if war itself had erupted in the woods.



The village, being a village, eventually produced a ditty about the hanged and disfigured man (an outsider, in fact) that went like this:

> There was a young man from nearby
> Who found that he wanted to die.
> Lacking all hope
> He purchased some rope
> And spluttered a last goodbye.

Poor, parochial stuff. He surely got a better epitaph than that after they cut him down and smoothed him out. Whoever was to blame had gone, never found, having trumped up a casualty of war. Had this atrocity brought back for my father deep-buried memories of France, the trenches, the day a shell almost wiped him out? I never got to know, and I wished the dead man had really been a shot-down pilot descending beneath his parachute, a wholesome hero, not this poor wretch of a draft dodger, for all I knew undone by a posse of infuriated local girls. The story faded after a few weeks and a column or two in the *Derbyshire Times*, that sedulous cushion of anemic data. In its own morbidly lyrical way, the *DT*, lacking any sense of humor, graced its abstract biography of Walter von by writing, "God's finger touched him and he slept." It did indeed.

When I and a few members of the gang were returning from an outing to the sluggish River Rother, with namby-pamby Maurice Newton in tow, we came across something evil and unusual. The idea had been to take Newt to the river to give him The Snake, in which two of us twisted the skin of his arms in opposite directions until he cried, and then we pretended to shove him into the river. Well, we had finished with Newt, who dragged along behind us, a beaten animal, and in the fading light took a short cut across the Meadows, open grazing land enclosed by a rickety fence. I stumbled into something soft and big, which did not move. Having little light to go by, we had to feel, and discovered the thing on the grass was a dead sheep,

ustration by Shonagh Rae

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smelling bad and (as it felt) covered with maggots. Into the mess went Newt's tear-stained face, just to teach him a lesson, and away home we ran, stranding him outside the Atco motor-mover works.

That night I told my father about the sheep, which made him scowl, so next day he walked me down to the field where it lay, and we saw it in all its repugnant glory: the ripped-open belly, the storming siege of maggots, the stench even worse than the day before. "And you shoved young Newton face first into this?" My father was severe today. Next thing, he had lifted me up, dangling my own face above the rotted carcass. "You and your mates do that again and I'll tie you to it face down." Only once before had I felt so sickened, when Jim Webster, one of my butcher grandfather's assistants, had dangled me over a vat of pig's blood, steamy and vile, just to scare me, he said. Why did everybody want to scare me, I wondered. Fortunately, my father set me upright again, though I was shaking, and thus Morrie Newton was spared the next stage or two of his torture, and we chose someone else in his stead. So, I mused, my father was not the implacable war demon I had thought; he had feelings, and a streak of sensitivity, also no doubt learned in war. It consorted well with the weathered, responsible side of him. It was he whom the village called on for guidance when things went wrong, no doubt on the assumption that a man who is part ghost, part wiped out will have special *skills* when dealing with bad news. He was an expert with catastrophe, not just because he had won medals but because, not to make too fine a point of it, he had had one foot in the grave already, and his blind eye saw angels only.

Something like that motivated the older people in the village, who had vicariously lived out the war with precious little guidance and no pleasure. He had gone away a boy, come home (my version) an affable Minotaur. To be the son of such a prodigy was alarming but a privilege not to be sneezed at: you were his deputy in a way, as if (their version) he were Buck Jones, Tom Mix, even Gene Autry.

So: the hanged man and the d sheep edged into the talk about h Nothing stayed private for long, when, mostly at weekends, the B Brigade marched in procession t the Top End Chapel to the Epis palian church near which my fat had been born, I watched fascina as the boys in black with white t came first, complete with kett drums and brass, followed by th pitiful few, the survivors from the war: Bill Woodcock, blinking ins his thick lenses; Stephen Race, cle ly impatient at having to turn o and my father in his best trilby, ne able to walk straight and therefo kept between the other two, w now and then nudged him ba where he ought to be. One-eyed m do not march well, but with a lit guidance they get there in the e Actually, the procession alwa stopped short of the church a stood around the cenotaph, whi was right at the church gates, an chitectural separation nonethel enveloped by the religious clo They were God's and no one else's

At these gatherings, my fatl seemed to shiver, even on wa days, and I guessed he was reliv the worst days of bombardment, filade, and attack. What was need though, was an officer in front, some flunky from the Boys' Briga but a suave subaltern in khaki, ho ing a swagger stick and sporting a volver in a canvas holster. To g the whole thing a dose of the re Also odd was the absence of anyo from the present war: they were ther dead or with the Colors "son where in Europe." True, E Plumtree, of Spitfire fame, mig have been persuaded to do a flyov but he was not in charge of his fli times by any means and most lik had better things to do. So we w watched felt we were in the prese of an obsolete rite, made vivid o by the dressage of the three s vivors. It was almost as if we had g en up this new war for lost, and would have been if Hitler (known all and sundry as Schicklgruber) h invaded from across the Chann first blasting the Air Force bas then annihilating the so-called Lo Defence Volunteers, who drill

h broomsticks and cap guns. It
ıld all have been over in a day as
motorized plague swept north-
d from the south coast to Scot-
d in the wake of incessant aerial
ıck. Somebody was looking out
us, and perhaps this feat of mysti-
intervention was the role of my
her and his two old pals, firm
nking buddies, neither of them
wounded: unscathed after
four years of bloodshed.

often wondered if my father were
vy to a special sign language, which
enacted with a whole series of hand
vements: tilting the wrist, bending
tain fingers, motioning to a certain
npass point, holding one palm erect
d flat like a traffic policeman, open-
and closing the pincer joint of fore-
ger and thumb. Called upon to mar-
ıl a crowd or just a few, he would
ort to these gestures in a trice, di-
ting people this way and that. The
ange thing is that they seemed to
derstand him, as I did not. Was it an
ack of worldly finitude that graced
m in this way, enabling him to read
ople's minds, or was it something
ore sensitive, quite unmilitary in fact,
ıounting to an almost transcenden-
l delicacy vouchsafed only to those
ıo had been severely wounded and,
e the Swan of Tuonela in that piece
Sibelius (one of our Finnish allies),
ıdulated along the line between life
ıd death, grieving all the way?

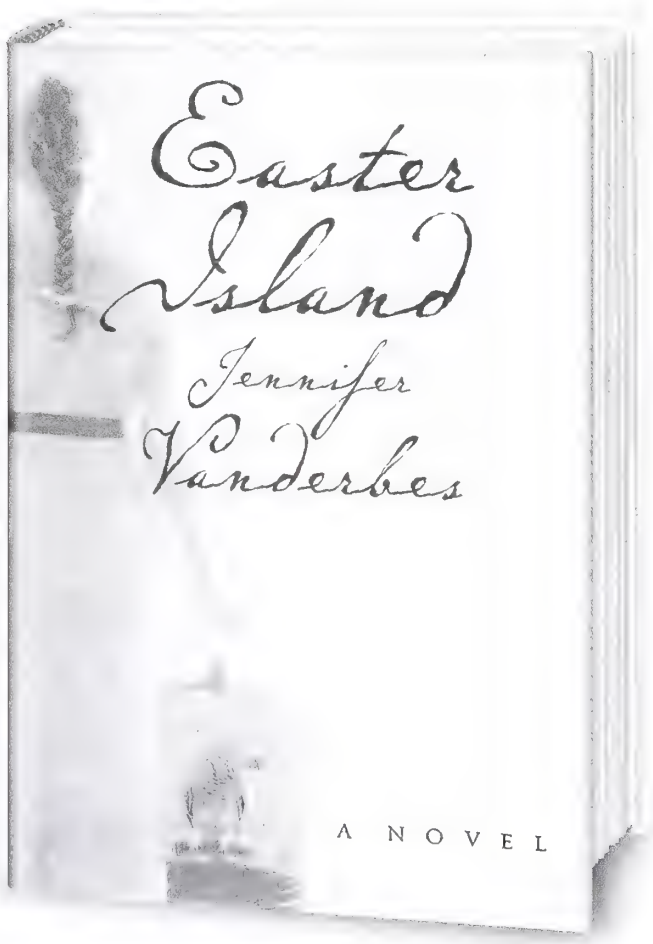
It was no use asking him, but I often
ondered if all the things I never fath-
ned about him could be merged into
ıe bundle and attributed to some oth-
worldly courtesy: what you got for
eing wounded, provided you kept your
ıouth shut. If so, there was no use try-
ıg to puzzle him out; the moment you
egan to quiz him about anything more
thereal than machine gun cooling, or
ome such, he floated away into a dif-
erent realm in which questions curled
ack on themselves and ate their tails.
ou could look into that doomed eye
nd persuade yourself you were an an-
ient Greek posing questions to the
ibyl. Maybe that was why, as I found
ut in later studies, ancient Greek for
question mark was a semicolon, al-
nost as if conning you along into the
tate of mind that supplies additional
tatement, only to foul things up by

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reminding you that anything preceding [illegible] was well-questionable and not to be counted on.

As I got older, with my father ever [illegible], somewhat enigmatic [illegible]. Still, he didn't receive his hand signals as others did. Instead, he roamed about in the waiting rooms of his mind, recalling the most minor event and how he coped with it, most of all the feeling of depressed homesickness that he always remedied in the same way, by lighting up his pipe and puffing on it until, he said, the tobacco taste became "nutty." "Nuttiness" ruled the disconsolate world, I gathered, especially if you could combine it with a decent blanket, no wind, some warm food. I realized he had spent three and a half years eating cold bully out of cans, and I recalled his tales of tossing lice into a heated can and hearing them explode. So there was, now and then, in some filthy dugout, a tiny source of heat the enemy could not see or shoot at, and they saved it for lice, much as certain soldiers who missed their dogs made pets of outsized rats that fed on corpses. I could tell why he wanted the tobacco nutty.

Surveying my peers, who loosely thought of themselves as part of a gang not the most brutal or well-bred, I noted them all. John Batty smelled of stale loaves, putrid flour anyway; Bernard Price's pimples and red hair gave off the oddly pungent aroma of Lifebuoy soap with Balkan Sobranie. Ken Honeybone had a neutral odor but a silly name. Frank Lund, our designated runner, had a waxy sweat. Geoff Magee suffered from chronic constipation and was much avoided by girls. And Pete Banks alone among us was chubby and diffused a pleasant aroma of fresh-baked pastry and woodsmoke. I, I was the secretive one, privy to big-time secrets of other continents, with a father much called upon to set things right, as when some uproar broke out at one of the village's two movie theaters, The Picture House, literal enough even for those whom moving pictures made dizzy. Some substitute teller had helped himself, it was being said, to part of the take, and, besides, had admitted unchaperoned children to A and H movies. Stabbing the air with his empty pipe (nothing nutty tonight), my father at once began hand signals, urging shilling customers this way, sixpenny customers that, chicken run to the front, including patrons permitted to see only movies labeled U. With slight angular shifts of his joined fingers, he did the work of an usher, got them seated again, quickly totted up the balance (he who had wanted to be an accountant), and then with a sigh dismissed the whole canard as a storm in a teacup, a slander on a young man he knew, and got the movie, *Night Train to Munich*, rolling again, after which he walked out and home, not a moviegoer at the best of times. Soon after, his pipe was glowing nutty, and he was content, little realizing what those watching him had assumed—an intricate knowledge of strategy and tactics after mingling with generals, then with surgeons, some of whom came from abroad (Pittsburgh, for instance). They saw in him something irritably debonair, honed abroad of course among the French and the Belgians, and a savvy pushed further than it should have been by contact with maps, binoculars, and field telephones. With a saga behind him, he was better than police, as Constable Swain the stamp collector claimed: "He's putting me out of a job."

Living with such an expert, they all reasoned, especially the gang, I was bound to be secretive, even in such of our private lairs as the dustbin hole and a dungeon at the gasworks owned by Stephen Race. We had bows of ash and arrows of elder, toy tomahawks and water pistols, cap and potato guns, and balloons full of urine; but one day an affable old chemist came to our dustbin hole, among the bins, to poison a cat with liquid from a sinister brown bottle bearing skull and crossbones, which he did in no time at all with barely a sigh from the cat.

That was when our raffish, callow gang faded out. We had witnessed a superior magic, and so turned our attention to girls, that long-postponed treat, not administering The Snake to them of course, though in our brutal, gauche fashion guessing at their anatomy on wild spring days when the wind blew their gym slips up high all along the breezeway between classrooms, and the secret domain of velveteen blue knickers became ours at last. Devious and sly, like butterflies inching out of the chrysalis, we embarked on demi-pretenses that hid cruder motives. We had arrived, but in arriving had already begun to slide downhill into a newer phase of sameness, fortified at all by the occasional sight of Paula Fisher on the breezeway, her voluminous skirt blown around her head to reveal samite thighs and some intimation of the quantum pour between.

If there was a family secret of a kind, it had to do with a piece of embroidery in a wooden, cross-shaped frame my father had somehow managed to bring back from France and keep by him during his year in a London hospital. It now reposed in the bottom of the front-room cupboard where I kept defunct model planes, both those that flew on rubber motors and those that merely sat on the piano. Was this embroidery of French words, a motto maybe, well camouflaged? I couldn't work it out, and he said not a word about it, though in later years my mother did. I divined some foreign doxy whose heart broke when he vanished into the ghastly underworld of the wounded and never came back. As best I could, before restoring the find to its nest beneath the creaking drum-tight tissue paper enclosing the models' internal structure, I memorized the French, slewed as the embroidery was, against a day when I would be able to make sense of it and thus interpret the more Arthurian parts of my father's wartime life. In later years, my translation emerged to discomfit me, stranding me with the beguiling peacetime vision of a lady too much called upon, taunting him. What that it?

> A mob at the door, they all show up
> from their loathsome bowers,
> riotous latecomers bleary with sleep.

Here was a plot without a name, yet he had borne it with him like a grail, maybe always trying to translate it to have it done for him, his mind on the true facts no longer applicable to his ruin. After years of trying, and recognizing that the barrier was not French but her obliquity of mind, I began to think of his wordy sampler as the Puccini minefield, and left it at that.

GRACE

By Paula Fox

Once they were out on the street, race, his dog, paid no attention to hn Hillman, unless she wanted to nge farther than her leash permitd. She would pause and look ck at him, holding up one w instead of lunging ahead id straining against her colr as John had observed oth- dogs do.

On her suddenly furrowed ow, in the faint tremor of er extended paw, he thought e read an entreaty. It both uched and irritated him. He ould like to have owned a og with more spirit. Even afr he had put her dish of food n the kitchen floor, she would esitate, stare fixedly at his ce until he said, heartily, "Go head, Grace," or, "There you re! Dinner!"

He entered Central Park in ne early evening to take their sual path, and the farther he alked from the apartment ouse where he lived the more enign he felt. A few of the eople he encountered, those ithout dogs of their own, aused to speculate about Grace's age r her breed.

"The classical antique dog," pronounced an elderly man in a long raincoat, the hem of which Grace sniffed at delicately.

John had decided she was about three years old, as had been estimated by the people at the animal shelter where he had found her. But most of the people who spoke to him in the park thought she looked older.

"Look at her tits. She's certainly had one litter. And some of her whiskers are white," observed a youngish woman wearing a black sweatshirt and baggy gray cotton trousers. As she looked at John her expression was solemn, her tone of voice impersonal. But he thought he detected in her words the character of a proclamation: "Tits" was a matter-of-fact word a woman could say to a man unless he was constrained by outmoded views.

What if, he speculated, inflamed by her use of the word, he had leaped upon her and grabbed her breasts, which, as she spoke, rose and fell behind her sweatshirt like actors moving behind a curtain?

"You're probably right," he said as he glanced up at a park lamp that lit as he spoke, casting its glow on discarded newspapers, fruit-juice cartons, crushed cigarette packs, and empty plastic bottles that had contained water. He had seen people, as they walked or ran for exercise, pausing to nurse at such bottles, holding them up at an angle so that the water would flow more quickly into their mouths. Perhaps they were merely overheated.

"I don't know much about dogs," he added.

She was pleasant looking in a fresh, camp-counselor style, around his age, he surmised, and her stolid-footed stance was comradely. He would have liked to accompany her for a few minutes, a woman who spoke with such

aula Fox's most recent book, Borrowed inery, *a memoir, was published by Henry Holt in 2001.*

ainting by Anne Watkins

authority despite the ugliness of her running shoes. He knew people wore such cartoon footwear even to weddings and funerals these days. Meanwhile, he hoped she wouldn't suddenly start running in place or stretch her arms or do neck exercises to ease whatever stress she might be experiencing, emitting intimate groans as she did so.

When he was speaking with people, he found himself in a state of apprehension, of nervous excitement, lest he be profoundly offended by what they said or did. For nearly a year, he had dated a girl who did such neck cycles at moments he deemed inappropriate. After completing one she had done in a bar they frequented, she had asked him, "Didn't I look like a kitty-cat?" "No!" he replied, his voice acid with distaste. At once he regretted it. They spent the night lying in her bed like wooden planks. The next morning she dressed in silence, her face grim. He had tried to assuage her with boyish gaiety. She had broken her silence with one sentence: "I don't want to see you anymore."

"Have a good day," said the woman in the baggy trousers, crimping her fingers at him as she sloped down the path. He bent quickly to Grace and stroked her head. "But it's night," he muttered.

Was the interest expressed by people in the park only for his dog? Was he included in their kindly looks? When the walk was over, John felt that he was leaving a country of goodwill, that the broad avenue he would cross when he emerged from the park to reach his apartment house was the border of another country, New York City, a place he had ceased to love this last year.

Grace made for frequent difficulty at the curb. If the traffic light was green and northbound cars raced by, she sat peacefully on her haunches. But when the light changed to red and the traffic signal spelled WALK, Grace balked, suddenly scratching furiously at the hardened earth at the base of a spindly tree or else turning her back to the avenue. John would jerk on the leash. Grace would yelp. It was such a high, thin, frightened yelp. John would clench his jaw and yank her across the avenue, half wishing a car would clip her.

In the elevator, a few seconds later, he would regret his loss of control. If only Grace would look up at him. But she stared straight ahead at the elevator door.

The trouble with owning a dog is that it leaves you alone with a private judgment about yourself, John thought. If a person had accused him of meanness, he could have defended himself. But with a dog—you did something cheap to it when you were sure no one was looking, and it was as though you had done it in front of a mirror.

John hoped that Grace would forget those moments at the curbside. But her long silky ears often flattened when he walked by her, and he took that as a sign. The idea that she was afraid of him was mortifying. When she cringed, or crept beneath a table, he murmured endearments to her, keeping his hands motionless. He would remind himself that he knew nothing about her past; undoubtedly, she'd been abused. But he always returned, in his thoughts, to his own culpability.

To show his good intentions, John brought her treats, stopping on his way home from work at a butcher shop to buy knucklebones. When Grace leaped up and whimpered and danced as John was opening the door, he would drop his briefcase and reach into a plastic bag to retrieve and show Grace what he had brought her. She would begin at once to gnaw the bone with the only ferocity she ever showed. John would sit down in a chair in the unlit living room, feeling at peace with himself.

After he gave her supper he would take her to the park. If all went well, the peaceful feeling lasted throughout the evening. But if Grace was pigheaded when the traffic light ordered them to walk—or worse, if the light changed when they were in the middle of the avenue and they were caught in the rush of traffic and Grace refused to move, her tail down, her rump turned under—then John, despite his resolution, would jerk on the leash, and Grace would yelp. When this happened, he had to admit to himself that he hated her.

His murderous rage led him to s
pect himself the way he suspected
men who walked alone in the p
shabbily dressed and dirty, men he
ten glimpsed on a path or standing
neath the branch of a tree halfway
a rise. In his neighborhood there w
as many muggings during the day
there were at night. Only a week
lier a man had been strangled less th
one hundred yards from the park
trance. Now that it was early sumn
the foliage was out, and it was har
to see the direction from which dan
might come.

A day after the murder, he w
dered if his cry would be lo
enough to bring help. He had ne
had to cry out. He stood before
bathroom mirror, opened his mou
and shut it at once, imagining
had seen a shriek about to bu
forth, its imminence signaled b
faint quivering of his uvula.

Grace didn't bark—at least h
never heard her bark—and this f
increased his worry. Would
silently observe his murder, th
slink away, dragging her leash
hind her?

Sometimes he wished she wo
run away. But how could she?
didn't let her off the leash as so
owners did their dogs. Were he to
so, she was likely to
abandoned once again.

He had got Grace because
had begun to feel lonely in t
evenings and on weekends since
end of his affair with the kitty-
girl, as he named her in memory.
his loneliness, he had begun
brood over his past. He had be
slothful all his life, too impatient
think through the consequences
his actions. He had permitted
thoughts to collapse into an indet
minate tangle when he should ha
grappled with them.

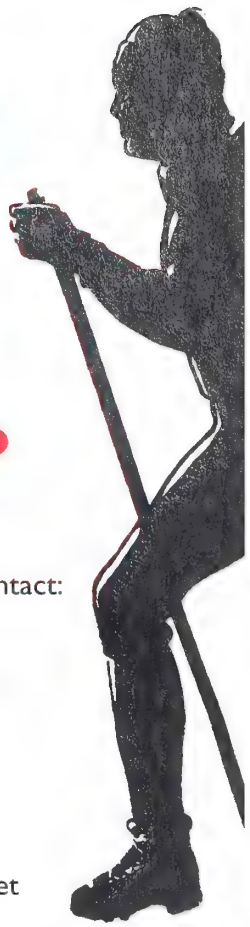
When regret threatened to si
him, he made efforts to count
blessings. He had a passable job w
an accounting firm, an affection
older sister living in Boston wi
whom he spoke once a month, an
rent-controlled apartment. He st
took pleasure in books. He had be
a comparative-literature major
college before taking a business

judging that comp lit would get nowhere. His health was good. as only thirty-six.
ily! Would he tell himself on ext birthday that he was *only* -seven, and try to comfort him- vith a word that mediated be- n hope and dread?
e had little time to brood over ast during work, yet in the office lt himself slipping into a numb- of spirit and body broken only ts of the looniness he had also rved in colleagues and acquain- es. He called the phenomenon e breakdowns in big cities."
is own little breakdowns took form of an irritability that ned to increase by the hour. He me aware of a thick, smother- oily smell of hair in the packed vay trains he rode to and from c. There was so much hair, lank urly, frizzed or straight, bushy or ved in wedges, adorned with e-toothed combs, metal objects, of leather, rubber bands. There e moments when John covered mouth and nose with one hand.
hen there was the bearded man hared an office with. Throughout day, with his thumb and index er, he would coil a hair in his d as though it were a spring he trying to force back into his . When John happened to look nd catch his office-mate at it, he ldn't look away or take in a sin- word the man was saying.
He was in a fire of rage. Why ldn't the man keep his picking l coiling for private times?
That was the heart of it, of course: vacy. No one knew what it meant ymore. People scratched and omed themselves, coiled their r, shouted, played their radios at volume, ate, even made love in blic. Not that anyone called it emaking.
On a scrap of paper that he found his desk, John wrote:

Name's Joe Sex
You can call me Tex
You kin have me, have me
At 34th and Lex.

rolled it up into a ball and aimed but missed the wastebasket. Later at day, a secretary retrieved it and

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grew merry and flirtatious. He was thanked by everyone for cheering them up, for lightening the day.

On the weekend before he found Grace at the animal shelter, he wrote three letters to the *New York Times*. The first was to a noted psychiatrist who had reviewed a study of child development, calling it an "instant classic." John wrote: "An instant classic is an oxymoron. A classic is established over time, not in an instant."

The second was sent to a book reviewer who had described a detective story as *lovingly* written. "Lovingly," John wrote, "is not an adverb that applies to literature, especially thrillers when they concern criminal activity."

His third letter was about a term, "street smart," used by a writer to describe a novel's heroine. "This is a superficially snappy but meaningless cliché that trivializes reality," he wrote. "On the street, the truth is that people stumble about in confusion and dismay even when they are making fortunes selling illegal drugs. People are smart for only a few minutes at a time."

While he was writing the letters he felt exalted. He was battling the degradation of language and ideas. But the intoxication soon wore off. He stared down at the letters on his desk. They looked less than trivial. He crumpled them and threw them into a wastebasket.

He came to a decision then. What he needed was a living creature to take care of; an animal would be a responsibility that would anchor him in daily life.

On weekends, Grace was a boon. John played with her, wearing an old pair of leather gloves so her teeth wouldn't mark his hands. He bought rubber toys in a variety store, and she learned to chase and fetch them back to him. Once, while he lay half-asleep in his bathtub, she brought him a rubber duck. "Why Grace," he said, patting her with a wet hand, "how appropriate!"

Perhaps dogs had thoughts. How else to explain the way Grace would suddenly rise from where she was lying and go to another room? Something must have occurred to her.

She followed him about as he shaved, made breakfast, washed his socks, dusted the furniture with an old shirt. When he sat down with his newspaper, she would curl up nearby on the floor. In the three months he had owned her, she had grown glossy and sleek. He liked looking at her. Where had she come from?

As if feeling his gaze, she stared up at him. At such moments of mutual scrutiny, John felt that time had ceased. He sank into the natural world reflected in her eyes, moving toward an awareness to which he was unable to give a name.

But if he bent to pet her, she would flatten her ears. Or if he touched her when she was up, her legs would tremble with the effort to remain upright yet humble. Or so he imagined.

One day he came home from work at noon. He had felt faint while drinking coffee at his desk in the office. Grace was not at the door to welcome him. He called her. There was no response.

After a thorough search, surprised by the violent thumping of his heart, he discovered her beneath the box springs of his bed. "Oh, Grace!" he exclaimed reproachfully. As soon as he had extricated her, he held her closely, her small hard skull pressed against his throat. After a moment he put her down. "You gave me a scare," he said. Grace licked her flank. Had his emotion embarrassed her?

John's throat was feeling raw and sore, but he took Grace for a walk right away. She might have been confused by the change in her routine. At the park entrance, she sat down abruptly. He tugged at the leash. She sat on—glumly, he thought. He picked her up and walked to a patch of coarse grass and placed her on it. Dutifully, she squatted and urinated. A dozen yards or so away, John saw a black dog racing around a tree while its owner watched it, swinging a leash and smiling.

Grace seemed especially spiritless today. Later, propped up by pillows in bed and drinking tea from a mug printed with his initials—a gift from the kitty-cat girl—he wondered if Grace, too, was sick.

She was lying beneath the room window, her paws twitch her eyes rolled back leaving w crescents below her half-closed He tried to forget how he dragged her back home after t brief outing.

Of course, animals didn't h grudges. They forgave, or for your displays of bad temper. they must have some form of re lection, a residue of alarm t shaped their sense of the w around them. Grace would h been as exuberant as the black circling the tree if her puppyh had been different. She pran and cried when John came h from work, but wasn't that sim relief? My God! What did she d the apartment all day long, bladder tightening as the hours cumulated, hearing, without un standing, the din of the city bey the windows?

John felt better toward dusk, a waking from a nap. He determi to take Grace to a veterinarian. ought to have done so long ago the telephone directory, he four vet listed in the west Eighties, a blocks from his apartment house.

The next morning he called office to say that he wouldn't b until after lunch; he had to go to doctor. Did the secretary sense ambiguity in his voice when he m tioned a doctor? She didn't kn that he had a dog. No one in the fice knew.

Yet was it possible that his e sions, his lies, were transparent others? And they chose not to through them because the tr might be so much more burdenso

He recognized that people thou him an oddball at best. His frie warned him that, at worst, he wo dry up, he was so wanting in emoti But he considered most of them t sentimentalists, worshiping sensati that they called feelings.

"You have a transient sensati At once you convert it into a c viction," he said to a woman sitt beside him at a dinner party. T hostess heard him, sprang to her f grabbed the salad bowl, with its maining contents, and emptied onto his head. He was dismayed,

ıanaged to laugh along with the
er guests, who helped to pick
es of lettuce and strips of carrot
radish from his collar and neck.
or the rest of the evening, deso-
n wrapped itself around him like
antle. Everyone, including him-
was wrong. Somehow he knew
vas alive. Life was an impenetra-
mystery cloaked in babble. He
dn't get the olive-oil stains out
of his shirt and had to
throw it out.

n the vet's waiting room, Grace
close to John's feet, her ears ris-
and falling at the cries of a cat in
rrier. The cat's owner tapped the
rier with an index finger and
led at John. "Sorry about the
se," she said. "We all get scared
he doctor's office."
he may have been right, but he
d away from her all-encompass-
we. He smiled minimally and
ked up a copy of *Time* magazine
n a table.
When the receptionist told him to
to Room One, Grace balked. He
ked her up and carried her, turn-
away from the cat owner's sym-
hetic gaze. He placed Grace on a
tal examination table in the mid-
of a bare cubicle. A cat howled
another room.
As the doctor entered, his lab coat
anating the grim, arid smell of
ınfectant, he nodded to John and
oked at Grace. She had flattened
rself against the table; her head
s between her paws. The doctor's
ık hands moved Grace's envelope
fur and skin back and forth over
r bones as he murmured, "Good
l, good dog."
He took her temperature, exam-
ed her teeth, and poked at her
lly. With each procedure, Grace
ew more inert. "Distemper shots?"
e doctor asked. John shook his
ad mutely. The doctor asked him
ore questions, but John couldn't
swer most of them. Finally John
plained that he'd found her in an
imal shelter. The doctor frowned.
Those places weren't great even
efore the city cut funding for
em," he said. John nodded as
ough in agreement, but it was all
ews to him. What he'd known
about dogs was that they could get rabies and had to be walked at least twice a day.

The doctor said that Grace had a bit of fever. It would be best to leave her overnight for observation. John could pick her up in the morning on Saturday.

John went to his office. People remarked on his paleness and asked him what the doctor had said. "I had a fever yesterday. Probably a touch of flu," he replied. After his words they kept their distance. A secretary placed a bottle of vitamin C tablets on his desk, averting her face as she told him they were ammunition in the war against colds.

"I have leprosy," John said.

She giggled and backed away from his desk. She doesn't know what leprosy is, he guessed, or senses that it's vaguely un-American.

He kept to his section of the office the rest of the day. He was gratified that his colleagues had him pegged as a bit crazy. He had no desire to dislodge the peg. It made it easier. Thinking about that now, as he drank his third carton of tea, he didn't know what the it was that was made easier.

After work, with no special reason to go home, he stopped at a bar on Columbus Avenue. He ordered a double whiskey. As he drank it, his brain seemed to rise in his skull, leaving a space that filled up with serene emptiness. He ordered a repeat, wanting to sustain the feeling, which recalled to him the moments that followed lovemaking, almost a pause of being. But as he lifted his glass, he became cautious at the thought of four whiskeys on an empty stomach, and asked a passing waiter for a steak, medium. He took his drink to a booth.

The steak, when it came, was leathery, and it reminded him of the gloves he wore when he played with Grace. At this very moment she was in a cage in the dark, bewildered but stoical. Long suffering was more like it, poor thing, carried along on the current of existence. No wonder she suddenly got up and went to another room to lie down. It wasn't thought that roused her, only a need for a

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small movement of freedom inside of fate. Why, after all, had he stopped in this awful, shadowy

He had a few friends, most of them cocooned in partial domesticity, living with someone or seeing someone steadily. His oldest friend was married, the father of a child. Occasionally someone would introduce him to a woman in an attempt at matchmaking, feebly disguised as a dinner party.

One showed no interest in him, but another had taken him aside and asked him why he had lent himself to what was, basically, a slave auction. His impulse was to remark that no one had bid for her. Instead he asked why she had agreed to meet him. She replied that she had a sociological interest in the lifestyles of male loners in New York. He observed that life, like death, was not a style. She called him a dinosaur.

The only woman over the years for whom he had felt even a shred of interest was the mother of his friend's child. When he recognized the interest, stirred once more to life after he stopped seeing the kitty-cat girl, a sequence of scenes ran through his mind like a movie: betrayal, discovery, family disruption, himself a stepfather, late child-support checks. She was steadfast and not especially drawn to him.

There had been a time when he took the kitty-cat girl out for social evenings with his friends. Their enthusiasm for her was tinged by hysteria, he noted, as though he'd been transformed from a lone wolf to a compliant sheep. Walking away from a friend's apartment where they had spent an evening, he felt like a figure in a heroic illustration: a woman-saved prodigal son.

Now he was down to a sick dog. An apartment filled with unattractive furniture awaited him. But Grace would not be there.

He was dizzy after downing such a quantity of whiskey. His fork slid from his hand to fall beneath the table. He didn't bother to search for it but continued to sit motionless in the booth, most of the steak uneaten on the plate.

It might be only the strange weakness that had come over him like a swoon, but he imagined he could feel his bodily canals drying up, his eyes dimming, the roots of his hair drying with tiny explosions like milkweed pods pressed between two fingers.

His resounding No to the kitty-cat girl, from months ago, echoed in his ears. What had prevented him from saying yes? She might have laughed and embraced him. By that magic of affection that can convert embarrassment into merriment, they might have averted all that followed. Instead she had turned away and, he thought, gone to sleep, leaving him in an agitated wakefulness in which his resentment at her fatuity kept at bay, he knew now, a harsh judgment on his own nature.

She was, after all, a very nice woman: kind, generous, full hearted. What did it matter that in bending to someone's pet or a friend's small child she assumed a high, squeaky voice, that she held her hand over her heart when she was moved, that she struck actressy poses when she showed him a new outfit or hairstyle? What had it mattered? Body to body—what did it all really matter?

He sighed and bent to retrieve the fork. In the darkness beneath the table he found a whole cigarette lying among the damp pickle-ends and crumpled napkins. *Smoke it,* he told himself as he felt the strength returning to his arms and hands. Smoking was the one thing that aroused the kitty-cat girl to anger. He'd been startled by it, so much so that he'd given up the pleasure of an infrequent cigarette after dinner in the evening. "Don't make it a religion," he'd chided her. "It's only one of a thousand things that kill people."

He summoned a waiter and asked him for a match. While he was speaking, he heard a voice boom out, "*. . . and this will impact the economy.*" Someone at the bar had turned up the volume on a suspended television set. John glimpsed the speaker on the screen, an elderly man wearing steel-rimmed eyeglasses. "Impact is a noun, you stupid son of a bitch," he muttered, puffing on the cigarette.

"Always correcting my English," she had protested to him more than once. It suddenly came to him that he'd been lying to himself about how the affair had ended. He'd convi himself that she had left his ap ment, angrily, the morning a their quarrel about "kitty-cat. fact it had taken a week, du which they met at the end of the in his or her apartment, ate toget went to a movie, slept in bed sid side. They had not made love. W they spoke, it was of mundane m ters, and when they parted in morning, he to his office and sh the private school where she ta first grade, she had briefly pressed cheek against his. Life has rhythms, he told himself.

But at the end of the week, a staring down at the light supper h prepared, she burst out at him in w that suggested a continuation of an gry interior monologue, "—and it's only the way I talk. You're trying change the way I am!" She paus then shouted, "Why don't you say a thing you really mean? My God! wouldn't acknowledge the Eiffel T er if it fell right on you!"

He had laughed, startled at s an extravagant image. "I'd speechless then, all right," he'd s But he admitted he'd been clumsy

She asked then, as she wept, h he could have said No to her so s agely. Afterward, when she was ing inside, he'd walked around apartment with a foolish smile— though nothing had happened tween them.

She picked up her purse from chair where she'd been sitting, eating while he ate and kept on ta ing cheerfully.

"You're one big NO!" she burst o "And you're smiling this instant . .

He recalled touching his fa What she'd said was true. "I do mean to smile," he'd said. She got and dropped her key on a kitch counter and left the apartment.

He'd eaten her untouched supp his mind like an empty pail. Then h waited for her to telephone him. H waited for himself to telephone h But something had gone out of hi He had slumped into a mulelike position to her: she skirted life's r troubles, chirping platitudes.

He dropped the cigarette the wa er had lit for him, got to his feet, a hurried from the bar. Behind h

e the waiter. John paid his bill he sidewalk, all too aware of the es of the public.

will not think about her, he or- d himself as he walked home. I e cleared the decks. I'm better off. s he unlocked the door, he called, ace!" Then he remembered. "Oh, ist . . ." he said aloud.

He took a long hot shower, emerg- slack limbed and unpleasantly m. Naked, he walked through the ns, letting the air dry him, waving arms, a heavy object trying to fly. He paused before the bedroom dow that looked out on Central k. Perhaps the comradely woman for a run, who had remarked on ace's tits, would look up and ob- ve to a friend, "See the cock ging up there in that window?" t he was on the seventh floor, invisible to everything but passing birds.

He put on a ragged T-shirt and ned on the television set. As a e he watched opera, a Friday ening news program, and now and en an old movie. Tonight he uld settle for diversion. He was ding it hard to keep his mind off e way he'd left the bar without ying his check.

A news anchor was saying, "The sis centers around . . ." He itched channels and turned up a chologist with devilish red hair d a sharp jaw who was discussing le models and sharing. "We must are," she asserted in a tone John und menacing. "Share what?" he ked the screen. "Give me a noun give me death. And isn't 'role odel' a tautology?"

On another channel a middle-aged tress declared that after years of sub- ance abuse—"yeah, cocaine, the ole megillah"—and loveless promis- ity, she had become a sexually ma- re woman, in charge of her body and r life. The male interviewer smiled d nodded without pause.

On a call-in interview, a very rge Arab emir was addressed as bdul by a caller who then asked m, "How ya doin'?" The emir's ex- ession of stolid indifference didn't ange, but he appeared to send out glow like a hot coal.

John switched channels more quickly. In every mouth that spoke from the screen, that word, "hopefully," ownerless, modifying nothing, inserted itself amid sentences like the white synthetic packing material that protected china or glasses.

The telephone rang. Startled—no one called at this time of evening—he picked it up, and a buoyant male voice asked, "John?"

The voice was not familiar. Perhaps he'd forgotten its owner; he wasn't good with voices. "Yes," he answered. He discovered at once that it was a selling call. "Do you know me?" John asked. The voice chuckled. "Well, no, John. I don't," it replied. John hung up.

It was nearly midnight when he turned off the set and went to bed. On a nearby table lay a volume of short stories by a British writer. In one of them, the writer had stated: "You can't help having the diseases of your time."

He thought of the letters to the newspaper he'd thrown away. Why had he bothered? The apocalypse would not be brought about by debased language, would it? "I've been cracked in the head, Grace," he said to the absent dog.

His body, his brain, began a slow descent into the formless stuff of sleep. His hands fluttered at the light switch until, with what felt like his last particle of energy, he pressed it off.

At once his heart began to pound. His eyelids flew open, and he was fully awake, recalling the kitty-cat's account of her only brother's death. It had happened several months before he met her. Her brother was visiting her from the Midwest. While shaving one morning in her bathroom, he toppled over, dead from a heart attack. He had been twenty-eight.

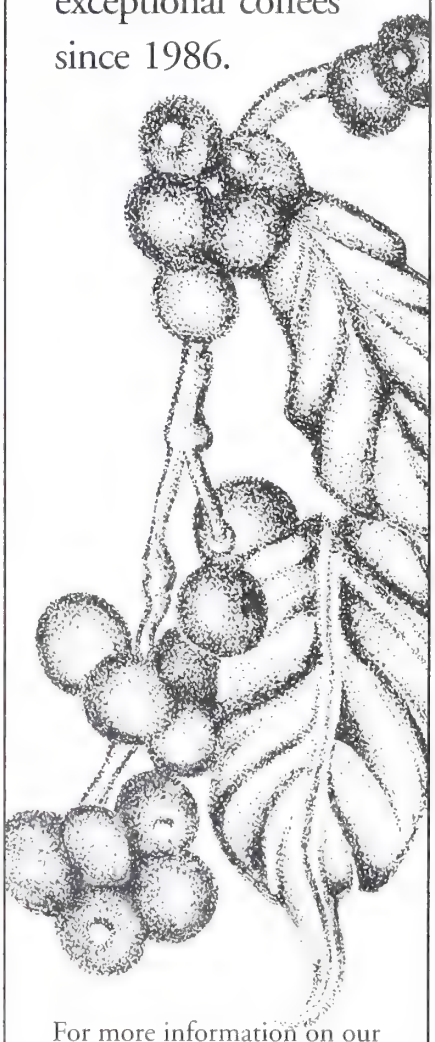
She'd telephoned the news to their mother in Norman, Oklahoma. Their father had died of the same ailment several years earlier.

"Oh, Lord—where will we get the money to fly him home and bury him?" were her mother's first words, she'd told John.

He had expressed indignation at such petty concerns in a woman whose son had died.

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cried. "She was putting something in against a burglar. And money isn't petty when there's so little of it!"

She had been right and wrong, as he had been. But he could hardly have pursued the subject while her cheeks were covered with tears.

He turned the light back on and picked up the book of short stories, opening it at random. He read several sentences. Unable to make sense of them, he dropped the book on the table. The phone rang. He grabbed it, aware that he was breathless with hope it would be the girl. "Hello, hello?" he pleaded. A muffled voice at the other end asked,

The next morning he returned to the vet's office. The waiting room was crowded with animals and their owners. Dogs panted or moved restlessly or whimpered. A brilliant-eyed cat sat on a man's lap, one of its ears nearly severed from its bloodied head.

To John's relief, the receptionist sent him at once to an examining room. The doctor was waiting for him with a grave expression on his face.

"I'm sorry to inform you that"—he turned to glance at a card lying on the table —"Grace has passed away."

John was astonished to hear himself groan aloud. The doctor gripped his arm. "Steady! Relationships with pets are deeply meaningful," he said softly. "You shouldn't blame yourself. Grace was a casebook of diseases. But it was the heartworm that finished her."

"Heartworm!" cried John.

"She must've had puppies," the doctor replied. He relinquished John's arm.

"She didn't seem that sick," John said dully, leaning against the examining table.

"She was," the doctor stated brusquely. "And please don't lean against the table or it'll give way. Let me advise a grieving period, after which, hopefully, you'll move on. Get a new pet. Plenty of them need homes." He nodded at the door.

John held up a hand. "Wait! Had she littered?"

The doctor frowned momentarily. "Yes. I believe she had."

"What do you do with the bodies?" John asked at the door.

"We have a disposal method in place. You'll be notified," the doctor answered, taking a bottle of pink liquid from a shelf and shaking it.

On the sidewalk, John stood still, trying to compose himself. He felt a jab of pain over his navel. He loosened his belt, and the pain ceased. He had been eating stupidly of late and had certainly gained weight. He set off for his apartment.

The ceiling paint in the living room was flaking. Really he ought to do something about it. He took a dust mop from a closet and passed it over the floor. The dust collected in feathery little piles, which he gathered up on a piece of cardboard.

Had any of Grace's puppies survived? For a few minutes, he rearranged furniture. He discovered a knucklebone beneath an upholstered chair, where Grace must have stored it. A question formed in his mind as he stooped to pick it up. Was it only her past that had made her afraid? Her puppies lost, cars bearing down on her, endless searching for food, the worm in her heart doing its deadly work. He stared at the bone, scored with her teeth marks.

As if suddenly impelled by a violent push, he went to the telephone. In a notebook written down amid book titles, opera notices, and train schedules to Boston was a list of phone numbers. He had crossed out kitty-cat's name but not her phone number. Still clutching Grace's bone, he dialed it.

On the fifth ring, she answered.

"Hello, Jean," he said.

He heard her gasp. "So. It's you," she said.

"It's me," he agreed.

"And what do you want?" She was breathing rapidly.

"I'd like to see you."

"What for?"

"Jean. I know how bad it was, the way I spoke to you."

"You were so . . . contemptuous!"

"I know. I had no right—"

She broke in. "No one has."

They fell silent at the same mom Her breathing had slowed down.

"I haven't just been hang around, you know," she said defiat

"I only want to speak to you."

"You want! You have to th about what other people want on year!"

"Jean, please . . ." He dropped bone on the table.

In a suddenly impetuous rush, said, "It was so silly what I as you! I'll never forget it. I can't e bear describing it to myself—w happened. All I feel is my o humiliation."

"We are born into the world anything can happen," he said.

"What?"

"Listen. I had a dog. Grace. got sick. Last night she died at animal hospital. I guess I wanted tell someone."

"I don't know what I'm suppo to do with that news," she said. "I I'm really sorry." She paused, th went on. "Poor thing," she said g tly, as if speaking to someone sta ing beside her.

Something painful and thrill tore at his throat. He held h breath, but still a sob burst from h Despite its volume, he heard her s "John? Are you all right?"

"Yes, yes . . . I don't know."

"Oh, John, I can come over t minute. I've been running, but I change clothes in a jiffy. I don't f you're all right."

The few tears had already dried his cheeks. They stood in th apartments, hanging onto their te phones, trying to make up th minds if they really wanted to s each other again.

Answers to May Quiz, "I Spy"

1 Dr. John Dee; **2** Prisoners cou not tell when they were being o served; **3** Kites; **4** *The Art of War*; Indonesia's President Sukarno; Lyndon Baines Johnson; **7** Th United States; **8** Yes; **9** The Scre Actors Guild; **10** Marijuana; **1** Procter & Gamble; **12** James Fe more Cooper; **13** Rudolf Hess; **1** John le Carre.



EW BOOKS

John Leonard

or months, even years, after the murderous attack on the wagon train in 1857, travelers igh the Utah mountains would cks of women's hair and tatters of ren's dresses caught on cotton- ls and sagebrush; buttons and s. Two hundred men, women, and dren on their way west from nsas to California with cattle and ng machines had been ambushed —except for the youngest, nine ths to seven years and therefore ocent blood"—slaughtered. Like cavenged loot, those spared would arceled out among the killers, who ed to be not Paiute Indians after ut white Christians wearing war t. Mormons, in fact.

's a story told almost as often as Donner Party's but never better n when Sally Denton tells it in RICAN MASSACRE: THE TRAGEDY MOUNTAIN MEADOWS, SEP- ABER 1857 (Knopf, $26.95). Like



lves or crows, Mormons fed on guenots while Native Americans rted their eyes: "The plunder proceeded with a strange quiet. Women from Cedar City and nearby settlements arrived to remove the calico dresses and lace pinafores of the women and children, pulling off their expensive shoes, and ripping earrings, brooches, and rings off the corpses."

To understand how people could wear the clothes and raise the children of men and women they had murdered, we must first see how they came to feel so paranoid and persecuted that they demonized strangers and deployed their own army of Avenging Angels, a regiment of assassins that specialized in "blood atonement." Denton takes us back to young Joseph Smith, the son of an itinerant ginseng merchant and the great-great-grandson of a Salem witch-hunter, who dreamed a kind of Bollywood spectacular of lost tribes, golden plates, and sacred stones; who delivered out of his own head a 275,000-word manuscript about bloodshed, miracles, and a latter-day Zion; who ordained his own apostles in a fertility-worshiping mystery cult; and who had procured nearly fifty wives before he was defenestrated in 1844 by vigilantes in Carthage, Illinois. These vigilantes also wore war paint, pretending to be Indians.

After that it was up to Brigham Young, part Cromwell and part Moses, to lead his flock on a Voortrek worthy of the Transvaal Afrikaners, from their miserable winter retreat at Council Bluffs, Iowa, to the Great Salt Lake, where they fantasized "Deseret," a theocratic kingdom consisting of Utah, Nevada, and large parts of Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, New Mexico, and Wyoming; where they sank a plow on the very afternoon of their arrival; and where they were almost as soon at war with Paiutes, trappers, traders, federal troops, and U.S. presidents. The Mountain Meadows massacre happened at a characteristic nineteenth-century American intersection of the sacred and the profane, where the politics of slavery and empire met the schismatic dementia of mixed religious nuts.

Charles Darwin, born four years after Joseph Smith, had no use for God at all, especially after his favorite daughter died. But then, he had almost as

85, *Cynthia* (Ascidiae), by Ernst Haeckel, from *Art Forms in Nature* © Prestel-ag (top); Engraving of the Mountain Meadows Massacre © Bettmann/CORBIS

Kent—in the big house with the little mirror mounted to the wall outside his study window so that he could see someone coming in plenty of time to duck if he was home—and enough money inherited from a venture-capitalist father not to have to work for a living. And so in the years between his seasick voyage to the Galápagos on the *Beagle* and the publication of his masterwork on the origin of species—even as he wrote four long monographs about what he saw while supporting his wrists on wooden blocks to dissect cirripedes the size of pinheads—he was writing a Prime Mover out of the big picture: "the strongest wings, the largest mouth, the longest legs . . . "

In DARWIN AND THE BARNACLE (Norton, $24.95), science historian Rebecca Stott has taken Darwin to the thrilling verge. This is the apprenticeship of a hero of consciousness, from the sea sponges and three-foot worms of his student days in Edinburgh to his five years of Jane Austen novels and "phosphorescent zoophytes" on board the *Beagle* to a daily dose of two blue opium pills and the fabulous biography he will write "about the body of a water creature and how it had come to exist over unimaginable eons of time—this story of valves and apertures and anal orifices shaping in deep time."

Stott wants us to see how scientific discovery can proceed through indirection. But she wants us to appreciate as well how much it depends on community, on scholars cooperating all over the postal system. And we do, because ideas light up like matches on each page, and because her own prose passage—from Pliny on pears to Melville on whales to Darwin on an acorn barnacle—is so evocative. Even as Brigham Young denied he had anything to do with Mountain Meadows, elsewhere the nineteenth century was trying hard to save our souls from organized religion. Darwin would publish *On the Origin of Species* in 1859, a year after Gray's *Anatomy* and eight years before *Das Kapital*. In between Darwin and Marx was Lewis Carroll.

Whenever she passed a nun in the street, Sonia Orwell spit. She had spent too many years in a convent during her unhappy Anglo-Catholic childhood, not even certain of the identity of her father and never knowing whether she belonged in England or India. Her friend Hilary Spurling has written THE GIRL FROM THE FICTION DEPARTMENT: A PORTRAIT OF SONIA ORWELL (Counterpoint, $24) to rescue George's widow from the slanders of George's biographers. It is a generous effort even if it fails to persuade us that the last dreadful years were all somebody else's fault. As in her earlier, otherwise first-rate biographies of Ivy Compton-Burnett and Paul Scott, Spurling tends to treat alcoholism as a symptom instead of a disease. Besides, Sonia did have a brain tumor.

But the woman we meet here is not at all the ogress who so stoutly defended her dead husband's estate from the depredations of the body snatchers that they revenged themselves with aspersions on her sexuality. She's more like Ada in Anthony Powell's *Books Do Furnish a Room*, Elvira in Angus Wilson's *Anglo-Saxon Attitudes*, or Julia in *1984*. She may have married George because he beseeched her to and she thought she could jolly him back to health, and she may have married her equally unfortunate second husband because he had been disgraced in a homosexual scandal. But her affairs with the English painters William Coldstream and Lucian Freud, the French philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and the Israeli general Yigal Allon were notorious. And if the child she aborted really was Arthur Koestler's, from what we know now of his kamikaze mating habits, she probably had sober cause.

Although she couldn't be creative on her own, she did prove indispensable to Cyril Connolly as an editor at *Horizon*, to John Lehmann as an editor at *Penguin New World Writing*, to Ian Fleming at the *Sunday Times*—he sent her to Jerusalem in the middle of the Suez crisis—and to everybody at the new publishing h of Weidenfeld and Nicholson, w she brought in Sybille Bedford, Bellow, and Mary McCarthy. F unproduced playlet by Connolly *The Id Never Sleeps*, she was supp to tap-dance saucily across the s But another of her alter egos, Dia Marguerite Duras's *Les Petits Ch de Tarquinie*, has performance an "Up till now I've only ever slept men whose ideas were clear, and never worked for me."

Almost as long as he has a novelist, Charles Joh has also been a Buddhist fore he wrote *Middle Passage* reimagining of the slave trad *Dreamer*, his counterlife of Dr. tin Luther King Jr., he had embr "the Buddhist Dharma as the revolutionary and civilized of p ble human choices, as the logica tension of King's dream of 'beloved community.'" Not does he consult the sutras but fo last five years he has studied skrit. One half of TURNING WHEEL: ESSAYS ON BUDDH AND WRITING (Scribner, $2 about the Four Noble Truths and Eightfold Path, and we learn Henry David Thoreau was the translator of the Lotus Sutra English; the other half is ab Ralph Ellison, Harriet Bee Stowe, Jean Toomer, Sinclair L and Johnson's mentor, the J Gardner who wrote *Grendel*.

I can't say these two halves ad to an augmented whole, but they s how chime. A quarter of a century a Buddhist friend of mine took into the foggy South Korean m tains to see the sutras in the H Temple—the *itaka* on 81, wooden print blocks, in both skrit and Chi characters. A m inked up tw these block f and pressed t onto rice-pa pages, which h now in my liv room. I can't read Sanskrit, but I k a Middle Passage when I see one.



School of Ratnaksam wall painting © Gilles Mermet/Art Resource, New York

HE MAN WHO KNEW OO MUCH

phen Jay Gould's opus posthumous

David Quammen

ssed in this essay:

Structure of Evolutionary Theory, by Stephen Jay Gould. The Belknap Press Harvard University Press, 2002. 1,433 pages. $39.95.

Not long before publishing his first book, the young Bertrand Russell received some advice t literary technique. It e from his future broth-a-law, Logan Pearsall ch, the aesthetic and atly loopy brother of Pearsall Smith, who me Russell's first wife. en years older than rand, Logan had stud-he classics at Balliol and g with artists in Paris; as an imposing if dubi-source of postures and ions. Years afterward, n essay entitled "How I te," Russell recollected Alys's brother "was at time exclusively inter-d in style as opposed to ter," and although Rus-had opposite priorities, was impressionable. Lo-confidently offered var-rules, of which Russell ntioned only a few: Place mma after every four ds; never use "and" ex-t at the beginning of a tence. "His most emphatic advice that one must always rewrite," Rus-remembered. "I consciously tried , but found that my first draft was al-st always better than my second. This discovery has saved me an immense amount of time." With experience, Russell found his own congenial literary methods, partly grounded in his devotion to mathematics and his early determination "to say everything in the smallest number of words in which it could be said clearly." Perfect clarity was the ultimate style. A sentence should be as lean as an equation. He would correct mistakes of substance, recasting entire passages, but never second-guess a first draft on grounds that were merely stylistic. In 1945, after half a century of steady literary output, he published *A History of Western Philosophy*, his romping survey of thinkers from Thales to himself, a book that's witty and terse at 836 pages. Five years later he won the Nobel Prize for literature. So much for a brother-in-law's advice.



Stephen Jay Gould, a very different kind of brilliant man, was also a very different kind of writer. But he shared one thing with Bertrand Russell: the disinclination to rewrite. Gould, who died on May 20, 2002, at the age of sixty, composed his essays and books on a typewriter. There was no delete key. He pulled pages from the carriage, ream after ream, and gave them to a secretary for typographic cleanup. Then off to the editor of the moment, who was not encouraged—so it seems—to edit.

The method worked well enough to make him a best-selling author of popular books such as *Wonderful Life* (about the fossil evidence of the Burgess Shale), a widely read magazine columnist for twenty-seven years, and a provocative contributor to the scientific literature of paleontology and evolutionary biology. All the while he taught at Harvard. At the time of his death, he had recently ended his gig as a columnist, but only "to move on to other scholarly and literary matters," and he showed no intention of slowing his pace before adenocarcinoma of the lung prematurely ended his life. His output was large, his breadth of knowledge vast, his interests eclectic, and his mode of composition (this is putting it politely) brisk. "I mean I don't write drafts, is what I'm saying," Gould told an interviewer last year. "I never write a second draft. I almost never shift a paragraph. I add something if something new comes up. But I'm a believer in the old-fashioned technique of outlining—that is, you don't sit down and write until you pretty much know how it goes, what the logical structure is." Writing, for Gould,

id Quammen's books include The Song he Dodo, *about evolution and extinction islands, and the forthcoming* Monster of d, *a meditation on man-eating predators.*

tration by N. Ascencios

w is a straightforward process of saying [illegible] and, on any chosen subject, he knew and thought quite a bit.

Gould's extraordinary strengths as a science historian and his extravagant weaknesses as a writer have never been more abundantly displayed than in *The Structure of Evolutionary Theory*, the capstone tome opus that appeared two months before his death. It's a peculiar book, big as a toaster, heavy as a bag of bricks, and so determined to be clear that, with all its reiterations and epitomes and summaries, it's blurry. (Unlike Russell, Gould never thought to associate clarity or elegance with concision.) The text alone runs to 1,343 pages, not counting bibliography or index and excluding the glossary that it should have but doesn't. It also lacks even a single page of acknowledgments, evidently because the author, after twenty years' work on this tome, could remember no one in particular to thank. The book is dedicated to two colleagues with whom Gould co-authored notable papers, Niles Eldredge and Elisabeth Vrba, but in spirit the dedication celebrates not two people but three—"the Three Musketeers/Prevailing with panache," the third musketeer being Gould himself. What sort of person writes a gigantic book, filled with history and biology and cultural arcana, staking his personal claim to be the Second Coming of Charles Darwin, and then congratulates *himself* in the dedication? Well, there is no such "sort" of person. Stephen Jay Gould was like nobody else.

Gould's *Structure* raises a host of issues about evolutionary processes and the intellectual lineage of Darwinism—huge issues concerning the history of life on Earth and the phenomenon of biological diversity, issues relevant to anyone who has ever marveled at the shape of an orchid, worried about the destruction of tropical forests, or argued God-and-Darwin with a smart, obdurate creationist. The book also presents an entirely different set of questions: concerning what was good and what wasn't good about Gould as a writer.

Gould loved to echo Darwin, as he did in the title of his long running column for *Natural History* magazine, "This View of Life." The allusion was to the final sentence of *The Origin of Species*: "There is grandeur in this view of life, with its several powers, having been originally breathed into a few forms or into one . . ." Another of Gould's favorite Darwinian phrases comes from the first sentence of *The Origin*'s final chapter: "As this whole volume is one long argument, it may be convenient to the reader to have the leading facts and inferences briefly recapitulated." Gould's book too, he tells us, represents "one long argument," of which the fundamental points are simple and few.

His subject is the Darwinian theory—evolution by natural selection—and its history as an evolving abstraction, derived from observable facts. "For some reason still unclear to me," Gould admits, "I always found the theory of how evolution works more fascinating than the realized pageant of its paleontological results." Although amused by dinosaurs, although expert on fossil snails, he preferred the airy rustle of ideas. Having sedulously examined the theory as it was articulated by Darwin himself, in *The Origin* and certain other writings, Gould finds its essence in three cardinal assertions. He labels each with a one-word tag: *agency*, *efficacy*, *scope*. Never mind for the moment what the words subsume. He calls these the three branches of Darwinian logic, beside which all else is subsidiary and inessential. Each of the three assertions, variously modified and challenged, has played a major role in evolutionary theorizing and research from the time of Darwin's immediate successors to the present. Gould's project in *The Structure of Evolutionary Theory* is to illuminate the three assertions within their original Darwinian context, to trace their history throughout later thinking, and then to argue that they have been crucially revised—but not negated—by important new theoretical insights (based both on fresh data and on fresh understandings of old data) during the last third of the twentieth century. [illegible] essence of Darwinian theory, [illegible] claims, has been embraced [illegible] transmogrified by these recent [illegible] sights, like a lump of coal squa[illegible] into diamond. Preeminent am[illegible] the new theorists he places hims[illegible]

The three essential Darwinian [illegible] sertions are easy to grasp. *Agen*[illegible] Gould's label for the concept [illegible] evolution by natural selection oc[illegible] at the level of organisms and n[illegible] any other level, such as tha[illegible] species, or populations, or genes. [illegible] ganisms are the agents that do [illegible] deeds of which natural select[illegible] keeps score. In other words, indi[illegible] ual animals and plants and ot[illegible] creatures—not whole species of [illegible] mals and plants and other creatu[illegible] not populations of them, and [illegible] selfish genes—compete against [illegible] another to leave a greater shar[illegible] offspring and thereby achieve hig[illegible] representation in subsequent gen[illegible] tions. "Darwin's brave and sin[illegible] minded insistence on the exclusi[illegible] of the organismic level," Gould [illegible] "although rarely appreciated by [illegible] contemporaries, ranks as the m[illegible] radical and most distinctive fea[illegible] of his theory."

The term *efficacy* signifies t[illegible] natural selection is the effect[illegible] mechanism by which evolution [illegible] curs. This was the dangerous i[illegible] that broke open Victorian think[illegible] when Darwin announced it in 18[illegible] Evolution itself had been a fami[illegible] vague notion at the time, a [illegible] sense of lineal connectedness ba[illegible] on empirical observations of the n[illegible] ural world but unsupported by [illegible] cogent hypothesis about what cau[illegible] it. No one until Darwin (an[illegible] young man named Alfred Ru[illegible] Wallace, a freelance specimen [illegible] lector out in the Malay Archipel[illegible] who, without Darwin's scientific [illegible] social connections, arrived at [illegible] same idea independently) had [illegible] upon natural selection to expl[illegible] how evolution works.

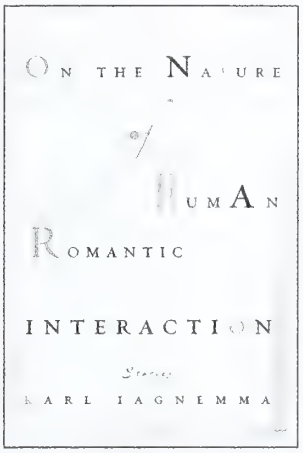
The third in Gould's triad[illegible] terms, *scope*, embodies the idea t[illegible] natural selection has produced [illegible] the major patterns of life on Ea[illegible] as well as the minor ones. In scien[illegible] ic parlance: natural selection [illegible] counts for macroevolution as wel[illegible]

evolution. The differences be-
n this species of beetle and that
Attributable to natural selec-
The differences between a bee-
nd a grasshopper? Attributable
atural selection. Between a gi-
and a trilobite? The same. Nat-
selection reaches up and down
cale of time, side to side across
preadth of taxonomic diversity,
aining why species, living and
act, have displayed such a won-
s range of variousness in shape,
t, complexity, and fate. Its scope
fficient, Darwin argued, to gen-
e the entire divergence of life-
s by incremental accretion of
contrasts.

hese three essential principles of
vinism also provide the organiza-
al plan for Gould's sprawling
k. He takes them one by one—
and over, until they ring more
liarly than doorbell chimes—ex-
ning how agency, efficacy, and
e represent the three major con-
s necessary for comprehending
progress of evolutionary theory
n Darwin to Gould.

n his first chapter, a throat-
clearing introduction that goes
on for eighty-nine pages, he tells
utline what he will tell at great
gth in the chapters that lie ahead,
why his various points should be
gnized as original and important.
ng books, like large bureaucracies,
n easily get bogged down in a
oque layering of summary within
mary," he admits unwisely, before
ceeding to demonstrate how true
t is. His second chapter is an exe-
is of *The Origin of Species*, illumi-
ing each of the three cardinal as-
tions (*bong bing bong*: agency,
icacy, scope) within Darwin's
nding text. The rest of Gould's
ok falls into two halves, roughly
ual in size, very different in charac-
, interconnected like a pair of air-
ft carriers bound together with old
e. The first half is an historical
vey and critique of evolutionary
eory from Jean-Baptiste Lamarck
e most influential pre-Darwinian
olutionist) through such famous
st-Darwinians as August Weis-
nn, Francis Galton, and Hugo de
ies, as well as such little-known

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author of *1185 Park Avenue*



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[illegible] interesting nineteenth-century figures as the American paleontolo[illegible] expert on extinct snails), to the [illegible] so-called Modern Synthesis of the 1930s and '40s. That synthesis, in which classic Darwinian ideas were conjoined with more recent insights from genetics, paleontology, and systematics by a handful of men (including R. A. Fisher, J.B.S. Haldane, Theodosius Dobzhansky, George Gaylord Simpson, and Ernst Mayr) yielding a broader, more robust, and more up-to-date neo-Darwinian theory, is a particular target of Gould's disapproval. After its valuable early phase, he argues, the Modern Synthesis suffered a "hardening" in later revisions and reinterpretations of the primary texts, during the 1950s and early '60s, which left it too rigid and dogmatic for anyone's good. In particular, it embraced an overzealous program of finding "adaptationist" explanations for virtually every attribute of every living creature. The alternative to such adaptationism is Gould's own firmly held view: that chance and history and some deep internal factors, not just adaptation through natural selection, play formative roles.

The book's first half features characters as well as theory. It's a portrait gallery of intellectual also-rans, showing through close but fair-minded studies of select evolutionists and their works that each of the three cardinal Darwinian assertions has been tested, over time, against non-Darwinian ideas that might have supplanted it but didn't. The second half of *Structure* is more abstract and prescriptive. Here Gould makes his case that, beginning with the start of his own career, each of the three assertions has been dramatically modified by auxiliary ideas, similar enough to be considered loosely Darwinian, that have left it intact but stronger. The major theoretical revision that he describes and advocates won't be "pure sweetness and light" for orthodox Darwinism, Gould warns. "Much that has been enormously comfortable must be sacrificed to accept this enlarged theory with a retained Darwinian core—particularly the neat and clean, the simple and unifocal, notion that natural selection on organisms represents *the* cause of evolutionary change, and (by extrapolation) the *only* important agent of macroevolutionary pattern." That's the takeaway message, rendered down from 1,343 pages to a few lines. Agency *isn't* just a matter of organism versus organism; efficacy *isn't* just a matter of natural selection; scope *isn't* just a matter of the vast accumulation of tiny, organism-level differentiations.

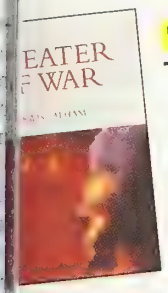
Creationists should take no solace (though some have tried) from Gould's critique of those Darwinian orthodoxies, since the revised theoretical edifice he offers is every bit as materialistic as Darwin's own. And it is built, he insists, on Darwin's foundation. He elaborates that point with an extended architectural metaphor, a characteristic touch of Gouldian cross-disciplinary flavoring: the Cathedral of Milan, a multi-century construction project that, as tastes and fancies changed, successively incorporated gothic, baroque, and retro-gothic styles. Darwin's three cardinal assertions correspond to the cathedral's eastern end, its original core, embodying tall windows with "glorious flamboyant tracery" in the high gothic manner. Piled onto that, like Milan's later baroque lintels and pediments, are the discordant addenda of post-Darwinian speculation. Upon those (but replacing them, not just topping them—here his metaphor gets shaky), Gould erects some retro-gothic spires of his own. He ranges across two hundred years of evolutionary and pre-evolutionary thought, spanning the fields of paleontology, organismal biology, taxonomy, macroevolution, developmental biology, and genetics, to highlight what has been discarded, what has been saved, and what has been added. It all amounts to an encyclopedic compendium of historical facts and scientific arguments, and a very great deal of typing.

The most insistent claims that Gould makes for his revised version of Darwinian theory involve concepts that are familiar to biologists but may sound arcane to the general reader: punctuated equilibrium, hierarchical selection, exaptation, deep homology, and developmental channeling, among others. If any of those has reached your ken, it's proba[illegible] punctuated equilibrium, an idea [illegible] rode into wider public view on [illegible] coattails of Gould's celebrity as a [illegible] ence expositor.

The gist of punctuated equilibr[illegible] is that most evolutionary change ta[illegible] place in relatively brief spurts, wh[illegible] new species diverge from old ones, [illegible] that species otherwise tend to rem[illegible] unchanged throughout long stretc[illegible] of time. The spurts of change punc[illegible] ate the equilibrium condition of [illegible] sis. Eldredge and Gould proposed [illegible] idea and coined the name (origin[illegible] they called it punctuated *equilibria*, [illegible] in the course of later publication[illegible] became singular) in a 1972 paper p[illegible] lished in a paleontological journal. [illegible] a while it engaged mainly paleonto[illegible] gists, who were hungry for a better [illegible] planation of gaps in the fossil rec[illegible] where one species seems to give way [illegible] suddenly to another. Biologists w[illegible] study living creatures ("neontologis[illegible] as Gould calls them) were gener[illegible] less impressed. Some considered [illegible] theory wrong; or, if not wrong, triv[illegible] or, if not trivial, derivative. Hadn't [illegible] patriarchal Ernst Mayr suggested [illegible] sentially the same thing back in 19[illegible] describing a phenomenon he tern[illegible] "genetic revolution" among small, [illegible] lated populations? Maybe, but M[illegible] never made the idea as conspicuou[illegible] controversial as Gould and Eldre[illegible] have done in their various elaborati[illegible] and defenses of it.

Nor did Ernst Mayr claim, as Go[illegible] does in his big book, that this p[illegible] nomenon, however labeled, was [illegible] key to a radically revised understa[illegible] ing of macroevolution. If new spe[illegible] arise by punctuated equilibrium, Go[illegible] asserts, then the big patterns of b[illegible] logical diversity must result from [illegible] differential survival of species matc[illegible] against one another, not the differ[illegible] tial survival of competing individu[illegible] *within* species. Gould calls it "the gr[illegible] analogy," this claim that species sel[illegible] tion accounts for macroevolution [illegible] trends in roughly the way that natu[illegible] selection accounts for small evo[illegible] tionary trends. He places it at the c[illegible] ter of his own "one long argumen[illegible] with a 150-page discussion of w[illegible] species should be considered individ[illegible] agents of selection and then a 280-pa[illegible] treatise on how punctuated equilibri[illegible]

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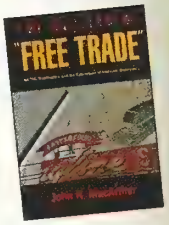
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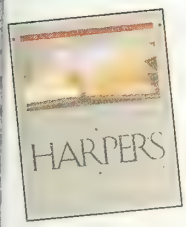
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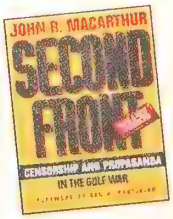
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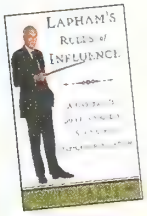


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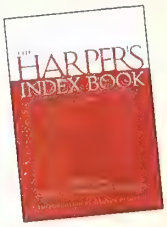


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supports a new view of hierarchical selection and macroevolution. The logic is intricate, the test cases are intriguing, the data seem persuasive, the presentation is authoritative though unabashedly biased, and a spare summary here could never do it justice. I might as well try to show you the Congo River in a soup ladle.

And those are just two chapters among twelve. Although he was not a poet in any sense, Gould was Whitmanesque: "I am large, I contain multitudes." One of the merits of *Structure* is that its author was a science historian of exceptional capacities and appetites, not just a scientist and a science writer. Evolutionary biology is more an historical science than an experimental one. It proceeds mainly from found data—that is, measurements and observations of living creatures and dead specimens, close scrutiny of fossil remains—toward hypotheses about what has happened and how life works. The historical dimension is often overlooked (by narrow academic programs, for instance, that allow someone to get a Ph.D. in evolutionary biology without ever having read *The Origin of Species*) but not by Stephen Jay Gould. Near the start of his book, he calls himself "a paleontologist and part-time historian of science." Gould has studied Darwin's works, his life and times, with the thoroughness of a biographer. He has read Darwin's precursors, contemporaries, and successors, all the important evolutionary documents and many of the marginal ones, in their original languages, including German, French, Italian, and Latin. "I am a historian at heart," he attests near the book's end. His *Structure* is an epic chronicle as well as a critique of evolutionary theory, delivering high scholarship and an appreciative sense of human narrative without compromising the scientific concepts. Many full-time historians may be more knowledgeable about their immediate subjects, Gould concedes, but none except him enjoys "enough intimacy with the world of science (knowing its norms in their bones, and its quirks and foibles in their daily experience) to link this expertise to contemporary debates about causes of evolution." It's a brag, but it's true.

The best example of this strength is Gould's treatment of Etienne Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, a French naturalist of the early nineteenth century, whose specialty was vertebrate morphology and whose chief contribution to the thinking of his day was a transcendently formalist vision of animal anatomy, suggesting that mammals, birds, reptiles, and fish were all variants of an archetypal form. Geoffroy never quite embraced a theory of evolution, but his intimations pointed the way. In his view, a parsimonious Creator had used a single underlying pattern for all the vertebrate animals. Gould outlines Geoffroy's career, including his long expedition to Egypt among Napoleon's entourage, and the development of his ideas, which came to relief in his rivalry with Georges Cuvier, a young friend who had built his own brilliant career as a morphologist while Geoffroy was gone. Besides being a better scientific politician, Cuvier was a functionalist, with a guiding vision directly opposed to Geoffroy's. Cuvier's functionalism was no more evolutionary than Geoffroy's formalism, but it differed in seeing a Creator who, unconstrained by some archetypal form, shaped animal species to their adaptational needs. The Geoffroy-Cuvier rivalry climaxed in an 1830 debate at the Académie des Sciences, which caused enough stir throughout European intellectual circles that Goethe, a serious naturalist as well as a poet, followed the reports reaching Weimar. Goethe even wrote two articles on the controversy, his sympathies tilting toward Geoffroy. Conventional wisdom has held that Cuvier won the dispute, but Gould calls it a draw, one partly settled by the fact that Cuvier died soon afterward, whereas Geoffroy lived long enough to enlist not just Goethe to his side but other influential literati. If you've ever wondered why Balzac dedicated *Père Goriot* to "the great and illustrious Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire," in Gould's book you can find the answer.

The reason this old intellectual scuffle is worth reviewing, Gould explains, is that the formalism-functionalism dichotomy has never gone away. It has echoed throughout the history of evolutionary theory. The hardened adaptationist dogma of the later Modern Synthesis represented an "exaltation of functionalism," but in the rhythms of time even exalted ideas sha
humbled. Formalism, Gould h
has recently regained credib
through unexpected discoveri
genetics and evolutionary dev
mental biology. Seven hun
pages later he invokes Etie
Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, in the
ern context of deep homology
developmental channeling, to
the connection between old, re
ed ideas and plausible new
Nobody can match Gould at
gambits of historically informe
entific elucidation.

But unfortunately the b
merits are less than enou
redeem it; they're buried
so much else. All of Gould's f
tics, self-indulgences, ineptitudes,
ities, and infelicitous excesses
writer are allowed to multiply.
prose alternates between chatt
formality and jargon-bestrewn
strusity, but even when inform
lacks economy. Nothing is imp
everything is stated. Clichés ab
and his habit of putting them in
tation marks, as though they
someone else's bits of bad wri
doesn't help. He has a penchan
coining cute new terms and c
phrases as candidates for general a
tion, some of which (*exaptation*, *s*
drels—for two concepts involvin
interplay of accident and adapta
are useful, but many of which
strained if not silly—such as *Gold*
ean solution, *Cordelia's dilemma*
paradox of the visibly irrelevant, *q*
functional shift, *miltons*, and *frank*
The writing is often imprecise
clumsy, and there's far too muc
it, not just because the scale o
subject is large but because the
thor's chief principle of organiza
seems to be inclusiveness. Why
any piece of tenuously related t
that comes to mind? Why let a
tence flow if it can be interrupted
an erudite parenthetical aside? A
in point is Gould's quotation of
from *The Tempest* on the matter
sea-change," then his noting
these lines of Shakespeare's "als
pear on the tombstone of the
poet Percy Bysshe Shelley (als
author of the preface to his w
novella, *Frankenstein*, which cites

Darwin"—that is, Charles's fa-
grandfather—"in its first line of
" And why say in few words what
e prefaced, then stated, then re-
lated in many? Why edit oneself,
eself is Stephen Jay Gould and
dy else insists on doing it?

Once, in the dewy past, Steve Gould was a bright young scientist taking his first licks as a lar writer. His debut column for *ral History*, published in January , was a modest essay about animal hology titled "Size and Shape." ough decorated with an analogy medieval church architecture, with a reference to Wagner's *Das ngold*, and another to *The Bride of kenstein*, it stated its premise quick- uncluttered prose: "Animals are ical objects. They are shaped to advantage by natural selection. sequently, they must assume forms adapted to their size." That piece thirty-two others reappeared in irst collection, *Ever Since Darwin*, ished in 1977, and I am not the reader who remembers the book revelatory delight, combining al humanity and a rich mix of cul- l interests with fascinating little ursions into evolutionary biology. average length of an essay in *Ever e Darwin* was about seven pages. n something changed.

Gould became, as a writer, success- overconfident, and blowsy. He nd his voice, and it was garrulous. paraded his erudition more insis- tly. The length of his essays in- ased, not so much because the top- were more complicated now but ause he indulged himself in ram- ng, expatiating, and digressing. He w many things about many sub- s, and he seemed unwilling to leave thought unexpressed, any subsidiary nt unnoted. He could draw a quo- ion or a fact from diverse sources— exander Pope and Muhammad Ali, ak Walton and Walt Disney, George ot and Karl Marx, baseball and ar- tecture, Gilbert and Sullivan. He med to have read everything, but ybe he read too quickly and too eas- to appreciate those two sacred tues of good prose: economy and ce. By 1980, as displayed in Gould's ond collection of essays, *The Panda's*

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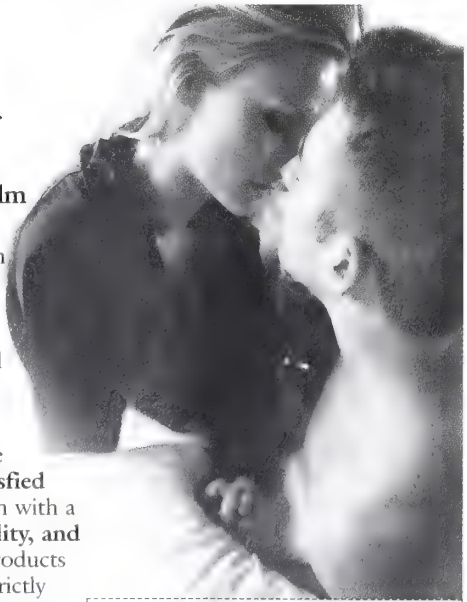
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Humbo, the main features of his mature style had emerged. You could love them or loathe them. He lost some readers and gained many others. Several years later, having survived his first bout of cancer, he began writing *The Structure of Evolutionary Theory*. He had a fresh chance at life. This would be his big book. If he couldn't say everything, he could at least make doubly sure he said most of it. He started typing and didn't stop for two decades.

Who is the book written for? Not for you and me, but never mind. That makes it no less interesting as a literary phenomenon. When a figure with such broad public reach publishes a mammoth book—even if it's to some degree a technical work, aimed at his scientific colleagues—we mere readers are entitled to take notice. Besides, much of it is intellectual history, not argumentation about current issues in macroevolution, and therefore no more daunting to a general reader than to an evolutionary biologist who knows convergence from homology and a clade from a deme but not William Bateson from William Paley.

Then again, is *The Structure of Evolutionary Theory* really aimed at his scientific colleagues? He never says so flatly, but he suggests it repeatedly—voicing hope, at one point, that his combination of historiographic and scientific skills will "make my efforts useful, in a distinctive way, to my colleagues." Scientists reviewing it in their professional journals (Douglas Futuyma in *Science*, David Jablonski in *American Scientist*, David B. Wake in *Nature*) have tended to accept that premise, placing *Structure* in a category with Gould's only other technical volume, *Ontogeny and Phylogeny*, published twenty-five years earlier. But the big book is more stubbornly personal than *Ontogeny and Phylogeny*. It contains almost no mathematics, a virtue to general readers but not to population biologists and geneticists, who nowadays make their most intricate arguments with equations. By Gould's own testimony (in that late interview), his manuscript wasn't as thoroughly edited or peer-reviewed as scientific books generally are. And how many evolutionary biologists, busy with their teaching, their research, not to mention their own writing, and accustomed to the compressed prose of professional publications, have either the time or the inclination to read five hundred pages of science history as a prelude to seven hundred pages of loquacious reiteration of ideas that Gould has already made familiar in his journal articles?

I have an alternate theory, which is that this book became Gould's *Finnegans Wake*, an impossible thing destined to be more honored than read. Perhaps in its original conception it was, yes, a technical volume that might exert immediate influence in the chat rooms of paleontology and evolutionary biology. Or perhaps it was to be written for two audiences, a trickier challenge, educating and impressing the amateurs while making its pointed claims to the professionals. Sometime d the long decades of compositi suspect, the author's purposes expectations changed. The grew, as did Joyce's last nov mere seventeen-year effort), i dimensions of brilliance, erudi ambition. It outgrew the very n of readership. It outgrew bo limits and gravity. Hump Chimpden Earwicker morphed Here Comes Everybody. Only reader was really capable of em ing its variousness, its magnit and that was the author himse became a prose edifice, a m ment—the pyramid willed int ing by the dead pharaoh. At the Stephen Jay Gould must l known that he was writing m for himself. I lived and wond and studied and thought, he was ing. Here's the evidence.

THE MAXIMALIST

Rediscovering Edward Whittemore's epic invention

By David Cozy

Discussed in this essay:

Sinai Tapestry, by Edward Whittemore. Old Earth Books, 2002. 333 p $17.95.

Jerusalem Poker, by Edward Whittemore. Old Earth Books, 2002. 424 p $19.95.

Nile Shadows, by Edward Whittemore. Old Earth Books, 2002. 478 p $19.95.

Jericho Mosaic, by Edward Whittemore. Old Earth Books, 2002. 395 p $17.95.

Before settling down to write his first novel, *Quin's Shanghai Circus* (1974), Edward Whittemore, like many American writers before him, knocked around a bit. In Whittemore's case, this consisted of more than a short stint in the military or summer jobs endured during v tions from college. He spent ten y with the CIA, and, as Jim Hou notes in his introduction to Wh more's *Jericho Mosaic*, he wasn't hind a desk:

> Entering the CIA in the 1950s— very apex of the Cold War—he bec a spy in the truest sense. Not an onage bureaucrat on the 9-to-5 sh

David Cozy is a writer living in Chigasaki, Japan.

rban Langley, but a NOC—a field
t under Non-Official Cover work-
against unforgiving adversaries. It
ne spook's equivalent of a trapeze-
st working without a net. Slip, and
embassy won't save you.

ich of this high-wire act took
in the Middle East, a region to
Whittemore would return in
ur novels of his masterpiece, *The*
dem Quartet. First published be-
1977 and 1987 by Holt, Rine-
nd Winston and W. W. Norton,
ooks received considerable criti-
gard. Writing in the *Philadelphia*
rer, novelist Jay Neugeboren
d the *Quartet* "one of the most
derful achievements in 20th-
ury literature," and asserted that,
nge and effect," it is comparable
olstoy's *War and Peace*; another
list, Jonathan Carroll, described
irst of the books as "funny, pro-
d, visionary, learned"; and this
azine printed an essay in which
ttemore was declared "an author
traordinary talents."

evertheless, the *St. Louis Globe-*
ocrat's prediction that Whittemore
his *Quartet* "will be ignored no
er, but will soon be the subject of
iderable interest, speculation, and
e," proved to be woefully
rrect. After the initial flur-
enthusiasm subsided, the
ks were roundly ignored
until their recent reissue,
out of print for years. The
of Edward Whittemore
inds us that even lavish
cal attention (there were
reviews in the *New York*
es and *The Nation*) does
guarantee lasting renown.
can deplore this in the
of an artist as worthy as
ittemore, but we are, at the
e time, forced to admit that
ephemeral nature of criti-
opinion is not always re-
table. Many are the pun-
—this writer sheepishly
luded—who have taken
itions that, after a few years
reconsideration, they are
e happy to forget, and have
ers forget, too. Remember
forget, if you will) how
athless some of us were
ut Bret Easton Ellis, about

Jay McInerney, about Tama Janowitz—before we realized that what made their books charming and timely was precisely what would soon make them embarrassingly dated.

It is a testament to Whittemore's talent that many of those who praised his work at the time it was published are just as excited about it now. Neugeboren, sixteen years after he first compared Whittemore to Tolstoy, has contributed a glowing introduction to the new edition of *Sinai Tapestry*, the first installment of the *Quartet*; and Hougan, who extolled Whittemore's work in these pages a quarter of a century ago, has done the same in his introduction to *Jericho Mosaic*, the last book Whittemore completed before he died of cancer in 1995. That astute readers have not retreated from their early praise of Whittemore's work is particularly remarkable when one considers how easily his magnum opus could have become a sprawling, overly ambitious mess.

There are certain writers, and Whittemore is one of them, whose achievement is so particular that imitators should be deterred, not encouraged. One quails at the thought of M.F.A. aspirants somewhere in the American heartland being taught the tricks deemed sufficient to enable them to write like Samuel Beckett or Thomas Bernhard. We admire Beckett and Bernhard precisely because they make things work that shouldn't work—a feat that is beyond the reach of good, even very good, writers. Whittemore, with his absurd exaggerations, has created something that could easily have been portentous or silly but is discerning and extraordinary instead.

Sinai Tapestry was published in 1977, the year that Raymond Carver's *Will You Please Be Quiet, Please?* was nominated for the National Book Award. Given the tremendous influence of Carver's austere fiction on American letters, the first thing to note about *Sinai Tapestry* is that, like the *Quartet* as a whole, it is the antithesis of minimalist. The difference is obvious as early as the *Quartet*'s opening sentence, which is not a first-person rumination on life in the American suburbs but something almost baroque:

> The Arabic Jew, or Jewish Arab, who owned the entire Middle East at the turn of the century passed his early life exactly as had his English forebears for six hundred and fifty years.

Whittemore's expansive vision is more redolent of Thomas Pynchon's than of Carver's. His concerns are grand ("the entire Middle East") and controversial ("the Arabic Jew, or Jewish Arab"). We see also, with some relief, that the *Quartet* will not be wedded to the burdensome realism insisted upon in most historical novels. Did anyone *really* own the "entire" Middle East? That Whittemore doesn't hesitate to answer this question in the affirmative allows us to guess that whimsy, in this quartet, will trump pedantry.

The novel is populated by a horde of unusual characters, including Haj Harun, a Jerusalem antiquities dealer who has been living in that



tration by Steven Dana

city for 3,000 years, and whose reminiscences remind us that nearly everyone has laid claim to Jerusalem at one point or another. Unrest there is nothing new. "The Crusaders," recalls Harun,

> killed about a hundred thousand and [illegible] thousand. The Babylonians murdered less than the Assyrians but blinded more. The Ptolemies and the Seleucides also murdered on a smaller scale, as did the Byzantines and Mamelukes and Turks, generally speaking just the religious leaders and anyone who was educated. Naturally the people were made to change the churches into mosques and destroy the synagogues, or change the mosques into churches and destroy the synagogues, depending on the new conqueror.

Despite his birth date 1,000 years before Christ and a birthmark that resembles "a general layout of the streets of Ur," the hoary Haj Harun is not even the most remarkable character in or around Whittemore's Jerusalem. Another candidate would be Plantagenet Strongbow, scholar and Duke of Dorset, "the greatest swordsman in English history" and the "Arabic Jew, or Jewish Arab" mentioned in the first sentence of *Sinai Tapestry*. Whereas Harun carries around in his memory a disorganized stock of the stuff of history, Strongbow has attempted to record what he knows of the past and present in a thirty-three volume study entitled *Levantine Sex*. A Victorian born in the same year as the eponymous queen, he issues this study at a time when it still seems possible to concoct an all-encompassing explanation of the world, when master narratives still hold some appeal. Strongbow's "theory" (more of an anti-theory, really) acknowledges that "it would be comforting news indeed if we could find a scheme or a plan or even a hint of a conspiracy in life," but denies the possibility of doing so. This thesis is deemed offensive not only by the conservative Victorians but even by liberal proponents of subversive ideas, "outraging both the contemporary defenders of Darwin and Marx and the future defenders of Freud." All of them object to Strongbow's attacks on every form of mechanism or order:

> He had the effrontery to suggest that far from there being any laws in history or man or society, there weren't even any tendencies toward such laws. The race was capricious, he said, thrusting or withdrawing as its loins moved it at the moment.

Whittemore likewise deviates from Tolstoy and Pynchon by rejecting their suggestions that underlying the apparent randomness of history there is some sort of direction. Pynchon in particular implies that events don't just happen: someone conspires to make them happen. The Strongbowian worldview turns Pynchonesque paranoia on its head:

> Nowhere in [Strongbow's] thirty-three volumes was there to be found even a nascent conspiracy. . . . On the contrary, as seen by Strongbow all yearnings for the existence of a conspiracy in life were hopeless illusions from childhood that surfaced later in idle moments, the illusions having been caused by a child's false perceptions of order above him, the subsequent yearnings arising from an adult's inability to accept the sexual chaos beneath him.

Readers who favor if not gritty realism then at least a nod to naturalism may balk when they learn that the *Quartet* is populated not only by Jewish-Arab-English noblemen and 3,000-year-old Methuselahs but also by a black African Muslim named Cairo Martyr, who, after a career as a dragoman catering to the desires of wealthy European tourists in Egypt, eventually becomes the Godfather of an organization that traffics in a rare and highly addictive substance: the ground-up remains of pharaohs. Martyr is joined by a crazed ascetic Albanian who unearths a Bible older than any previously known and discovers that it contradicts everything contained in later editions of the Book. Or perhaps "contradicts" is too impoverished a word:

> In this oldest of Bibles paradise lay everywhere on the wrong side of the river, sought by the wrong people, preached by a prophet different from the one who had been heard, an impossible history where all events occurred before or after they were said to have occurred, or instead, occurred simultaneously.

So distressed is this holy man b[illegible] discovery that he determines to [illegible] the ur-Bible and forge the "[illegible] Bible—shades of Borges's "P[illegible] Menard, Author of the Quixot[illegible] which he will then leave in its p[illegible]

If the pages of *Sinai Tapestr*[illegible] rife with outlandish chara[illegible] doing outlandish things, Wh[illegible] more's prose keeps step with t[illegible] admirably. For readers not espec[illegible] drawn to imaginative outrageous[illegible] however, Whittemore's exuber[illegible] can seem excessive and overbl[illegible] Could we have just one char[illegible] who is not 3,000 years old, wh[illegible] not "memorized the Bible in al[illegible] tongues current in the Holy [illegible] during the Biblical era," and [illegible] does not possess "fluent abili[illegible] Early and Middle Persian, h[illegible] glyphics and cuneiform and Ara[illegible] classical and modern Arabic, the[illegible] al knowledge of Greek and He[illegible] and Latin and the European ton[illegible] Hindi where relevant"? One [illegible] oneself craving, after a while, a [illegible] dinary human being.

Realizing that *Jerusalem Poke*[illegible] second novel in the quartet, is ir[illegible] about a poker game in which the s[illegible] are Jerusalem and everything ir[illegible] and that among the regular play[illegible] the aforementioned Cairo Mar[illegible] those in search of more prosaic [illegible] sures may begin to despair. Sitti[illegible] the table with Martyr is one Jo[illegible] Enda Columbkille Kieran Kevin [illegible] dan O'Sullivan Beare—"Joe [illegible] short—who, when he's first introd[illegible] to us in *Sinai Tapestry*, is as fanc[illegible] creation as any of Whittemore's [illegible] acters. As the *Quartet* progresses, [illegible] ever, Joe does, too. We follow [illegible] through the first volume and th[illegible] ond and the third, and he con[illegible] have less and less in common [illegible] Strongbow and his ilk, who s[illegible] boldly through a grand and m[illegible] logical Victorian age. Genera[illegible] younger, Joe acquires the ordina[illegible] of his nickname.

As Joe and the *Quartet* evo[illegible] pattern emerges that can be liken[illegible] the spinning down of a top. W[illegible] the novels travel forward in tim[illegible] various catastrophes through w[illegible] humanity moves force the more[illegible] inventions into a smaller and sm[illegible]

er of Whittemore's world; the
c fancy that has driven the *Quar-*
ains away, revolution by revolu-
For characters who appear later
ıe *Quartet*, Strongbow, Harun,
Martyr are something like leg-
, and this gradual diminution of
antastic—and of the dreams, il-
ns, and ideals it makes possible—
s the pattern that binds the four
ls together. That this pattern ex-
just beneath the layer of tales,
s, and characters is largely what
ents the *Quartet* from degenerat-
nto chaos, and what makes it the
ess that it is.

he atrocity that initiates this
ess of spinning down is one that
remember: the 1922 massacre of
Armenians at Smyrna. As Whit-
ore paints it, this slaughter is ex-
ionally atrocious because it took
e under the eyes of those who
ıt have had the power to moder-
if not to stop, the suffering. Some
ıose fleeing the disaster tried to
n out to foreign ships anchored in
harbor, while

om the decks of the warships the for-
ıgn sailors watched the massacre
ırough binoculars and took pictures.
he navy bands played late and
honographs were set up on the ships
nd aimed at the quay. Caruso sang
om *Pagliacci* all night across a harbor
lled with bloated corpses. An admi-
ıl going to dine on another ship was
ıte because a woman's body fouled
is propeller.

oe, now a gunrunner, witnesses this
edy in the company of Stern, who
oe's employer and Strongbow's son.
rn is an idealistic arms dealer: he
s to all sides and hopes his activities
bring about a state in which Arabs,
s, Christians, and others who have
nd themselves entangled in the
ody propeller of the Middle East
ı live together in peace. At Smyrna,
he midst of the genocide, Stern cuts
ttle girl's throat in what is intend-
as an act of mercy. Joe, appalled at
at somebody will to do in the service
deals, repudiates Stern:

Take your bloody cause of a kingdom
come and shove it up your arse. Chase
t, dream about it, do whatever you want
with it but I'm not there. I'm not work-
ng for you or anybody else ever again
nd I'm not killing again, ever.



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NOTES FOR "DAFFINITIONS":

Puzzle editing by Dan Asimov.

Anagrams are indicated with an asterisk (*).

ACROSS: 13. *; 14. *; 15. hidden; 18. bri(LL)iant; 19. *; 22. hidden; 23 homophone; 29. (j)ousts; 32. two mngs.; 33. yo-g-a; 36. *; 38. hidden; 40. but-Cher-Y; 41. rev.; 42. Reb-oot(rev.); 44. Hair-balls; 46. iris(H); 47. *; 49. has-sock; 50. D(us)T's; 51. rev.

DOWN: 2. rev.; 3. homophone; 4. B-rooms; 5. rob-in; 7. a(d)-lib-1; 8. *; 9. p(1-L)ut, rev.; 10. e(VI)ct*; 11. p(ant)ing; 16. SE-kin, rev.; 25. (f)lute; 26. e-very-bo(d)y; 28. so-CIA-list; 30. tai(l); 36. s-print(s); 37. homophone; 39. hidden; 40. B.O.-sh; 43. (m)oral; 45. (h)itch; 48. cop(y).

Stern's utopian hopes are as untenable as any of the conspiracies rejected by his father, and Joe, with his condemnation, brings Strongbow's skepticism to its logical conclusion. In *Levantine Sex*, Strongbow challenged "the famous theoreticians" of his day, by rejecting "vast, but separate, concepts of the mind and body and society" in favor of "dealing with all three." Dead before the massacres of the twentieth century, Strongbow derided abstractions as ridiculous and foolish. Joe, however, must live through the suffering they can cause.

Jerusalem Poker centers on Joe's attempt to live with his experience at Smyrna, on his anger at Stern, and, finally, on their reconciliation. Stern, wonderfully and mundanely human—with his worn-out shoes and his morphine addiction, his idealism and his doubts—takes a step toward the central position he will occupy in *Nile Shadows*, the third volume of the *Quartet*.

Published five years after *Jerusalem Poker*, *Nile Shadows* opens with Stern's death. A grenade is tossed into the working-class dive where Stern and Joe have been talking and sipping arrack. Looping backward in time, Whittemore recounts Joe's wanderings through Cairo in search of his old comrade Stern, and the novel becomes a kind of detective story in which the mystery is solved by assembling a version of Stern from the shards provided by those who have known him. Turning away from the euphoria of the previous books, Whittemore offers some marvelous descriptions of simple human pleasures. A girlfriend of Stern's walks out into the evening to meet him for dinner:

> In the quiet little square at the end of the alley, tucked away behind busier streets, there were other neighbors to greet, working people out for a stroll or simply standing around in small groups chatting and enjoying the evening breezes off the river, so welcome after the fierce heat of the day. The waiter inside the door of the little restaurant on the square was all smiles when he saw her.

The happiness depicted is a quiet joy that has nothing to do with utopian schemes and hidden Bibles, and it reflects the *Quartet*'s move away from the fantastic and toward the elements of life as it is lived.

To say this is not to imply that Whittemore's writing loses its vigor or sparkle. It never does—except, that is, for odd patches in *Jerusalem Mosaic*, the book that concludes the *Quartet*. *Jerusalem Mosaic* is a tale of espionage that puts forth a version of Israel's history. In conveying the necessary background, Whittemore produces the drabbest prose—drab, that is, for him—in the *Quartet*:

> The Palestine Liberation Organization was founded in 1964 under the patronage of Nasser of Egypt. In 1965 a sack with an explosive charge was found floating down a canal in northern Israel by an Israeli water engineer, having been placed in the canal by saboteurs who crossed over from Jordan on horseback. In Damascus a militant wing of the PLO calling itself . . .

And so on. The purely functional language is, to some extent, appropriate, and certainly purposeful: in this final volume, the realistic account of political matters has moved to the forefront. As much as we may have enjoyed Haj Harun's spectacular descriptions, in *Sinai Tapestry*, of the various catastrophes that befall Jerusalem during his long life, that sort of color, along with the mythological Victorians and their dreams, seems to have little place in Whittemore's modern, post-Smyrna world.

Loosely based on true events, *Jericho Mosaic* introduces us to an Iraqi-Jewish Mossad agent who survives in Damascus for more than twenty years by masquerading as a Syrian. Yossi, who is known to the Syrians as Halim, becomes less and less content with the life he has chosen. He has "served Israel honestly," but that service was intended for "Israel as an idea, a concept," not for the country that has turned into one run by generals, a power like so many others. This transformation has left Yossi not only homeless but also, like so many of Whittemore's characters, bereft of ideals.

Thus the *Quartet* closes not with a tapestry—in which "all lives . . . swirl and sweep through the years with souls and strivings as the colors, the thr . . . [and] little knots of tangled m ing [lie] everywhere beneath the face, tying the colors and thread gether" —but rather with a mosa which the souls of this people are tained within one tile, the strivin that folk within another, and the gled meaning" that might bind th though always present, is obscured. Whittemore doesn't leave us wit hope. At the close of *Jericho Mosa* grandmother-to-be cries with sad but also with joy, reflecting upon the things this unborn child will h to go through someday." She is o whelmed by "the things we com know in time . . . the endless farew of life."

And life in all its horror and sp dor is overwhelming—indeed, it's nal to say so. To capture all of th art is part of the splendor that m the horror bearable. Writers as verse as Basho and Chekhov h done this by selecting and arran significant details into exqui miniatures, the power of which is tirely out of proportion to their parent size. There are, at the s time, other writers who work c larger scale, who, rather than giv fragments of the world, attempt t into their works the enormity of man experience. In undertaking kind of grandeur they risk fai grandly, by writing books that ar ungainly and chaotic as the w they have taken as their subject. Whittemore, with the precisio his prose and his command over absurd, has left us with a serie novels as powerful and as subtl they are enormous in scope. Str bow's history was "unplanned chaotic and concomitant with n ing"; Harun's birthmark "swirled termittently . . . in a restless pr mation of stops and starts." W would otherwise be colorful senseless digressions are deployed dered, and composed so that nonsense is intelligible and the sense of meaning is meaningful. ing words that could just as well scribe the *Quartet*, a characte *Nile Shadows* recognizes the "fu purpose" of life but also observ "mysterious and merciless arra ment of logic."

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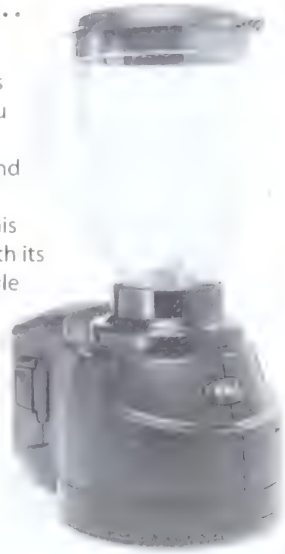
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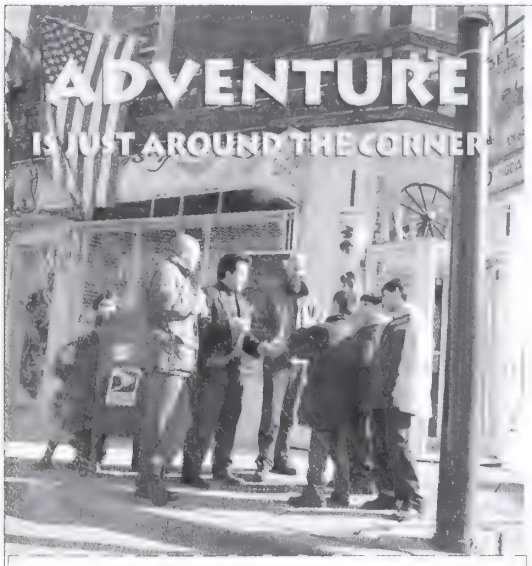
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LETTERS

Continued from page 7

of a telephone line would not
severe impediment to acc
forensic analysis of audiocass
The many forensic scientists
sulted all agreed that because t
leged Bin Laden tape lacked si
cant data below 4,000 Hz (n
mention the data lopped off
4,000 Hz), the positive identific
of the speaker's voice would b
tremely difficult. The IDIAP
mentioned the problem, notin
tape's "degraded quality."

The Post-Sexual Revoluti

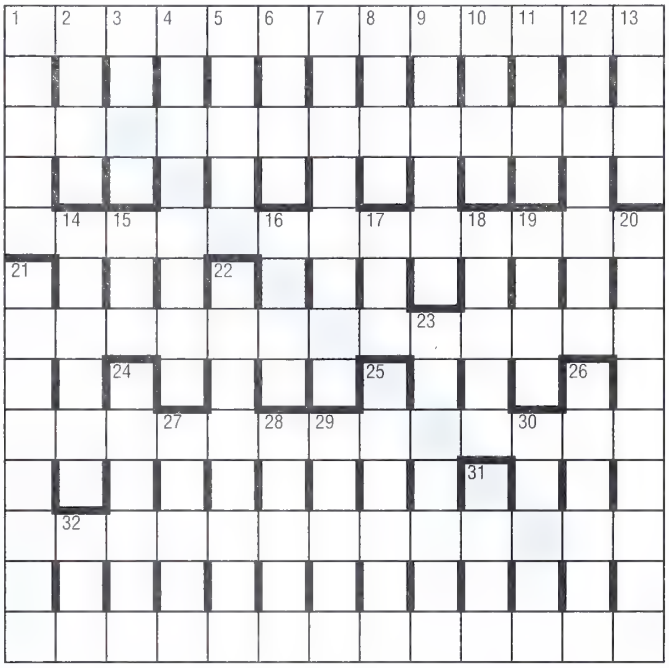
Bill McKibben's gloomy tal
the dehumanizing effects of ge
engineering ["The Posthuman
dition," Readings, April] is the
of well-intentioned but w
thinking that zealots such as
Ashcroft quote in their ideol
campaign against freedom in
tific research. Notwithstandin
hype spouted by some researc
science is nowhere close to ide
ing genes that control such b
iors as piano playing, marathon
ning, or reading literature, for
activities are enabled and de
largely by cultures and technol
Aptness in any of them requir
netic sequence so large and so
delicate trade-offs that the ki
task-specific engineering McKi
fears may never be possible.

For the sake of argument, let
you could pay the doctor to e
that your child would become the
Bach or Haydn. Were Bach or H
any less self-possessed individual
cause they sincerely thanked G
their musical talents? Would a
cessful composer feel downcast
empty if suddenly informed that H
was his great-great-grandfather
less McKibben is willing to answ
to such questions, he has no bus
claiming that a future genius will
prived of meaning and individu
just because he got his gifts with
biochemical help rather than ent
through sexual roulette.

James M. Unger
Columbus, Ohio

Save One for Me

By Richard E. Maltby Jr.



Across answers, listed by answer length, are to be entered, two or three to a row, at Across locations to be determined by the solver. The logic of their placement will be revealed by the letters in the shaded squares.

Down answers are to be entered normally. Clue answers include four proper names and one combining form. M Across is a variant spelling; O Across and 8 and 22 Down are uncommon words. As always, mental repunctuation of a clue is the key to its solution. The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 83.

ACROSS

A. Fool with the heart of 23D (3)
B. Muscle quality gives heavyweight energy (4)
C. Faceless girl joining in church drive (4)
D. Tech stocks: "Letters from grave" (4)
E. I work in the Mideast but I am American (4)
F. Get to break through after Second Grade (5)
G. French place fearless in irons! (5)
H. One in company of speakers with capital (5)
I. Yam may produce a groan (6)
J. Makes a point, starting the Open (6)
K. A thing like a pronounced pronouncement (6)
L. Up late partying after eye-opener—that's a burden to shoulder! (7)
M. Moving around key, Mozart broke a rule (7)
N. Good lord, it isn't a thingamabob! (7)
O. Greeks' sea can become rough, holding back a husband (8)
P. Difficult boss: a drama agent (10)

DOWN

1. Directional signal: it's tapers between poles (5)
2. Directional signal, said to be stuck up (4)
3. They get between two, four, and six chances! (4)
4. Weather's changing circles (8)
5. Rank and somewhat malignant (5)
6. Latin judge is a hunk (4)
7. To row around a curve makes you warmer (8)
8. Element of frenzy means ferment (4)
9. Paleface has a look around storage space (6)
10. Inside memory chip: first sign of Outer Space (4)
11. Sleep botherer died quickly—"Enjoy eternity!" (4)
12. Notice that can become verbose (7)
13. Sit for fitting (4)
14. Fisherman's tart (6)
15. A holy woman eviscerated a saint (3)
16. At first eight eggs are about a penny (4)
17. U.S. piano-maker of big sound (3)
18. *Look* covers university film (5)
19. They're slow flying off! (4)
20. Invalid signature limiting unwanted power (9)
21. Want ad line used in oceanfront property (8)
22. Lack of blood (i.e., I'm cash-free) (8)
23. Squirrels—same as S., only different (7)
24. Pacers traveling astronomical distance (6)
25. Sachet potpourri from Continent (6)
26. In a hotel, to take something back is natural (6)
27. Jar remains after bit of candy left (5)
28. Prized fossil bear dug up, bringing million in (5)
29. Some graphic raw language finishes a movie! (5)
30. Regulator of volume in Saudi oil (5)
31. Start removing insect from spout (4)
32. Throw up endlessly, being drunk (3)

Contest Rules: Send completed diagram with name and address to "Save One for Me," *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Entries must be received by June 11. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive one-year subscriptions to *Harper's Magazine*. Winners' names will be printed in the August issue. Winners of the April puzzle, "Game," are Donald E. Kelley Jr., Alameda, California; Ernest Muzquiz, Syracuse, New York; and William Konczyk, Chicago.



I DO KNOTS

1. The world's evils are said to have resulted from the curiosity of what mythic Greek bride, whose name means "all endowed"?

2. How many of his six wives did Henry VIII order executed?

3. Name the Byzantine empress overthrown after she proposed a marriage with the emperor Charlemagne?

4. What did Pope Pius VII agree to do for Napoleon Bonaparte in exchange for his agreeing to marry Josephine in a church?

5. What British monarch advised her daughter that "a marriage is no amusement but a solemn act, and generally a sad one"?

6. The wife of what British monarch overthrew him with an invading army and imprisoned him in London's Tower, earning the nickname the She Wolf of France?

7. What Greek goddess, married to her own brother, replaced the unmarried Great Mother goddess of the matriarchal Minoan culture?

8. Who appears as best man on a seventh-century icon celebrating the spiritual marriage of Saint Serge and Saint Bacchus, both men?

9. What American divorcée was still married to her second husband while conducting simultaneous affairs with a married car salesman and a prince?

10. The high court of which American state was the first to challenge laws against interracial marriage?

11. In 1987 the Supreme Court granted what class of Americans the right to marry?

12. How many extant human societies function without any form of marriage?

13. What nineteenth-century German philosopher wrote, "It is obvious that all sense has gone out of modern marriage: which is, however, no objection to marriage but to modernity"?

14. What nineteenth-century American naturalist and philosopher wrote, "The universe is the bride of the soul"?

Contest Rules: Send numbered answers with name and address to "Quiz," Harper's Magazine, 666 Broadway, New York, NY 10012. If you already subscribe to Harper's, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Entries must be received by June 13. The sender of the first correct set of answers opened at random will receive a one-year subscription to Harper's Magazine. The winner's name will be printed in the August issue. The answers to last month's quiz, "I Spy," appear on page 70.

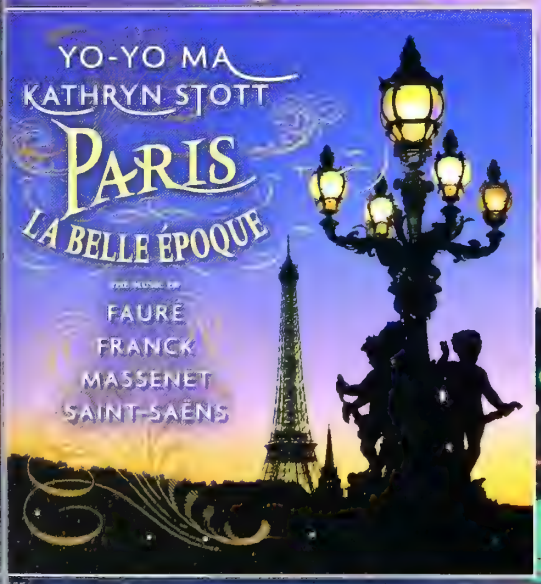
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YO-YO MA
KATHRYN STOTT

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By Charles Glass

II. Lost in the Cradle of Civilization

By Paul William Roberts

A GOSPEL ACCORDING TO THE EARTH

Sown by Science, a New Eco-Faith Takes Root

By Jack Hitt

Also: Haruki Murakami and Eula Biss

26 2003


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HARPER'S
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JULY 2003

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LETTERS

In Memoriam

Sam Antupit was a designer who valued words both as objects on t[illegible] page and as literature. In 1984, when *Harper's Magazine* took a n[illegible] editorial direction, we turned to him to create the look of the magazi[illegible] you now hold in your hands. Sam died on April 6, at the age of seven[illegible] one. We are one of many magazines, newspapers, and publishing hou[illegible] that will miss his talent.

The International Consensus?

The notion of a "Washington Consensus" is irresistible to conspiracy theorists, including now William Finnegan ["The Economics of Empire," May], for whom it has become an ideal straw man. The ideas encapsulated in the Washington Consensus, as defined by economist John Williamson, are accepted much more widely than Finnegan dares admit. It is the "model" of choice for countries from Iceland to India, from Croatia to Chile. There is wide agreement, based on many bad experiences, that countries cannot reduce poverty by spending money they don't have. Finnegan calls that realization "austerity"; I call it common sense. In fact, nothing in Finnegan's essay is critical of the policies Williamson enumerated in coining the phrase "Washington Consensus." Does Finnegan really question such elements of the consensus as increased spending on health and[illegible] cation, limits on tax exemptio[illegible] favored groups, and interest [illegible] that protect savers from inflatio[illegible]

There are other issues, how[illegible] about which reasonable people[illegible] differ on the best policy respons[illegible] deed, the IMF's views on a nu[illegible] of issues have evolved over time[illegible] example, the IMF today strongly[illegible] phasizes the importance to po[illegible] reduction of opening industria[illegible] countries' markets for exports [illegible] poor countries. On that questio[illegible] least, it seems that we agree [illegible] Finnegan.

Thomas C. Dawson
International Monetary Fund
Washington, D.C.

I offer an addendum to Wil[illegible] Finnegan's essay: For decades[illegible] World Bank has colluded in[illegible] theft of more than $100 billion [illegible] own loan funds. Article III of[illegible] Bank's charter states: "The B[illegible] shall make arrangements to en[illegible] that the proceeds of any loan[illegible] used only for the purposes for w[illegible] the loan was granted." Instea[illegible] making such arrangements, the B[illegible]

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ed a global policy of "Don't
Don't Tell," and its loans were
. Under pressure, the Bank fi-
admitted that during three
les of dictatorship in Suharto's
nesia (a showcase for the Bank
recently), a third of the money
ded for development—roughly
illion—disappeared.
senior Bank official responded
iticisms about this corruption:
eans 70 cents [on the dollar] got
for development after all. That's
better than some places with
10 cents on the dollar." He was
ring to Africa, where up to 90
nt of Bank loans are stolen.
is criminal for the Bank to ig-
its legal obligations under Arti-
II and to force poor populations
pay 100 percent of their debt
interest. The people of Asia,
ca, and Latin America are enti-
to write off World Bank loans
never received.

y A. Winters
cago

Irregular Indigested Piece

"Our Essays, Ourselves" [Re-
vs, May], Cristina Nehring claims
t Lisa Knopp's *The Nature of*
ne shares with four other books "a
ewhat sleepy obsession with rural
eats, peaceable pastimes, and
dhood memories." I do not neces-
ly share Nehring's apparent an-
thy to autobiography, but I find it
th noting that although Knopp's
essay in the collection chronicles
own journey home, most of these
ys are not autobiographical. The
jects Knopp in fact addresses in-
de the varied reactions to an exe-
ion that for some Nebraskans be-
ne a celebration not only of death
of overt racial hatred; water poli-
s on the Great Plains, particularly
an essay about the inventor of the
ter-pivot irrigator; the 1923 exca-
ion of a Columbian mammoth in
ncoln County, Nebraska; the
nder of Arbor Day, J. Sterling
rton, who sought to make the
sslands into a New England land-
pe; and the continued effects of
thologizing the Overland Trail
d homesteading history. For a



Photo: Charles Moore/ Black Star

The 1962 *Life* magazine photograph—

seven Mississippi sheriffs preparing to "control"
the violence they anticipate
when James Meredith attempts to integrate
the University of Mississippi

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New York Observer

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–Karl Fleming
Los Angeles Times

"A remarkable feat of investigative journalism... Revelations abound"
–Kevin Berger
San Fran. Chronicle

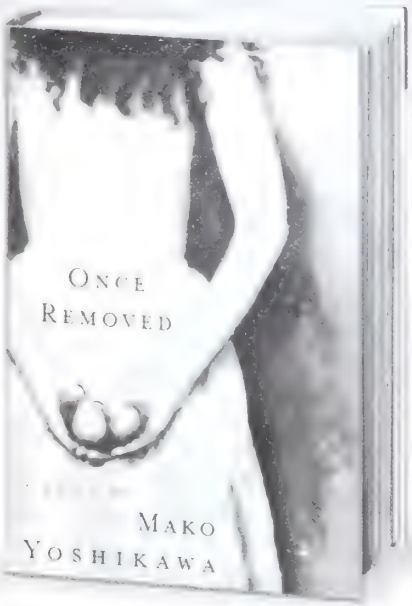
"An invaluable book" says GAY [illegible]ESE

"The story of the victims of racism [should] keep being told. But we desperately need this portrait of the oppressors, and the legacy they bequeathed...A lasting work of modern American history."

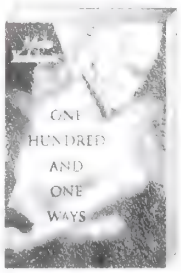
"Hendrickson does not stalk [illegible] subjects. He sits on their porches and drinks iced tea...watches [illegible]em play with their grandchildren... A complicated-and truthful-gl[illegible]pse into the lives of three generations of white southerners." –Dan T. Carter, *The Washington Post*

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reviewer to dismiss a finely crafted, provocative essay collection because of an aversion to the cover photo and the first essay alone is, at best, dishonest.

[illegible]
Lincoln, Nebr.

Cristina Nehring commits one of the most egregious blunders a critic can make: hasty generalization. In positing her own Big Idea, she neglects the specific and individual character of the books she discusses, revealing the weakness of unfettered "boldness" and "provocation."

It is hard to believe that Nehring actually read Tracy Daugherty's *Five Shades of Shadow*. Far from being a simple ode to Okies, Daugherty's book explores the decline of socialism in the United States, the sources of American violence, and the struggles of migrant workers. What bolder, brasher statement could Nehring ask for than when Daugherty writes, after a discussion of the Tulsa race riot of 1921,

> A storyteller who flees from ghosts, seduced by the illusions of freedom from time and place, flees the very source of storytelling; fails to learn how best to be a citizen both of the nation and of art; fails to see past the merely gruesome and into a subtly moral realm.

Provocation is the product of subtlety, complexity, and the specificity of experience.

Scott Naddson
Portland, Oreg.

Cristina Nehring is incorrect when she argues that fiction is "the public's favorite child." This, so she claims, is in contrast to other ages: "In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries a good prose narrative was a *true* prose narrative. . . . Imagination was a lesser god than observation; a lesser god, even, than philosophical reflection."

The New York Times Book Review—the barometer of literature that sells well—habitually reviews more nonfiction than fiction or poetry. First-time "essayists" generally garner higher advances than first-time fiction authors or poets. Reality-television ratings trounce those of the few [illegible] wrought dramas on the small [illegible] and literal readings of religious [illegible] all the craze. Contrary to what [illegible] argues, Americans are obsessed [illegible] non-fiction, albeit a version of [illegible] lacks big ideas.

The real problem is that [illegible] forgotten how to read anyt[illegible] metaphorically. Fiction—goo[illegible] tion—is the study of the hu[illegible] condition. It is from this study [illegible] we may begin to extrapolate [illegible] that could, eventually, become [illegible] der for "the big idea" of an e[illegible] Without imagination, philosop[illegible] reflection is impossible, and ob[illegible] tion is as vacuous as the next A[illegible] ican idol.

B. K. Loren
Broomfield, Colo.

Cristina Nehring's essay b[illegible] mentions any of the books in he[illegible] view." Her opinions might just as[illegible] appear under the rubric "gener[illegible] tions." Dr. Johnson offered this d[illegible] ition of "essay": "A loose sally o[illegible] mind; an irregular indigested p[illegible] not a regular and orderly com[illegible] tion." I would agree that Nehr[illegible] marathon is an essay in that it [illegible] takes of the quality of indigestion

R. E. Stratton
Hattiesburg, Miss.

We Shall Fight on the Page

I wish to challenge Chris Ro[illegible] assertion, in responding to Jonat[illegible] Schell [Letters, May], that " nonviolent departure of the Br[illegible] from India would never have [illegible] pened had World War II not [illegible] its devastating assistance." Un[illegible] Winston Churchill, Clement At[illegible] leader of the British Labour P[illegible] favored independence for In[illegible] which was assured by the elec[illegible] of Labour with a massive parlian[illegible] tary majority in 1945. Indeed, [illegible] even possible that had World W[illegible] II not delayed the calling of a [illegible] tional election Labour might h[illegible] gained power sooner and ther[illegible] granted independence to Indi[illegible] that earlier date.

Roy Palmer
Westmount, Canada

NOTEBOOK

Social hygiene

By Lewis H. Lapham

h air and innocence are good if you t take too much of them—but I al- s remember that most of the evements and pleasures of life are in air.

—Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr.

When the New York City law inst smoking in restaurants and s took effect on March 30, I ex- ted the friends of the risk-free en- onment to rest content with the mph of their intolerance. The as- ıption was misplaced. Not satisfied h the denial of a pleasure they find ful and the suppression of a free- n implicit in the Bill of Rights, our ident company of public scolds on began to say that smoking ould be forbidden in the open air. the second week in May I was lis- ning to complaints about cigar oke drifting across the lawns of ntral Park (reckless endangerment helpless infants), about cigarette tts littering the sidewalks adjacent the Grolier Club (disgusting sight), out the small cadres of furtive okers (dismal signs of failure) dis- uring the approach to the Trump wer or Le Cirque.

It's no good trying to explain to ch people that their exposure to condhand smoke is likely to do em as much harm as their handling a lead pencil or their close associa- on with a side order of mashed tatoes. They look upon themselves if upon the works of Thomas ainsborough, and even when I take me care with the argument (be- use I enjoy smoking and have in- lged the habit for fifty years), I ight as well be talking to a portrait the Viscount Kilmorey or Geor- giana, Duchess of Devonshire. I can understand why the habit might be thought foolish or obnoxious, but if I know that cigarettes can injure my own health, I also know that, with the exception of people afflicted with respiratory ailments, they don't inflict collateral damage on sensitive bystanders. Despite the repeated attempts to classify secondhand smoke as a weapon of mass destruction, nobody has yet identified it as a cause of death. The studies undertaken by the Environmental Protection Agency in 1993 and by the World Health Organization in 1998 can provide no certain evidence of effects contributing to the appearance of heart disease or cancer. The theoretically harmful chemicals in environmental tobacco smoke show up in quantities so small that they bear comparison to the trace elements of arsenic in drinking water, to the acetic acid in vinegar, or to the poisons hidden in the cellular maze of a sun-dried tomato. If Mayor Bloomberg's arms inspectors were to bring their paranoid standards of measurement into the kitchens of the city's restaurants, they would discover so many carcinogens in the mustard sauce or the chicken soup that they could arrest all the cooks and serve a summons on every stove.

Statistics, however, can be made to fit any season's fashion, and the fast shuffle of numbers on the part of the antismoking lobby I take to be no more or less surprising than the similar sleights of hand performed by the accountants for Arthur Anderson and the Enron Corporation as well as by the authors of the annual CIA estimates, the projectors of the federal budget deficit, and the adjusters of New York City's subway fares. The recognition of a shell game still leaves the question about its purpose. To what end? Whence the hysteria? Why is it that when I smoke a cigarette at a sidewalk café, at least two passersby (one of them wearing a bow tie and a straw hat, the other jingling with Navajo silver) stop to inform me that I'm committing a crime against humanity. Their zeal is the more impressive because of its absurdity: prophets bearing witness to the Day of Judgment while standing in a haze of carbon monoxide emitted by the passing truck traffic, the sewers below their feet emptying streams of mercury and lead into the unrepentant sea.

If what was at issue actually reflected a concern for the public health, I would expect the municipal authorities to assign a percentage of the excise tax placed on a carton of cigarettes to a program of medical rehabilitation, possibly to the steering of smokers away from the reefs of destruction. We also might expect serious attempts on the part of both government and industry to cleanse the far more dangerously polluted atmospheres that surround the society's coal miners, garbagemen, food-processing workers, and parking-garage attendants, as well as the schoolchildren and homeowners obliged to live precariously downwind from a chemical factory, an oil refinery, or a hog farm.

But the antismoking lobby makes no protest against pollutants allied with the manufacture of its own comforts. It's an upscale crowd, well-groomed and self-regarding, its demographic profile matched to that of a lovingly phrased personal notice

that I came across several years ago in *The New York Review of Books*:

> AM I BEAUTIFUL? Some people say so. WASP brunette, 5'8", Ivy-educat- [illegible] competent, serene non-smoker, non-bitch, nicely proportioned in body and mind. Too intelligent and alive to be happy with loser-creatures. If you're a civilized, solvent, emotionally available, spiritual, epicurean man over 40, who loves his work and himself, seeking multidimensional companionship with grown-up divorced woman, please write. Shy, conventional, reserved exterior okay, but please no sugar daddies, hunters, hurters, or walking wounded.

A woman formed from Bloomberg's rib, clearly blessed with a high-end sensibility, DWF instead of DJM, spiritual instead of secular, but otherwise as sublimely narcissistic as the mayor, "graceful," "competent," and "serene," accustomed to private showings and opening nights, available for an interview with Charlie Rose. Why would so exquisite an item in the great American department store not wish to set herself apart from the common mud of plebeian weakness and misfortune?

The question speaks to the positioning of the velvet rope with which American society now divides the kingdoms of the rich from the deserts of the poor. The reconfiguration of the nation's wealth over the last twenty-odd years (90 percent of the private-capital assets transferred into the hands of 10 percent of the citizenry) has prompted the establishment of a social order—like the one known to the early Roman Empire—an oligarchy in place of a republic, an equestrian class that buys its rank at the prices paid for apartments on Fifth Avenue and houses at Pebble Beach, a Senate and a Cabinet composed largely of opulent landlords [illegible] by contemptuous of their tenants, a president of the United States who received his office as an inheritance.

Being American and therefore sworn at birth to the doctrines of egalitarianism, we don't like to acknowledge the existence of the class system that we meet every day in the street, if not during the course of an afternoon stroll on Rodeo Drive then by a brief visit—subject to the approval of the uniformed security guards—to one of the country's more fiercely defended resort hotels. No longer in the habit of reading *The Federalist Papers*, we learn our civics lessons in the gossip columns (boldfaced names ushered out of the limousines and into the VIP lounge, common names allowed to beg the favor of a food stamp or an autograph), and having lost faith during the years of our prosperity in any political or philosophical idea that might account for the unequal distributions of fortune, we revert to the simplicities of sumptuary law. The practice makes a mockery of our election-year rhetoric (which dwells on what must be done for the democratic many), but it conforms to the vocabulary of our commercial advertising (which dwells on what can be made available to the privileged few), and as a means of codifying the degrees of separation between the social classes, it comes equipped with the certificates of historical precedent.

Julius Caesar posted *lictors* in the Roman markets to seize from upstart pawnbrokers those provisions (exotic fish, heavy fowls, the better cuts of meat) forbidden to their plebeian rank. Queen Elizabeth I allowed no "man under the degree of baron to wear within his hose any velvet, satin or other stuff above the estimation of sarcanet or taffeta," neither under pain of "forfeiture" or "imprisonment," any man under the degree of knight to wear, either at the throat or on the sleeve, "outrageous double ruffs." Our Puritan forefathers in seventeenth-century Massachusetts took particular offense at the sight of "people of mean condition" (i.e., anybody valued at a net worth of less than 200 British pounds) dressed in a manner above their station, "by wearing gold or silver lace, or buttons, or points at their knees, or to walk in great boots." The effrontery was punished with severe fines, as were the ambitions of servant girls seen wearing "silk or tiffany hoods, or scarves which, though allowable to persons of greater estates and more liberal education, we cannot but judge intolerable."

Addressing the political confusions ominously at large in eighteenth-century France, Montesquieu in *The Spirit of the Laws* recruits the displays of luxury to the service of the gov[illegible] ment, an accommodation he tho[illegible] especially useful to states making [illegible] sometimes awkward transition fr[illegible] republic to a despotism or a monar[illegible]

> luxury ought continually to incr[illegible] and to grow more extensive, as it [illegible] from the labourer to the artificer, t[illegible] merchant, to the magistrate, to th[illegible] bility, to the great officers of state, [illegible] the very prince, otherwise the n[illegible] will be undone.

In the same way that sumptuary [illegible] imparts meaning to the forms of [illegible] (the purple thread woven into a [illegible] man toga, the length of sword per[illegible] ted to an Elizabethan gallant), it [illegible] arrange a society's seating plan (p[illegible] tarians allowed to occupy no more t[illegible] 5,000 seats in Yankee Stadium f[illegible] World Series game), establish the [illegible] erarchy of polite behaviors and [illegible] ferred taste (the caviar or the can[illegible] apple, the California zinfandel, or [illegible] rotgut Kentucky bourbon), determ[illegible] which magazines may be sold in su[illegible] markets (*Glamour*, not *Maxim*), [illegible] pluck from the playing fields of the N[illegible] any referee too fat or too clumsy t[illegible] seen on television. Perceived as a m[illegible] of ill breeding or low social status, [illegible] arette smoke indicates both insole[illegible] and stupidity, and Mayor Bloomb[illegible] can order it out of his presence as if [illegible] missing an impertinent doorman o[illegible] underachieving maid.

Apply the sumptuary laws to [illegible] "value free" speech now prized [illegible] most of our upwardly mobile pol[illegible] cians, and we come again to the fi[illegible] doms of expression that the eques[illegible] an classes, newly enriched a[illegible] digitally enhanced, neither wish [illegible] choose to see. The preferred attitu[illegible] toward smoking accords with t[illegible] canon of political correctness that [illegible] arisen over the last twenty years [illegible] concert with the government's p[illegible] tensions to imperial grandeur—t[illegible] news media cleansed of strong l[illegible] guage and imperfect hair, the auth[illegible] of standardized college tests inocul[illegible] ed against the infection of danger[illegible] adjectives and subversive nou[illegible] Among the topics deemed inadmi[illegible] ble on its roster of searching es[illegible] questions, The Princeton Revi[illegible] now lists, in no particular order, w[illegible] drugs, sex, alcohol, tobacco, ju[illegible]

socioeconomic advantages
ıming pools, expensive vaca-
, divorce, religion, Halloween,
ing "disrespectful" or "demean-
Diane Ravitch's new book, *The*
uage Police, takes note of the
fastidiousness governing the as-
y of high school textbooks, and
ımples of the words and images
ed in the interest of a risk-free
ectual environment she men-
Mickey Mouse and Stuart Little
rodents and therefore sugges-
f rats in slums), depictions of a
er cooking dinner for her chil-
(gender stereotype), dinosaurs
presence lending credibility to
heory of evolution), owls (in
cultures associated with death).
use the committees buying the
ly laundered lesson plans seek
tidimensional companionship"
the censors on the Christian
(who compose pictures of an ide-
l, nonexistent past) and the cen-
ɔn the liberal left (who compose
ures of an idealized, nonexistent
e) the books provide the students
the comfort of a fairy tale.

also did Mayor Bloomberg pro-
the voters of New York City with
ıdidacy so purified of the atmos-
e of politics that it consisted of lit-
lse except the fragrance (lemon-
d, smoke-free) of his money. He
$76 million for his election, and
t else did anybody need to ask or
v? The man was rich and therefore
nmortal, a billionaire who wished
ave his portrait painted by the
York Times, not once but every
Prior to his decision to stand for
ic office, Bloomberg summoned
uite of flatterers to ask where he
ıt best be advised to find a satis-
ɔry answer to the question, "AM
AUTIFUL?" The possibilities ap-
ntly were reduced to four—may-
f New York, president of the
rld Bank, president of the United
es, secretary general of the Unit-
Nations.

he city drew the losing number.
ing the five months of a campaign
le from an exhibit of television
ımercials, Bloomberg declined the
ignity of public debate, absenting
ıself from the common herd of cit-
s (losers or numbskulls..."the walk-
wounded"), who sweat in over-heated community halls and bring with them the foul smells of disrespectful argument and demeaning contradiction. Nor did the candidate offer any thought, phrase, or gesture that failed to broaden the horizons of his vanity.

As mayor of New York, Bloomberg reads from the same reassuring script, borrowed, in spirit if not in so many words, from the collection of his witticisms presented to him as a birthday gift in 1990 by the employees of his media company. Most of the *aperçus* have failed the test of time, but two of them speak to the shows of self-infatuation that the mayor now parades across the stage of City Hall:

"Make the customer think he's getting laid when he's getting fucked."

"Always pick a fight with someone smaller than you."

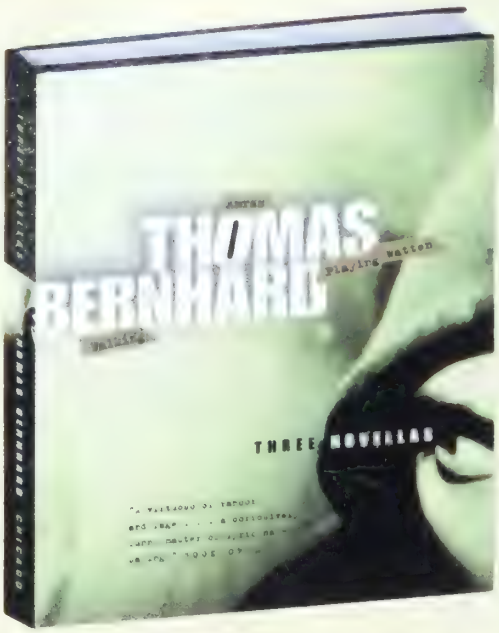
I know of no more accurate a gloss on the mayor's administration of his public office. Delighted with his photo opportunities, he picks his fights with people not rich enough to afford his arrogance, his vulgarity, or his helicopter. Together with the law against smoking, likely to bankrupt a good many small business establishments and deprive the city of substantial revenue from the hotel, tourist, and restaurant trades, the mayor has raised property taxes by 18.5 percent, increased the sales tax, and reduced sanitation services in Brooklyn and the Bronx. Life in Manhattan he defines as "a luxury good," and the borough of Queens as a desolation to which "I make it a rule never to go" unless on the way to an airport; nor does he hide his contempt for threadbare churls unable to pay the going rates for an East Side town house or a first-class collection of Italian shoes.

If Bloomberg enthroned in City Hall could be understood as a freakish accident or a bad mistake not apt to be soon repeated, maybe we could see him as a figure in a clownish farce—Molière's bourgeois gentleman or the fool in one of Shakespeare's forests. Unhappily, the mayor apes (heartlessly and all too well) the imperial manner of the Bush Administration, his egoism and what passes for his wit matched to the spirit of an age in which power reveals itself as nothing other than money, and the spirit of the law devolves into a course in social hygiene. ■



THE DARK SIDE of MODERN LIFE

New from Chicago



THREE NOVELLAS

Thomas Bernhard

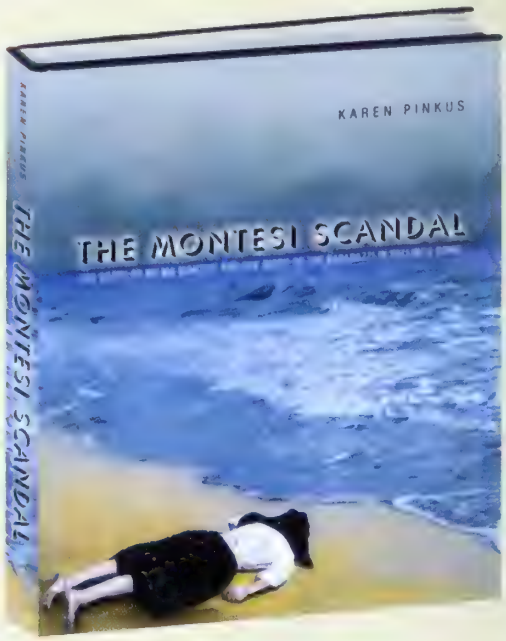
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Karen Pinkus

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HARPER'S INDEX

ırs Alexander Hamilton spent in 1787 arguing at the Constitutional Convention that America should have a king : 5

Number of the three states that have canceled their 2004 primaries whose legislatures are GOP-controlled : 3

Percentage by which a British flag maker's sales of U.S. flags in March exceeded those a year earlier : 25

Percentage by which its sales of Iraqi flags did : 10,000

Chance that a human being alive today is a refugee : 1 in 318

Chance that an American lives full-time in an RV : 1 in 290

Estimated number of foreign human-rights violators living in the United States : 1,000

ntage of Americans who said at the end of April that their nation commanded less respect abroad than a year ago : 41

centage who said that the Iraq war will have been worthwhile even if Saddam Hussein is never captured or killed : 53

Percentage who said it will have been worthwhile even if weapons of mass destruction are never found : 60

Number of Serbian Orthodox churches burned down since the end of NATO's 1999 Operation Allied Force : 134

Minimum number of people reported killed by militants in Congo since the beginning of the Iraq war : 1,280

mum number of Latin American residents whose personal data the U.S. government has bought since 2001 : 100,000,000

Number of presidents Argentina has had in the past two years : 6

umber of NATO countries besides the United States and Canada that use no form of proportional representation : 0

mount by which the number of government jobs in the U.S. exceeds the number of manufacturing jobs : 5,129,000

nount of the $106,185 price of a Hummer H1 that businesses may deduct under the proposed Bush tax plan : $88,722

Number of terrorism indictments brought since September 2001 by the U.S. Attorney's Office in New Jersey : 62

Number of them brought against Middle Eastern students for paying others to take their English proficiency tests : 60

nber of Wisconsin accounting students given take-home tests to accommodate an Enron whistle-blower's April speech : 78

Number later found to have cheated : 40

ar in which Washington, D.C., neighbors of a WWI-era chemical-weapons test site were told it was cleaned up : 1995

Tons of toxic soil that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has removed from the site since 2001 : 10,660

inimum number of U.S. homes or properties seized under eminent domain since 1997 for private development : 3,722

Gallons of water that Boulder, Colorado, saved last year through a water-conservation program : 1,000,000,000

Estimated number of tons of ocean salt spray that enter Earth's atmosphere each second : 115

Estimated percentage by which the sun's radiation has increased since 1980 : 0.1

ars by which the 1831 invention of the electric dynamo preceded the first documented use of the word "boredom" : 21

imated percentage of U.S. workers who were "creative professionals" in 1900, 1980, and 2000, respectively : 10, 19, 30

Weekly wage above which new federal regulations forbid the payment of overtime in jobs requiring "talent" : $425

Estimated amount spent on lap dances in Las Vegas each year : $25,000,000

Total child support that went unpaid in Clark County, Nevada, in the last year : $63,100,000

Number of years Neil Bush was married before asking his wife for a divorce via email last summer : 22

Percentage of married U.S. couples that are raising children : 46

Percentage of unmarried, cohabiting U.S. couples that are : 41

e in April by which the North Dakota Senate upheld the state's 1890 ban on cohabitation by unmarried couples : 26–21

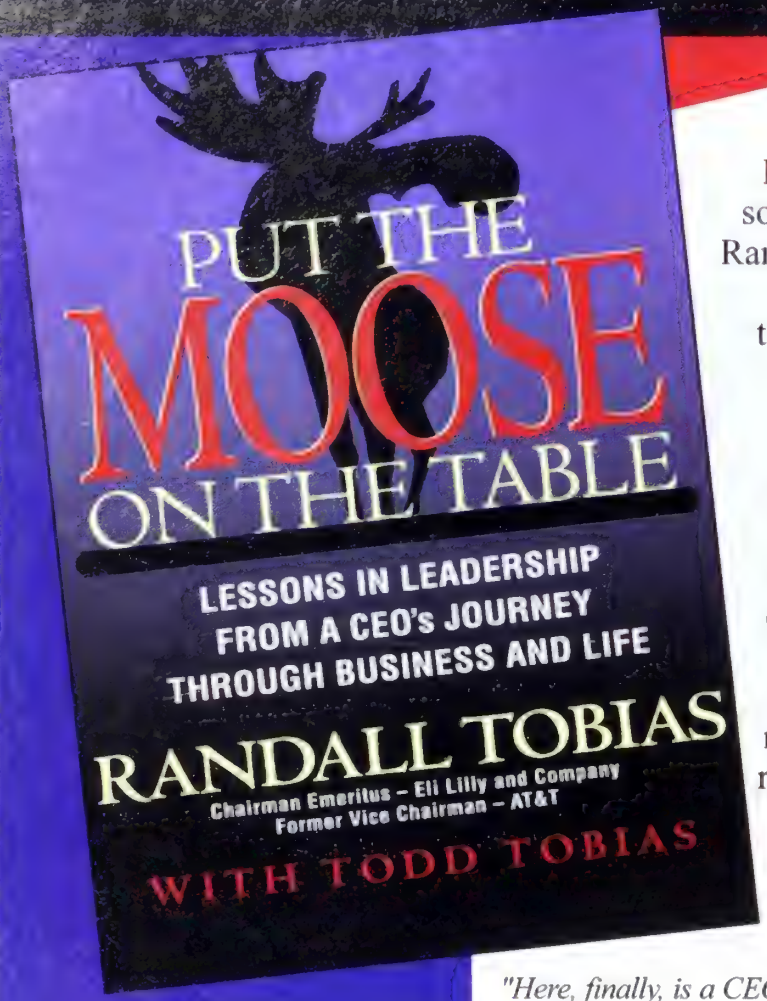
Number of American states that have revoked helmet requirements for adult motorcycle riders since 1975 : 30

Ratio of New York City's minimum fine for smoking tobacco in a bar to its minimum fine for possessing marijuana : 2:1

Number of Grateful Dead concerts attended by columnist Ann Coulter : 67

Figures are the latest available as of May 2003. Sources are listed on page 73.
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READINGS

[Dissent]

NOT IN OUR NAME

From an essay by Peter Hitchens in the March 29 issue of The Spectator. *Hitchens is a columnist for the* Mail on Sunday. *His most recent book,* A Brief History of Crime, *was published by Atlantic Books in April.*

There is nothing conservative about war. For at least the last century, war has been the herald and handmaid of socialism and state control. It is the excuse for censorship, organised lying, regulation, and taxation. It is paradise for the busybody and the narc. It damages family life and wounds the Church, all the while polluting the minds of millions with scenes of horror and death. It is, in short, the ally of everything summed up by the ugly word "progress."

Before the great conflicts of the twentieth century, the average Englishman had no contact with the state unless it was to see the postman at his front door or the police constable walking by. After those conflicts, he could hardly exhale without having to sign a government form and queue to have it stamped. A conservative country of free individuals where everything was permitted unless specifically prohibited became a collectivist state where everything was prohibited unless specifically allowed.

So why did the Conservative Party support this left-wing war? It has missed a wonderful opportunity to be true to its principles, to be right, and to re-engage with the people of Britain. Those who have dismissed it for years as a callous pressure group motivated by nothing but money might have been forced to reconsider their view. But the Tories have so utterly lost the power of thought that they have become what their cruelest opponents pretend they are. Not since they endorsed the unhinged privatisation of the railways—after scouring the world for the worst possible form of ownership and imposing it on the half-ruined system—have the Conservatives acted so contrary to their own wisdom and so exactly as if they were the brainless destroyers that "alternative" comedians imagine them to be.

This war was always different from those that have gone before. Previous conflicts in the modern age, even if caused by failures of deterrence, and even if they extended the power of the state, did at least have the virtue of being in British interests in that if we had not fought them we would have been ruined, subjugated, or fatally humbled. This one was so hard to justify that its supporters treated their own arguments with implied scorn, wanly grinding out cant phrases that long ago lost their meaning, trying to frighten us with bogeymen or pretending grotesquely that liberty and civilisation could be imposed on Mesopotamia with explosives.

Listening to educated, intelligent men regurgitating such expressions as "weapons of mass destruction" and "evil dictator" called to mind George Orwell's 1946 essay "Politics and the English Language," in which he wrote:

> When one watches some tired hack on the platform [illegible] *tual atrocities, iron heel, bloodstained tyranny, free peoples of the world, stand shoulder to shoulder*—one often has a curious feeling that one is not watching a live human being but some kind of dummy: a feeling which suddenly becomes stronger at moments when the light catches the speaker's spectacles and turns them into blank discs which seem to have no eyes behind them.

The idea that naked force can create human freedom is itself a left-wing idea. Even more radical were the war party's contempt for the sovereignty of nations and its unashamed belief that ends justify means. No wonder that the war's hottest-eyed supporters on both sides of the Atlantic are ex-Marxists who have lost their faith but have yet to lose their Leninist tendency to worship worldly power. Yet ranged alongside them are Tories, who are supposed to stand for the gentler and more modest cause of faith and nation, Church and King.

My affection for the U.S.A. and its people, and my readiness to defend them against mean-minded foes, are on record in plenty of places. During the Cold War, I believed that deterrence would create real peace while military weakness would bring war. The argument that those who really desire peace should prepare for war is not just an axiom but a proven policy, confirmed by all human history. In my case, the point is reinforced by an unfeigned loathing of war. In those days, left-wingers called me names. Now I find myself accused of anti-Americanism and even treachery because I was against this war. My fears for American liberties, following the grotesquely named Patriot Act and the founding of the Department of Homeland Security, are treated not as the warnings of a candid friend but as disloyalty.

There seems to be a new ideology of Americanism in which one is either totally loyal or one is a suspect. (Perhaps this, too, attracts those ex-Marxists.) It is based on an idea of America as a cause rather than on the good and decent nation which actually exists. I am reminded of the terrifying American messianic bore Hector Dexter, in Nancy Mitford's 1951 satire, *The Blessing*, who tells his English hosts that he wishes to see a bottle of Coca-Cola on every table in every country.

> When I say a bottle of Coca Cola I mean it metaphorically speaking, I mean it as an outward and visible sign of something inward and spiritual, I mean it as if each Coca Cola bottle contained a djinn, and as if that djinn was our great American civilisation ready to spring out of each bottle and cover the whole global universe with its great wide wings. That is what I mean.

The same juvenile spirit was epitomized in March by the U.S. Navy's Vice Admiral Timothy Keating aboard the USS *Constellation*. Vice Admiral Keating waved his arms about and proclaimed, "It's hammer time!" to the accompaniment of Queen's "We Will Rock You" played at full blast to his ship's company. Adult cultures think war deserves reflection and seriousness of purpose. This war seems to have been imagined and designed by spiritual teenagers. Will the next begin to the rattle and boom of gangsta rap?

A human city was shaken and blasted by men pushing buttons in almost complete safety hundreds of miles away. Yes, most of the missiles hit their targets and the civilian casualties were few—though that was little comfort to those few. Yes, the bombs were directed at an ugly and despicable tyranny. Yes, the bombers believed they were doing good. But what if one day others are in a position to treat us as we have treated Baghdad, and it is our women giving premature birth because they are petrified by the "smart" explosions, and the ceilings of our expensive hospitals cracking and crumbling as the palaces and bunkers of our loathed elite are blasted?

Do I wish that our casualties had been higher? Of course not. But the ability to ruin someone else's capital city without risk to yourself reminds me of Robert E. Lee's truly conservative remark after the carnage of Fredericksburg: "It is well that war is so terrible. We should grow too fond of it." For some people, war is no longer terrible enough; they have grown too fond of it. They are not conservatives in any serious meaning of the word.

[Strategy]

PROTOCOLS OF THE CONSULTANTS OF ZION

From "Israeli communication priorities 2003," a seventeen-page memo prepared in April for The Wexner Foundation by The Luntz Research Companies and The Israel Project. The Wexner Foundation, based in Ohio, funds "Jewish leadership initiatives." Frank Luntz is a prominent Republican pollster.

The world has changed. The words, themes, and messages on behalf of Israel must include and embrace the new reality of a post-Saddam world. In the past, we have urged a lower profile for Israel out of a fear that the American people would blame Israel for what was hap-



reen Trucks, White Night," by Andrew Moore. His photographs of Cuba are currently on display at the International Center of Photography, New York City.

pening in the rest of the Middle East. Now is the time to link American success in dealing with terrorism and dictators from a position of strength to Israel's ongoing efforts to eradicate terrorism on and within its borders.

The fact that Israel has remained relatively silent for the three months preceding the war and for the three weeks of the war was absolutely the correct strategy—and according to all the polling done, it worked. But as the military conflict comes to a close, it is now time for Israel to lay out its own "road map" for the future, which includes unqualified support for America and unqualified commitment to an ongoing war against terrorism.

Perceptions of Israel and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are almost entirely colored and often overshadowed by the continuing action in Iraq. Advocates of Israel have about two weeks to get their message in order before world attention turns to the so-called "road map" and how best to "solve" the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

There will certainly be some people, particularly those on the political left, who will oppose whatever words you use, but the language that follows will help you secure support from a large majority of Americans.

This document is about language, so let me be blunt. "Saddam Hussein" are the two words that tie Israel to America and are most likely to deliver support in Congress. They also just happen to be two of the most hated words in the English language right now.

There are some who would say that Saddam Hussein is already old news. They don't understand history. They don't understand communication. They don't understand how to leverage history and communication for the benefit of Israel. The day we allow Saddam to take his

eventual place in the trash heap of history is the duty and [illegible] strongest weapon in the linguistic defense of Israel.

Although Americans don't want to increase foreign aid in a time of significant budgetary deficits and painful spending cuts, there is only one argument that will work for continuing Israeli aid. All the arguments about Israel being a democracy, letting Arabs vote and serve in government, protecting religious freedom, etc., won't deliver the public support you need to secure the loan guarantees and the military aid Israel needs. You need a national-security angle—one that clearly links the interests of both Israel and America.

[Warning]

SLEEPER CUBICLES

From a February press release issued by Pre-employ.com, Inc., a background-investigation company based in Redding, California.

IS YOUR EMPLOYEE A TERRORIST?

According to the FBI, terrorists could be hiding among us, especially at work. An FBI bulletin says industry officials should *check out their current employees* in an effort to root out any terrorists who may have been working there for years, waiting for the signal to strike. Al Qaeda's mode of operation is patience, sometimes taking years to plan an attack—as it did for the attacks that occurred on Sept. 11, 2001.

"If you are concerned about terrorists among your company's employees, you can take several measures to uncover the potential operatives," advises Robert Mather, president of Pre-employ.com, Inc., a nationwide background investigations company. "Terrorists are in many ways the same as embezzlers, scam artists, and criminals; all attempt to hide their past history. An employer has many tools available to uncover a fake background on a résumé or application."

Pre-employ.com, Inc. completes 2,000 background checks each day for clients nationwide. Clients range from Fortune 500 companies to small businesses. For as little as $10, employers can get a background check within two days. They'll know whether their employees are whom they claim to be and whether they've been honest.

WORDS THAT WORK

"For ten years the United Nations talked about deterrence, and for ten years Saddam defied the international community. Just as America had no choice but to remove him from power, Israel has no choice but to protect its borders and its people from terrorists who mean us harm."

Mix this message in with one of compassion for the Palestinian people. Many Americans sympathize with their plight. So should you. Americans want to hear it. A statement that the Palestinian people deserve better should follow every recrimination of a Palestinian leader or terrorist.

THE ROAD MAP: A BALANCED APPROACH

As the postwar dust settles over the Iraqi desert, the focus has already begun to shift to the Israeli-Palestinian peace process and President Bush's so-called "road map" to peace. The good news is that the American people firmly believe that if the Palestinians want to demonstrate a sincere commitment to peace, they must abide by the tenets of the president's soon-to-be-released road map. The not-as-good news is that they expect exactly the same from Israel and they demand it immediately.

In both Chicago and Los Angeles, and among virtually all respondents regardless of political party, Americans responded quite favorably to the language from President Bush for two reasons: "*a balanced approach*" and "*shared responsibilities*." Keep those terms in mind and use them whenever possible.

COMPLICATING THE ROAD MAP: MAHMOUD ABBAS

To some extent, your job as proponents of Israel has been easy. Under the Arafat regime, it's not difficult to convince the American public of the corruption of the current Palestinian leadership. Although many sympathize with the plight of the Palestinian people, there is no love lost on Yassir Arafat. Arafat is a terrorist; they know that. Better still, he looks the part.

The emergence of Mahmoud Abbas as the new Palestinian prime minister comes *at exactly the wrong time*. His ascent to power seems legitimate. He is a fresh face, and a clean-shaven one at that. He speaks well and dresses in Western garb. He may even genuinely want peace.

Just as President Bush had begun to make headway in drawing attention to the need for a reformed Palestinian leadership, the Palestinians throw us this curveball. What will the world make of Abbas?

Given the haze surrounding this new figure, *it is imperative that you NOT immediately launch criticisms on Abbas. You need more substance on*

Abbas before you can tell the American people you question his devotion to peace.

Is it a concern that he is a Holocaust denier? Absolutely. Will that fact convince Americans that he cannot represent the Palestinian people in an honest bid for peace? Hardly. Americans don't want to hear about the Holocaust anymore, and they particularly don't want to hear it from the Jewish community.

A LITTLE HUMILITY, PLEASE

As you emerge from one delicate public-relations situation—war with Iraq—you enter an even dicier situation—cooperating on "*the road map*" with an unknown counterpart. Fortunately, the former may provide you some breathing room and cover for the latter.

Opinion elites in America will not find repeated criticisms of the Palestinian leadership credible unless they are coupled with a similar onus on the Israeli government to accommodate for peace and acknowledge past transgressions. Assertions that Israel enjoys a blameless history are *soundly* rejected. Although this will not be received well by everyone, it is essential for your spokespeople to acknowledge that Israel has made some mistakes. Not only does this build credibility but it also allows the spokesperson to then explain and assert Israel's history of taking strides for peace.

The essential conclusion is to remain focused on your communication *priorities* from this point forward. Terror ends first. A willing peace partner emerges second. The road map is executed last. And throughout it all, you exhibit humility and reaffirm that the Palestinian people deserve better.

ESSENTIAL CONCLUSIONS

- Iraq colors all. Saddam is your best defense even if he is dead. The worldview of Americans is entirely dominated by developments in Iraq. For a year—a SOLID YEAR—you should be invoking the name of Saddam Hussein and how Israel was always behind American efforts to rid the world of this ruthless dictator and liberate their people.
- It DOES NOT HELP when you compliment President Bush. When you want to identify with and align yourself with America, just say it. Don't use George Bush as a synonym for the United States. There still remains about 20 percent of America that opposes the Iraqi war, and they are overwhelmingly Democrat. That leaves about half the Democrats who support the war even if they don't support George Bush. You antagonize the latter half unnecessarily every time you compliment the president. Don't do it.
- Conveying sensitivity and a sense of values is a must. Most of the best-performing sound bites mention children, families, and democratic values. The children component is particularly important.
- "SECURITY" sells. Security is the context by which you should explain Israel's need for loan guarantees and military aid, as well as why Israel can't just give up land. The settlements are our Achilles' heel, and the best response (which is still quite weak) is the need for security that this buffer creates.
- Link Iraqi liberation with the plight of the Palestinian people. It is likely that the most effective arguments you have right now are those that link the right of the Iraqi people

[Horarium]

EXTREME UNCTION

From "A Christian's Duty in Time of War," a pamphlet published by In Touch Ministries. The pamphlet exhorts its readers to pray for President Bush and to "consider fasting as you beseech the Lord" on his behalf. Thousands of the pamphlets were distributed by unknown persons to U.S. soldiers in Iraq.

MONDAY: Pray that the President and his advisers will be strong and courageous to do what is right, regardless of critics.

TUESDAY: Pray that the President and his advisers will have the unified support of the American people as well as that of other countries around the world.

WEDNESDAY: Pray that the President, his advisers, and their families will be safe, healthy, well rested, and free from fear.

THURSDAY: Pray that the President and his advisers will be successful in their mission and that world peace will be realized.

FRIDAY: Pray that the President and his advisers will recognize their divine appointment and will govern accordingly in compassion, mercy, and truth.

SATURDAY: Pray that the President and his advisers will remember to keep their eyes on Almighty God and be mindful that He is in control.

SUNDAY: Pray that the President and his advisers will seek God and His wisdom daily and not rely on their own understanding.



Untitled (Humanoids from the White West), a painting by Oscar Fahlström, which was shown in March at Feigen Contemporary in New York City. Fahlström died in 1976.

to live in freedom with the right of the Palestinian people to be governed by those who truly represent them. If you express your concern for the plight of the Palestinian people, you will be [illegible] credibility for your support of the average Palestinian while undermining the credibility of their leadership.

- You need to talk continually about your understanding of "*the plight of the Palestinians*" and your commitment to helping them. Humility is a bitter pill to swallow, but it will inoculate you against critiques that you have not done enough for peace.
- Of course rhetorical questions work, don't they? Asking a question to which there is only one answer is hard to lose. It is essential that your communication be laced with rhetorical questions, which is how Jews talk anyway.
- Find yourself a good female spokesperson. In all our testing, women are found to be more credible than men. And if the woman has [illegible] even better.

[Legalese]

AND JUSTICE FOR ALL

From recently unsealed handwritten motions filed by suspected terrorist Zacarias Moussaoui over the past year. Moussaoui was arrested in August 2001 and is accused of conspiring with the September 11 hijackers. Frank Dunham was Moussaoui's court-assigned lawyer; Moussaoui is now representing himself. Leonie Brinkema is the federal judge hearing the case.

MOTION by Zacarias Moussaoui: Emergency Strike at Ashcroft Invisible 5th Plane, so his Suck Buster be Produced

MOTION by Zacarias Moussaoui: to Strike the Fat Megalo Dunham for Cyber War Subversion

MOTION by Zacarias Moussaoui: to Force Ashcroft to Show His Ultimate Fantasic Theory

MOTION by Zacarias Moussaoui: to Force Fat

Megalo Dunham to Submit to Death Judge Lieonie a Motion for Reconsideration in the Light of Ashcroft Ever Changing Delirious Theory (1st 20th Hijacker, then 5th Plane Strike to Dark House, then "Gone with the Wind")

MOTION by Zacarias Moussaoui: to Keep Mad, Out of Control Standby Hord of Blood Sucker, Out of Halal, Pure Pro Se Land

MOTION by Zacarias Moussaoui: to Know How the United Satan is Lying to Murder Me be "Legal" Means

MOTION by Zacarias Moussaoui: to Stop the Pervert Game of the Fascist Bureau of Inquisition Against My Distraught Mother

MOTION by Zacarias Moussaoui: to Stop the Pervert Sodom and Gomorah Agents of Torturing this Defender of Muslims

MOTION by Zacarias Moussaoui: to Force the United Scavenger and their Blood Sucker Dunham to Give Me Access to the Internet Site after More than 6 Month of Dirty Tricks

MOTION by Zacarias Moussaoui: to Jail Ashcroft for the Contempt of his Slaves

MOTION by Zacarias Moussaoui: to Get Access to Gas Chamber Guaranty Theory

MOTION by Zacarias Moussaoui: to Force Liar Ashcroft to Disclose and Unredact His Delirious New 5th Plane Pilot Missing in Action as Briefed to His Court of Appall

MOTION by Zacarias Moussaoui: to Get a Descent Cell to Search the Mountain of Discovery

[Job Description]

IT'S A LIVING

From Paroles de Bourreau, or Words of an Executioner, *as told by Fernand Meyssonnier to Jean-Michel Bessette, published in French by Editions Imago last year. Meyssonnier participated in more than 200 guillotine executions after his father, who was chief executioner in French Algeria, recruited him as an apprentice in 1947 and before the French pulled out of Algeria in 1962. Translated from the French by Donovan Hohn.*

An execution—that's something you don't easily forget. But the more courageously the convict behaves, the more forgettable it is. All the same, you can't help but feel pity. You don't take pleasure in making someone suffer. Me, I tried to put myself in the shoes of the victims, the shoes of the victims' parents. I thought of myself as a kind of savior, an avenging angel, if you will. Imagine if you were to stumble upon some ugly scene, a beggar getting his face smashed in by a couple of punks; at that instant you wouldn't say to yourself, I want to do harm to these punks, but you'd pounce on them anyway because you'd be outraged by what they were doing. Well, an execution is a little like that. It's difficult to express, but I think above all of the parents of the victim, and I get a little revenge on their behalf.

Everyone wants to live. Me, I want to live. Everyone's afraid of death. At first, to condemn someone to death—you tell yourself that such a thing isn't possible. You feel pity for the guy. And then you tell yourself, on the other hand, he did kill people. Me, when I found myself across from someone on death row, my thoughts went out above all to the victims. I knew what this person had done. I tried to meet his glance, to read his last thoughts by looking into his eyes. In a human being, it's the eyes that live. It's only by gazing into his eyes that you can tell whether this chap really did perpetrate such crimes, that he could have borne to see such things. I tried to formulate an opinion, to judge. And then I paid attention, to see if the guy intended to bite me. I tried to read in their eyes what they were thinking then, only seconds away from death. There's no denying it, it's a weird thing to be telling yourself: In a moment, this guy, he's going to be dead. And me, I'll be alive. Is there such a thing as life after death? Me, I'll always have my doubts. And him, in just a moment, he'll know. He'll know for certain.

It's difficult to try to get inside the skin of a condemned man. In fact, I never really gave it much thought. But having seen all the things I've seen, I don't think that I would be particularly courageous in comparison with most people. Once, I put myself into the guillotine. Yes, it's true. In Algiers, I tried—mind you, this was without the blade hanging in place above me—to insert my head, my neck, into the lunette. I climbed in, lay down on the bascule, and put my head in the lunette in order to see what it felt like to be a man at the furthest limit, during his last seconds. That vision will stay with me for life. And then there was the characteristic odor of the human blood that had soaked into the guillotine's woodwork even though we hosed it down. Of course, if we were to put ourselves in the place of those sentenced to death, we'd all be against capital punishment.

The condemned behave unpredictably. No one can know how he might act in the moments before death. You speculate about yourself. You tell yourself: I'm going to die courageously. You don't know a thing! On more than

executed convicts who seemed to [illegible] die with great courage, whereas others who looked tough, whose guards warned us that they might cause problems, often died like cowards.

I've dealt with prisoners who refused to walk, who bit, who argued, who screamed, who at the beginning had courage and at the end were paralyzed with fear. Others went pale. There were those who were so scared they messed their pants—thankfully, not many—and nearly always it was the ones who had committed the most horrible crimes. And then there were those who showed courage. Just because it's Arabs we're talking about doesn't mean you can go around saying whatever you like about them. Yes, there were Muslims who were very courageous! Of course, when there were three or four being executed one after the other, and I'm standing there waiting for their heads, and there are already two or three decapitated bodies in the basket, it's rough, no doubt about it. That's why you have to do it as quickly as possible.

In an execution, it's the job of the deputy executioner, known as the "photographer," that is the most delicate and dangerous. From the point of view of technique, the photographer's job lasts less than five seconds. He therefore has to coordinate his movements with speed and precision. At each execution, for two or three seconds, he has to be able to repeat the exact same gestures. What a photographer does can't be taught. The only way to learn it is by doing it and by paying close attention. In my case, my father simply told me, "Make sure that he doesn't turn his head aside or bite your fingers!" So I gripped the head just above the temples, fingers hooked behind the ears. I pulled hard, while keeping my thumbs away from the back of the head because the blade chops through the jaw and, following the blade, the weight would pass within eight centimeters of me. That's how close it came to crushing my thumbs.

In the occasional instances when heads were cut off badly, 95 percent of the time it was the photographer's fault. The inmate who had his skull cut in half in 1916, with the 1889 model guillotine—it was because the executioner let the blade go before closing the lunette. The convict had yet to be locked in, or else the photographer had failed to grab the head, and no matter what, he could not have been where he was supposed to be. Otherwise, he would have had both of his hands cut off. The executioner had thus made a wrong move in the descent. If this had happened with the guillotine of Algiers, the 1868 model with the detached weight, things would have been worse, much, much worse. In its fall, the blade would have sheared the lunette away. The skull would have been torn off or crushed. And had I been there, had this happened to me, I would have had both my hands ripped off. That's why, under these circumstances, you have to be fast but above all precise, and you can never panic or lose control. If I didn't grab the head fast, the convict would often retract his head into his shoulders, on account of the fact that the lunette originally had a diameter larger than the average human neck. The convict would get his entire lower jaw inside the two lunettes, and that was a big mistake. You tear the head in half, and one out of every four times there'd be muscles that held the head on.

The most dangerous moment is just before the upper demi-lunette has been lowered. When the bascule tips the convict into place, I was the one who had to help, because the convict could turn his head crossways, or else retract it into his shoulders. If I didn't stop him, he could bite the lunette. And when they do that, it's like a vise grip. They never let go. A human being who knows he's about to die has amazing strength; he no longer feels pain.

The worst incident in my experience occurred on February 22, 1958, when I was deputy executioner. This was a quadruple execution at Constantine. Two convicts had already been executed. The third would not stop howling and struggling all the way from his cell to the guillotine. I remember he had this huge mustache. Well, he arrived at the bascule and that's when he saw the basket where there were already two decapitated bodies. Picture this guy at the moment he glimpses decapitated bodies just a meter away, right when he himself is about to be decapitated! It's horrifying! His eyes were popping out of his head. White as a sheet. Once on the bascule, this guy made a break for it, twisting his head down into his shoulders and crouching on the bascule, his knees drawn up toward his stomach. I was there, fifteen centimeters away, ready to grab him. I reached through the uprights to take his head, and *bam!* . . . he's falling, screaming all the while, into the basket—into the basket where there were already two executed criminals! One of the assistants had blundered; he hadn't held on to him. This assistant was the one who'd told me that he closed his eyes every time the blade fell. So, he fails to hold on tight and what happens? The guy falls into the basket, *splat* . . . already full of cadavers. I was on the other side, waiting for the head. There was nothing I could do. He was alive in the basket, on top of the cadavers, and, covered in the blood of his two unfortunate friends, he wouldn't stop screaming. We had to

Why We Need A Smaller U.S. Population
And How We Can Achieve It

We need a smaller population in order to halt the struction of our environment, and to create an onomy that will be **sustainable** over the very long m.

We are trying to address our steadily worsening vironmental problems without coming to grips with eir root cause – overpopulation.

If present immigration and fertility rates ntinue, our population, now over 288 million, will ıss 400 million by the year 2050 – and still be owing rapidly!

All efforts to save our environment will ultimately futile unless we not only halt U.S. population growth, ıt reverse it, so that our population can eventually be abilized at a **sustainable** level – far lower than it is day.

The Optimum U.S. Population Size

The central issue is surely this: **At what size should e seek to stabilize U.S. population?** Unless we know ı what direction we should be headed, how can we ossibly devise sensible policies to get us there?

The size at which our population is eventually tabilized is supremely important because of the effect f sheer numbers of people on such vitally important ational goals as a healthy environment, and a ustainable economy.

We believe these goals can best be achieved with a J.S. population in the range of 125 to 150 million, or bout its size in the 1940s. This optimum size could be eached in about three to four generations if we do two hings now that are well within our grasp.

How To Get There

1. **Halt illegal immigration and reduce annual legal mmigration to not over 100,000.** Then, immigration will no longer contribute significantly to our population growth, as it does now.

2. **Lower our fertility rate** (the average number of children per woman) from the present 2.1 to around 1.5 and maintain it at that level for several decades. We believe that non-coercive financial incentives will be necessary in order to reach that goal.

If almost all women had no more than two children, our fertility rate would drop to around 1.5, because many women remain childless by choice, or choose to have not more than one child. **We promote the ideal of the two-child maximum family as the social norm, because that is the key to lowering our fertility.**

Incentives to Lower Fertility

NPG proposes these incentives to motivate parents to have no more than two children:

- Eliminate the present Federal income tax deduction for dependent children born after a specified date.
- Give a Federal income tax credit **only** to those parents who have not more than two children. Those with three or more would lose the credit entirely.
- Give an annual cash grant to low income parents who pay little or no income tax, and who have no more than two children Those with three or more children would lose the cash grant entirely.

Two Vastly Different Paths Lie Before Us

With the reductions in immigration and fertility we advocate, our nation could start **now** on the path toward a sustainable, and prosperous, population of 125 to 150 million.

Without such a program, we are almost certain to continue our mindless, headlong rush down our current path. That path is leading us straight toward catastrophic population levels that can only devastate our environment, and produce universal poverty in a crowded, polluted nation.

If you agree that we need to work toward a smaller U.S. population, we need your support. **NPG is the only organization that calls for a smaller U.S. and world population, and for specific, realistic measures to achieve those goals.**

NPG is a nonprofit, national membership organization established in 1972. Contributions to NPG are tax deductible to the extent the law allows. To become a member, and receive our newsletter, plus all our current and future publications, please send us your check today.

YES! I want to become a member of NPG, and help you work towards a smaller U.S. population, I am enclosing my check for annual membership dues.

___ $30 ___ $50 ___ $100 ___ Other

Name _____

Address _____

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Mail to: Negative Population Growth, Inc.
PO Box 3115 • Alexandria, VA 22302
www.npg.org

Nov H-0703

HIDE THE SALAMI

From New Line Cinema's "TV Version Notes" for Boogie Nights, *a film starring Mark Wahlberg and* [illegible] *about* [illegible] *in Hollywood. The notes list images and dialogue that would need to be cut if the film were to be shown on network television.*

PAGE	PICTURE
3	Rollergirl scratches her crotch
11	Amber does line of coke
12	Little Bill's wife and big stud having sex
13	Dirk removes clothes and looks at himself in mirror
14	Guy gives Rollergirl a blow-job gesture
17	Dirk jumps in bed, naked and flapping; girl stares at crotch
18	Rollergirl unzips Dirk's pants, pulls out his cock, smiles up at him
39	Little Bill's wife having sex with big dude
41	Kurt goes to watch Little Bill's wife having sex
56	Dirk's cock
56	Amber and Dirk having sex on desk
60	Becky naked; Amber giving Dirk a blow-job
66	Jessie unzips Dirk's pants, pulls out his cock
67	Rollergirl rips off bikini top
78	Amber sets up lines of coke
79	Amber and Dirk do another line of coke
79	Dirk does another line of coke
83	Little Bill's wife having sex with young stud
83	Little Bill returns, wife and stud still having sex
83	Little Bill's wife shot in stomach; young stud in heart
84	Little Bill's wife shot again; blood fills bathroom; Little Bill turns gun into mouth and pulls trigger; blood and brain shoot out back of skull
95	Rollergirl does a line of crystal
98	Dirk unzips pants and starts masturbating
106	Amber and Rollergirl do more coke
107	Jack Horner scene with two girls with fake breasts
108	Amber and Rollergirl do more coke
152	Dirk unzips his pants and lets his cock hang out
152	Dirk puts his cock back in his pants

pull him out, but how were we supposed to do this? He was slimy with blood—there wasn't any way to get a grip on him. Finally, it was my father's two assistants who lifted him out of the basket, but not without difficulty. The convict yelled even louder. He thrashed around. That's what he was like, thrashing, contorting, and howling like a whipped dog. Finally, they succeeded in getting him back onto the bascule. Once again, I saw him, eyes popping out of his head and his face now covered with the blood of his friends. He looked like a monster.

I confess that when the blade fell, I couldn't hold on to his head, it slipped through my hands. That execution lasted a good minute, an unusually long time. Normally, it's over—*crack, crack*—in two seconds flat. It must have been horrifying for the convict. As well as for the fourth awaiting his turn, seated on a stool, just ten meters away. He'd heard the whole uproar, all that shouting. He was paralyzed with fear and shaking all over. The two assistants practically had to carry him all the way to the bascule. I think he was feeling sick, but the prosecutor didn't ask the doctor to revive him.

All of this had happened because the two assistants had lost their cool. They admitted it to me afterward. They hadn't held on to the convict tightly enough.

[Entries]

ALL MY CHILBLAINS

The following scenes were taken from soap-opera scripts submitted in a contest held last year by the British Medical Journal. *The winning script was turned into the journal's new weekly soap opera,* Misplaced Trust, *which first ran in November.*

"It's not just the rectal bleeding, doc. I can live with that," he says morosely. "It's not the dark, red, slimy, rectal bleeding. No, no. Nor the tenesmus. Nor the anorexia. It's not the cachexia or the abdominal swelling, the ascites, the relative or absolute constipation, the faeculant and the frankly faecal vomiting. It's not the pump on a belt on my waist. No." Slowly, slowly he shakes his heavy head, but Sal misses it. She's got her nose in Tykey's notes. Tykey's had twelve . . . *twelve* . . . failed colonoscopies. He's got them all at home, on video. Reluctantly, she meets the man's eye.

"Okay, okay. Let's . . . just . . . have another look."

Triumphant, Tykey unbuckles.



ıtitled 2003, *by Amy Morken, was on display last May at Caren Golden Fine Art, in New York City.*

Dr. Costas Parapaledies resisted the urge to readjust his testicles again. It was only ten to eight but already he was unbearably warm in his vest, shirt, woolly cardigan and tweed jacket. He shifted uncomfortably as sweat trickled down his upper thigh, sighed and gave up, readjusting his sweaty gonads.

* * *

"Emergency caesarean. Foetal distress. Can you come up?" Millie Young, Obstetrics and Gynaecology SHO, asked Helen Cook. Millie had already beeped Winston Wong, the anaesthetic SpR she'd successfully avoided since the party. A night culminating with their alcohol-fuelled coupling.

Winston arrived and topped up the epidural, avoiding eye contact with Millie, who went to scrub.

Helen arrived, still nervous about neonatal resus. Her beeper went off again: "Curry arrived." Millie didn't need persuading to share Helen's chicken tikka. She was starving, having thrown up her morning muesli.

* * *

"Some ting do come out for my womanskin," said the patient plaintively, and Duncan Macallister smiled to himself. There were not many British MRCOGs, he reflected, who knew the West African pidgin for vaginal discharge.

* * *

He felt his way, trying to gauge the consistency of the surface through the latex of his gloved fingers. Firm like the tip of a nose or soft like a pair of pouting lips? He couldn't tell. It all felt the same to him—warm, awkward, unpleasant. Elbow deep in vagina every day.

He tasted a rush of tequila mixed with undertones of tahini sauce in the back of his throat.

"Having assessed the cervix I would say this lady is multiparous."

almost horizontal with the wind rushing through her open-top black Saab convertible. She had just left her afternoon dermatology clinic and was heading straight out for dinner. She drove at nearly seventy miles per hour. She was very happy. She had been informed that her fourth paper on the genetics of squamous cell carcinoma had been accepted for publication by *Nature*.

Highbury Corner. He planned to stop at his favourite HiFi shop. He parked on the opposite side of the road and crossed over to the shop. Doctor Spackman turned to see the blonde hair of Doctor Bradshaw swish into view. As she turned, something about the bridge of her nose struck a familiar and primal chord deep within his primitive brain. He remembered how much he had thought about the way she looked in her theatre blues. The gentle rise and fall of her breasts.

* * *

Tom is terrified. It's not fear of the unknown; it's the exact opposite. He knows very well what lies ahead. He's been here before. He reaches down to his radial pulse and then wishes he hadn't. If only he wasn't asthmatic. He's heard of so many others taking beta-blockers. They swear by them. He feared some bronchoconstrictive collapse. He toyed with the idea of verapamil. Maybe that would have controlled his rate enough, but what if it had led to some catastrophic arrhythmia?

* * *

Richard Jones was at a crucial moment when his mobile rang; it would be difficult, very difficult, to stop.

"Bad timing," Brenda whispered, the waft of her breath tickling his ear.

"Very," he murmured, moving upwards a fraction. "We're at the point of no return."

"Yes," Brenda agreed. "I can't believe you're doing this on your wedding day."

"Neither can I." Richard willed his phone to stop.

His mobile gave six more rings, then stopped.

"Thank God for that," Brenda sighed.

"Yes," whispered Richard, distracted. With only half his mind on the job, he moved his hand higher.

"Careful," Brenda said, restraining him.

"What? Oh right . . . sorry!" Richard cursed himself for being a clumsy fool. "It's no good, we'll have to stop now." He put down his lumbar puncture needle and pushed his stool away from the bedside. He hurried across the ward. His white coat was hanging beside the washbasin, pockets bulging. He switched off his mobile, scrubbed quickly, then hurried across the ward.

"You took your time," Brenda pouted.

"Let's just get on with it, shall we?"

"It was her, wasn't it?"

Richard didn't reply. He snapped on new gloves, sat down, and picked up the lumbar puncture needle.

"You'd better make it quick," Brenda said, close behind him. The tickle of her breath was back. She gave a little sigh. Something soft nudged the nape of his neck.

"If you don't hurry up," she murmured, "we'll run out of time." The nudge came again. "And you know what you're like, Richard, such a terrible stickler for fitting everything in."

* * *

The dull throb of a landing helicopter marked the arrival of a harvested liver on the roof of Barford Hospital. Inside the chopper was Professor Thomas Lovejoy, who liked occasionally to go out and do the harvesting himself. As he handed over the organ box and ran for the theatres, he was aware of the Chinese girl waiting in the corridor. This girl had been at every one of his last six transplants. "Professor Lovejoy, do you mind if I watch?" She was there, waiting outside the theatre, beautiful almond eyes visible above the mask.

"May Chang, you can assist."

[Correspondence]

I'D LIKE TO TEACH THE WORLD TO SPELL

From emails exchanged last year between David Armstrong, a former English teacher, and employees of The Coca-Cola Company.

To The Coca-Cola Company,

The slogan for Dasani mineral water contains an egregious error. The tag line is "Treat yourself well. Everyday." The word "everyday" is an adjective that is used to describe things that are routine or ordinary. "Everyday concerns" or "everyday life" would be two examples.

Your slogan should read: "Treat yourself well. Every day." In this case "every" is an adjective modifying the noun "day." This is a popular construction which is also used in such phrases as "every week," "every time," "every breath I take," etc.

I would also argue that the phrase "Every day"

by itself is somewhat unsubstantial as a full sentence. I will defer, however, to your superior knowledge of the language of mass communication. I do believe, though, that it would behoove the Dasani division of The Coca-Cola Company to make an attempt to appeal to the grammatically sophisticated beverage consumer by modifying your advertising to correct the aforementioned error.

Respectfully submitted,
David Armstrong

Thank you for contacting The Coca-Cola Company, Mr. Armstrong. We appreciate the opportunity to address your concerns regarding our new slogan for DASANI, "Treat yourself well. Everyday."

Advertising slogans aren't always constrained by the traditional conventions of formal writing; compromises are quite often made to develop a more effective message. When forming the new slogan for DASANI, we considered both "Everyday" and "Every day." After subjecting both versions to testing, we decided to use the more impactful adjective form, rather than the adjective-noun phrase. Since "Everyday" is not an actual sentence and isn't part of a complete paragraph, we do not feel it is necessarily confined by the same literary bounds as formal writing.

We value feedback from our consumers. Your comments have been shared with the appropriate management here at the corporate headquarters and will certainly be taken into consideration as we move forward with our future plans.

Joy
Industry and Consumer Affairs
The Coca-Cola Company

Dear Joy,

Thank you for your prompt and informative response to my email message. I do appreciate your taking the time. I must confess, however, that I am not completely satisfied with your answer. I fail to see how the adjective "everyday," which has a completely different meaning than the phrase "every day," is more "impactful." (By the way, "impactful" is not listed as a word in any dictionary that I am aware of. Was this neologism spawned by the person who hatched your Dasani slogan?) You say you chose the "adjective form," as if you were choosing between two versions of the same thing—but the similarity is purely superficial.

Your slogan may as well read "Treat yourself well. Ordinary," or "Treat yourself well. Commonplace," because that is what it means, given the error. You say that you have subjected both versions to testing. I assume that means that you conducted focus groups, and that none of the invitees caught the error, or that the few who did were drowned out by the majority that found the totally irrelevant adjective "everyday" to be "impactful." Are we then to assume that poor grammar and abuse of the English language make for more effective marketing? If this is the case I have a couple of suggestions for future slogans you may wish to consider:

"Coke. Its the real thing."
"All ways Coca-Cola."
"Coke add's life."

Would you use such slogans? I wouldn't think so, and yet you defend your error on the

[Translations]

YOU EAT THE HORSE MEAT

The following phrases are generated by "Bowlingual," a device that can be attached to dogs' collars to translate their barks into Japanese or English.

My friend!
Tell me your secrets.
Bend down so I can see you.
Got some good stuff?
I have a secret.
I want something new.
I want to see the world.
Give me the stars and the moon.
I'm huge.
I'm dominant.
I'm beautiful.
I'm gorgeous.
I'm very cuddly.
I'm having a fiesta now.
Let's do this all day.
I wonder what you're thinking.
I'm feeling a little odd.
I have mixed emotions.
Are you my friend or my enemy?
Leave me alone.
I'm depressed.
Don't touch.
Move back.
I'm above you.
Respect my authority.
I might bite.
Take your best shot.
I will not be denied anything.
I've never been so embarrassed.
Please help me.

grounds that "Advertising slogans aren't always constrained by the traditional conventions of formal writing." Surely there must be limits to this unpoetic license.

In closing, I am surprised that a firm such as The Coca-Cola Company does not want to extend its high-quality standards to include the language used to promote its products, and I anxiously await a decision from your superiors regarding my request.

Best regards,
David Armstrong

Thank you for your reply. We truly appreciate your feedback regarding our slogan for DASANI, and I will share it with the appropriate management. As for the word "impactful," this is simply the noun form of "impact" with the suffix "-ful" added to the end in order for it to be used as an adjective. Words with suffixes are typically not in the dictionary.

Rich Robinson
Advertising Specialist
The Coca-Cola Company

Dear Rich,

It has been a few days since our email exchange and I have yet to hear from your executives. You had promised to share my concerns with them, and I would have thought that the issues I raise were sufficiently urgent to warrant immediate attention on the part of your superiors. I would appreciate an update on the status of my request.

Your fine and reputable firm needs to act swiftly to repair this grievous attack on the English language, one which I have now seen plastered on the sides of buses, on billboards, and in numerous other public locations. Have you considered the effect of your nonsensical "Treat yourself well. Everyday" campaign on the nation's schoolchildren? How do you expect them to fare in their English courses when subjected to a barrage of advertising with no respect for the rules of the language? And what of those who are learning English as a second language? Should they be told that standards apply only in the classroom and not to Corporate America?

In these days of increased scrutiny of corporate behavior, you would do well to ensure that your "messaging" has a positive impact on society. I submit that you are conducting a campaign that is offensive to those of us who care about the language and harmful to those who are attempting to master it.

In closing, although I appreciate the creativity of your comment that "Words with suffixes are typically not in the dictionary," I believe that if you research this further you will find that many words with suffixes are in fact in the dictionary, and that words that are not words are not.

Warm regards,
David Armstrong

[Scherzo]

THIS IS NOT A TOY

"The Only Professional Player of the Toy Piano, Margaret Leng Tan," by Eula Biss, was published in the Winter/Spring issue of the Bellingham Review. *Biss is the author of* The Balloonists, *a book of prose poems.*

I. OF THE TOY

"I've learned to work within the limits of a toy," she says. "And confining myself to its boundaries has widened my capabilities."

What defines a toy? The toy hammer can't pound a real nail. The toy egg can't be eaten. The toy typewriter doesn't write. A toy has no use beyond play.

Dictionaries, religious texts, letters, and textbooks all have a use, I tell my poetry students. What is the use of poetry? "A rose is a rose is a rose is a rose," wrote Gertrude Stein. If prose is a tool, poetry is a toy.

I remember telling my father that I wanted a Happy Meal so that I could get the free toy. He said, "You can have a Happy Meal, but there's one thing you have to learn—nothing is free." This was before the report that children were working seventeen-hour days in China packing plastic Snoopy figurines for McDonald's restaurants. The toy factory released its child laborers after this report was made public.

She did not have a toy piano as a child in Singapore. At sixteen she won a scholarship to study at Juilliard.

McDonald's offers separate Happy Meals for girls and boys. The Happy Meals for girls come with a girl toy and the Happy Meals for boys come with a boy toy.

Is the toy piano a boy toy or a girl toy?

"The toy itself makes demands . . ." writes the National Toy Council.

She made her debut on the toy piano in 1993 at New York's Lincoln Center, playing John



f-Portrait with Red Birds, *by Julie Heffernan, was on display last April at Littlejohn Contemporary, in New York City.*

Cage's *Suite for Toy Piano*. Nineteen ninety-three was the year of the fire in the Zhili toy factory. The next year, the dormitory of another toy factory in Shenzhen collapsed.

I saw her play only once. Her tiny pianos were amplified and she herself was amplified. Little children in the audience were dancing as she played. She used a tiny toy boom box in one piece. Like many toys, she told the crowd, the boom box was made in China. She paid three dollars for it, which left her to wonder how much was earned by the workers who made the toy boom box. No toys are innocent, says the only professional player of the toy piano.

II. PIANO

How many times, in the three hundred years since the invention of the piano, has a child banging on its keys been told, "That is not a toy"?

It is not a toy—it is a precision instrument, a complex mechanism. The average piano has 220 tuning pins and each pin has about 80 threads to the inch. It can be put out of tune by a change in relative humidity or temperature. The piano, like the nineteenth-century Englishwomen who played it, must be protected from the direct rays of the sun.

In the year 1800, a piano cost about as much as the annual salary of a private tutor in Vienna and its primary function was to be played modestly well by the daughters of the upper middle class. Etiquette books explained how a woman should play for an admirer.

"Very few harems are now without a pianoforte," stated a letter from Constantinople to the *New York Musical Review and Gazette* in 1856. The sultan of Turkey kept an orchestra composed entirely of women.

My friend's wrists have become weak from practicing the piano for too many hours, for too many years. "From exhaustion," she tells me. I watch her hold a glass of water with difficulty. She was one of very few women to graduate from the conservatory last year.

American colonists imported pianos for their daughters. Eventually, most American homeowners also owned a piano but fewer and fewer girls knew how to play it.

"The history of the pianoforte," writes Arthur Loesser, "and the history of the social status of women can be interpreted in terms of one another."

Sales of pianos fell dramatically in the twentieth century.

III. PROFESSIONAL

I saw her play only once. Her tiny pianos were amplified and she herself was amplified.

To qualify as a professional Registered Piano Technician with the Piano Technicians Guild, applicants must pass a written test covering tuning, action regulation, tone-regulation repairs, and piano design and construction, and pass a technical test that covers grand action assembly and regulation, vertical-action regulation and repair procedures, and pass a tuning test that covers pitch, temperament, midrange, treble, high treble, bass, stability, and unisons.

". . . most of our pianists seem content with becoming mechanisms, not transcending them," writes Edward Rothstein, music critic for *The New Republic*.

The toy piano cannot be tuned. It has metal sounding bars, not strings. "Its mechanism is ludicrously simple," she says. "Marcel Duchamp once said that poor tools require better skills."

In eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europe, young genteel women were largely occupied with pastimes, known as "accomplishments," superficially related to the fine arts. Accomplishments included needlework, making artificial flowers, framing pictures with shellwork, and playing the piano. Although the playing of the piano was a required accomplishment for young women, the virtuosos of the instrument were men. It was considered improper and unladylike for a woman to play too well.

A former classmate at Juilliard has suggested that she took up the toy piano because she failed at classical piano. By "failed" he means that she was good, but that she wasn't going anywhere spectacular. Therefore she acquired a "gimmick."

A group of people in a study were asked to describe the reaction of some nine-month-old infants to a toy jack-in-the-box. Those who had been told the infants were boys described the reaction as anger. Those who had been told the infants were girls described the reaction as fear.

[Poem]

STORY OF A MAN

By Alice Oswald, from the January 23 issue of the London Review of Books. Dart, *her most recent book of poems, was published by Faber & Faber in 2002*

last time a man was sealed in skin
like an inspoken word sealed in
it was mid-spring, most people arm in arm,
most trees whispering
and he could just make out the fluttering light

it was warm, it was days you walk out without a coat
and little rain showers dash across the carpark
and he stood there, like a man on film, going on with his heartwork
at last at last he could think clearly

this is myself, he said,
rubbing round all four sides of my breeze-block patience
this is one or two flying strands of my eyes
this is my heart's halo's prismatic subdivisions

there were people bringing chairs to the fire-escapes, peering down.
it was mid-spring
and all day, all he could breathe
was the crow'sfoot tracks of his sighs' small hollows [illegible]

then in the half light, it half thawed,
he half, with a mist-hand, waved
alive in his skin-ruins.
at last he could think clearly

She is not afraid of the concert piano. She has appeared as a soloist with the New York Philharmonic, the Brooklyn Philharmonic, the American Composers Orchestra, and the Stuttgarter Kammerorchester.

"Let us summarize the factors involved when a professional piano tuner is called upon to tune any piano," writes W. Dean Howell in *Professional Piano Tuning*. "He should have a *high musical goal*."

The marketing division at PolyGram Classics and Jazz told her, "We don't want to pigeonhole you, as it may pose a problem when you grow out of being a toy pianist."

What is a high musical goal?

During the *Rondo alla Turca*, by Mozart, she asked a child who was dancing near the stage to sit down. Before playing the next piece she asked that parents hold on to their children. "This next one is a fugue; it's very complicated." Being the only professional player of the toy piano is very complicated. You can't dance with the children.

IV. THE ONLY

I saw her play only once. She was introduced as "the only." She is known as "the only." While the men at Juilliard studied to be the best, she was already the only. She was the only woman onstage. She was the first woman to earn her doctorate in music from Juilliard.

Now she is the only professional player of the toy piano. She is alone among children and amateurs. Alone among children, amateurs, and men.

John Cage composed his *Suite for Toy Piano* in 1948. He was the only composer writing for toy piano. He was also the only composer writing for pianos with screws, bolts, nuts, weather stripping, and other objects placed on and between the strings.

She had a working relationship with Cage for the last eleven years of his life. She has since been hailed by *The New Republic* as "the leading exponent of Cage's music today," and the *New York Times* has called her "the most convincing interpreter of John Cage's keyboard music."

In a 1978 interview, John Cage said, "I was with de Kooning once in a restaurant and he said, 'If I put a frame around these bread crumbs, that isn't art.' And what I'm saying is that it is."

Cage's music was a rebellion against musical hierarchy. No sound was better or worse than any other. He said, "I became so curious about the world in which I lived, from the sonic point of view, that I began hitting and rubbing everything I came near—whether I was in the kitchen or outdoors . . ." Eventually, the musicians in Cage's works determined the course of a piece as much as the composer did. His rejection of hierarchical structures became central to the American avant-garde tradition.

The New Yorker has called her "the diva of avant-garde pianism." She is recognized as the best in a tradition that refuses the concept of best.

I saw her play only once. Her tiny pianos were amplified and she herself was amplified. "I've expanded by contracting," she said. "Life is full of marvelous contradictions."

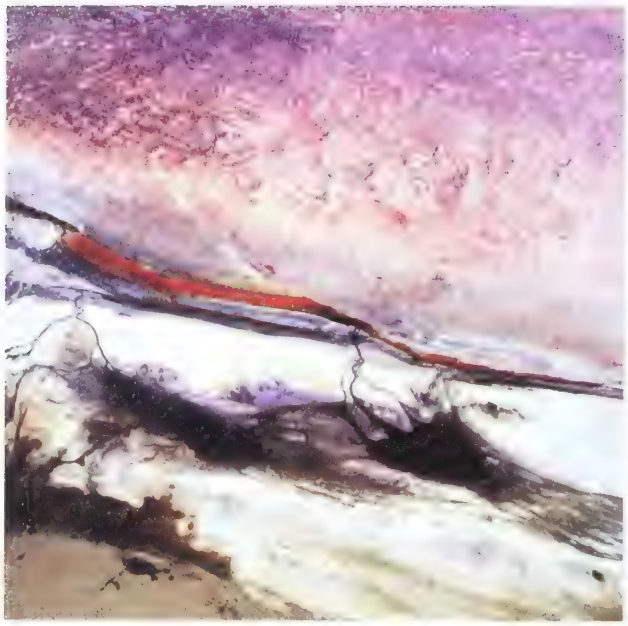
MONOLOGUE FOR THE VOICE OF MARGARET LENG TAN

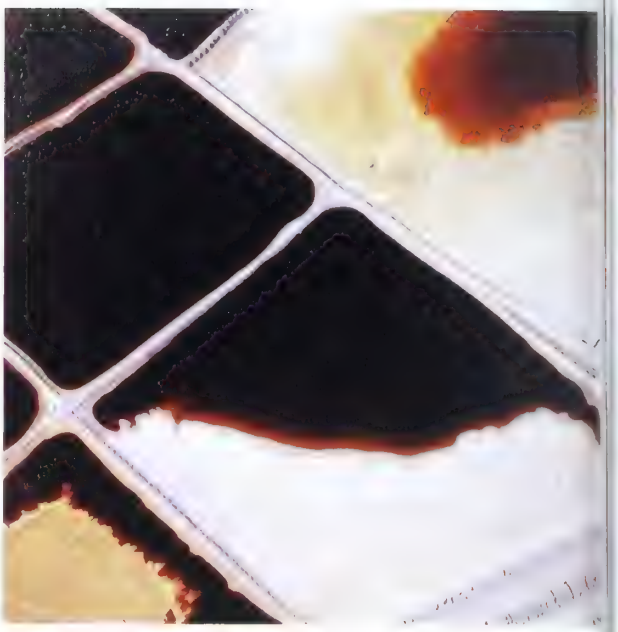
I am the only professional zipper of zippers. I am the only professional tapper of counters. I am the only professional pounder of the guardrails in the stairwell of the library with my fist. I am the only professional whistler of straws. I am the only professional dinger of wineglasses. I am the only professional donger of the bottom of a half-full teakettle. I am the only professional clanger of pot lids. I am the only professional listener to rice.

John Cage, Alvin Lucier, Tan Dun, Somei Satoh, Toby Twining, Lois V. Vierk, Guy Klucevsek, Julia Wolfe, John Kennedy, Stephen Montague, Errollyn Wallen, Raphael Mostel, Dary John Mizelle, Christopher Hopkins, Ge Gan-ru . . . Twelve men and three women have composed music for me.

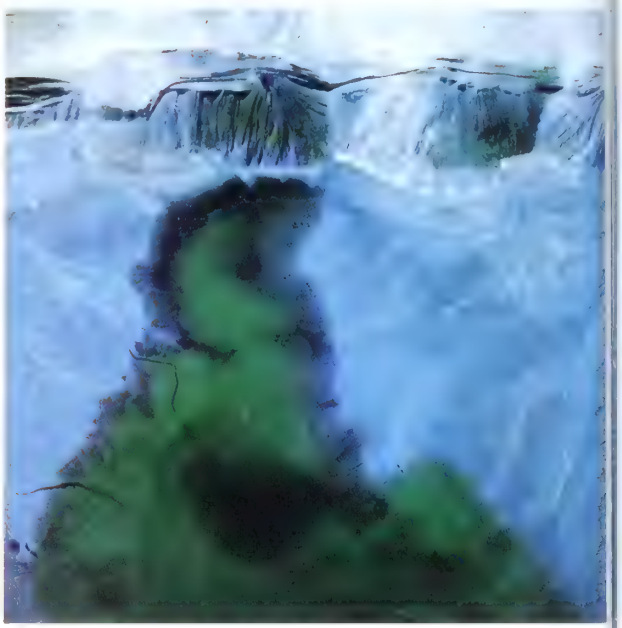
Do you remember Joseph Cornell? He was the only professional arranger of sundry objects in small wooden boxes. He was the only professional collector of plastic balls and white glitter. What about Charles Simic? He is the only professional transcriber of mice. He is the only professional capturer of strange tenderness. He is the only professional appreciator of Joseph Cornell.

But I am the only professional enjoyer of jet sounds. I am the only professional hitter of cat-food cans with chopsticks. I am the only professional blower of soda bottles. I am the only professional jumper on the hollow squares of the sidewalk. I am the only professional twanger of rubber bands. I am the only professional player of the toy piano.









"The Lake Project #9825-5," "Globe, Arizona Pond #14," "Clifton, Arizona #8," and "Butte, Montana Pond #10," by David Maise

THE ROMANCE OF EMPIRE

And the politics of self-love

By Thomas de Zengotita

You ought to be beating your chest every morning. You ought to look in the mirror, suck in our bellies, and say, "Damn, we're Americans!"

—Lieutenant General Jay Garner (Rtd.)

Will we look back on these years and say, I remember when it all began? American Empire? Not the more covert beginnings during the reign of Bill the Benign, back when imperial force could masquerade as a natural process, an evolutionary stage called "globalization"—something that was just happening, you know, nobody actually responsible, myriad interests served and serving. No, I'm talking about Empire properly so called, intoxicated with images of its own might—unabashed, raw. I'm talking about the reign of Bush the Bold. Will we look back and say, That was when it all began?

SWEET REVENGE

You've noticed how, in those action-vengeance flicks, there has to be this moment near the beginning when some very bad guys, led by this incredibly bad guy, slaughter the partner or wife or even the kiddies, so that Seagal or Diesel can emerge fully justified, seared by a transcendent loss, by a grievance no judgment can encompass, and commit mayhem for the rest of the movie, that being what you came to see in the first place? You've noticed that? You pay for the thrill of relentless carnage by enduring a few moments of sickening bathos, a brazen sentimentality more repugnant than any violence: Seagal tossing a baseball with his soon to be rubbed out son, doom hanging over the scene, the lingering close-ups of that innocent face under Seagal's tender supervisory gaze, the awesome martial-arts prowess tucked away for now—Man at Home.

George W. Bush serves this emotional/ethical dynamic, and so do those who follow him. Their Grievance is 9/11.

Thomas de Zengotita teaches at the Draper Master's Program at New York University and at the Dalton School. His essay "Common Ground" appeared in the January issue of Harper's Magazine. *His book* Mediated *will be published by Bloomsbury.*

When we look back on the [illegible] Empire, 9/11 will loom
the horizon of the past, inaugurating an age, justifying all that follo
But so accelerated has the pace of events become that 9/11 already see
long time ago. We can assess it from a distance that seems historical.

For some people, naturally inclined to reflection, 9/11 was not prim
a political/historical event at all, not immediately. They didn't get it. It
as if a meteor had struck, an occasion for meditation on a transformed l
scape, a transformed psyche. "Surreal" was the word, especially in New Y
and Washington, where we had to integrate two channels of informatio
multaneously. We saw what was really going on, and, at the same time
saw coverage of it. A flood of images from both sources, flowing and fu
and fragmenting, and all that mongrel input blending with memory
fantasy by way of the same associative processes that produce myths
dreams, and all of this happening automatically, randomly—just as the
realists had prescribed. If you lived in New York, you saw the flesh and st
of events, and you recalled imagery from some movie, then you saw
footage of the events, and then you heard someone describe the ash pe
walking across the Brooklyn Bridge, which you also saw on CNN, by the
and then you went to the bridge and saw the ghastly footprints, and then
woke up at 3:00 A.M., afterimaging it all. And so on, round and round, as th
eerie, early days drifted by—and such beautiful days they were, as if to
derscore nature's indifference to the fate of man.

But there were other Americans, less inclined to reflection, for wh
those days had a different meaning. They were called, and they rose up,
vated out of anonymity into an historical significance that would redefine t
lives. Cops and firefighters, and other useful men—they led that glorious
ing. It was as if they had been waiting in the wings for decades. Nuanc
their bearing denoted their importance and set off, by contrast, the irreleva
of mere contemplators. They were as rocks in the stream, stabilized by
pose. We were the water, aimless around them. The only group in Ame
still subject to stereotype without apology—white working-class men—w
moving to reclaim a central position in a culture that had come to disdain th

And they knew it. You could see it in the way they pretended not to
tice their grateful audience, but every iota of its attention was a vind
tion, long deserved, long denied. Their notion of manhood was redeem
Physical courage, physical strength, physical skill—nothing else really m
tered. The rest of us could only bear witness and bring doughnuts.

The contrast was lodged most of all in equipment. The useful men w
laden with tools, racked or slung with casual pride about their persons
their vehicles, powerful and pointed implements, caked with dirt, pa
chipped, scarred, dented—they weren't quite weapons, but they ca
close, and so they were both a measure of current importance and a
binger of vengeance. Those who lacked equipment stood around a
stripped, then dependence exposed. Health club fit they might be, but
what? New York professionals, heroes of the Clinton economy, mi
make momentous portfolio decisions, but could they fix a leaky fauc
The passing awkwardness a lawyer might feel talking to a mechanic ab
the car he drove but could not maintain was becoming less ephemeral.

This shift in valuation would deepen and merge over subsequ
months into renewed respect for military men, military equipment, m
tary skills. Soldiers in Afghanistan bore banners emblazoned with FI
and NATO, and GIs in Iraq knew they were there to avenge 9/11, whate
the policymakers said. Martial virtues, reborn at Ground Zero, t
root—as they had to if a domestic republic were to found an empire.

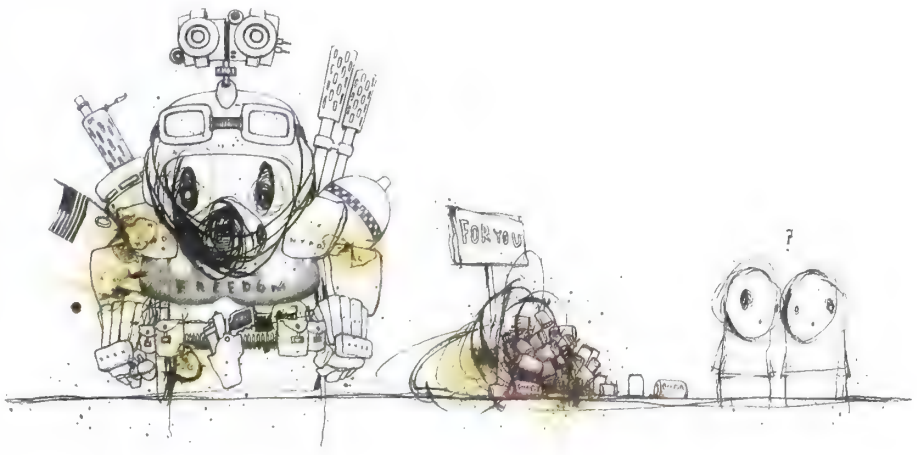
THE GLAMOUR OF GEAR

What about those graphics in the papers—the beige-and-gray fold
maps of Iraq, crisscrossed with thrusting arrows showing the progress
columns and with cool symbols for various deployments and enga
ments? A powerful aura emanated from those pages; it was as if the fi

inders were consulting maps just like this one. It was horrifying, if ought about what was represented—a crushing application of dous force against a virtually helpless enemy—but weirdly innoo, evocative somehow of hobbies. And similarly for the detailed of hardware, vehicles and vessels, munitions and ordnance, all the nents of war. Devices of death. Part of my cousin's collection.

nember, as a boy—before computers and fantasy games—there was g quite like the intensity of our identification with the toys of war. Deg them on the floor, on the furniture, in elaborate formations and sce- all the little tanks and planes, sometimes accurately modeled, maybe rets rotated and the guns (oh, the guns: how they *aimed*), and we made noises with our eager mouths, the roaring of engines, the rattle of auc weapons, the explosion of shells and bombs. The scattering of what- as "struck," undertaken as it had to be by an intruding finger or hand, one tried to ignore because it violated the scene as the imagination ted it—that was always a bit anticlimactic. One turned quickly to ations for the next engagement. There was a rhythm to it all. Tension lease. Erotic, no question.

t was back when boys were expected to dote on weapons and play at not Dungeons & Dragons, not Doom, but real war. No doubt that exion will flourish anew. The ground has been lovingly prepared, that's e, and not only by people consciously opposing the influence of the six- Ve ended up with Jerry Bruckheimer's shameless jingoism, but it didn't hat way. Remember the first *Vars* movie—sometime in the e seventies, was it? Vietnam esh in memory, and I recoiled t, resisting the resurrection of varfare." But it was so skillfully Reassurances of distance were rsuasive. We were in "a galaxy ar away," after all, and Darth r was so preposterous an evil, he blending of genres was so parently phantastic—the faux eval atmospherics, Jedi Knights + kung fu + Camelot), Han Soreprise of every rogue hero in rican cinema) and his artfully bished comic sidekicks, forbidethnic profiles transformed into t character traits. It was a comprehensive upgrade of a no longer viable iconography, projected into settings so obviously imaginary that I was ed to an actual moment of decision, sitting in the theater, a moment when ugged, let go of my reservations, and settled back to enjoy the ride.



nd a ride it was. We were entering the digital age, the age of interactivity, rgy, branding, and spin-offs, multiplying gizmos, soft and hard—total imion in a virtual world sustained by and containing a manifold of gadgets. glamour of gear has deep historical and psychological roots, but it end a whole new dimension when gear went high tech.

he archetypal scene? The A team prepares to take on the baddies. , say, a very butch Sigourney Weaver is to lead some Starship Troop- behold their racial and sexual diversity!) in a last-ditch stand against Mother of all Aliens—poor ET, that couldn't last; we were headed inrably toward *Independence Day*. Sigourney is up against an alien so able you don't have to feel at all ambivalent, as this is clearly not relnt to any politics. You can just let yourself go while they take this hsome, drooling, gooey, insectoid, pterodactyl thing *down*.

ut first they have to gear up.

h, the gearing-up scene. Suspense heaven, foreplay supreme, leather

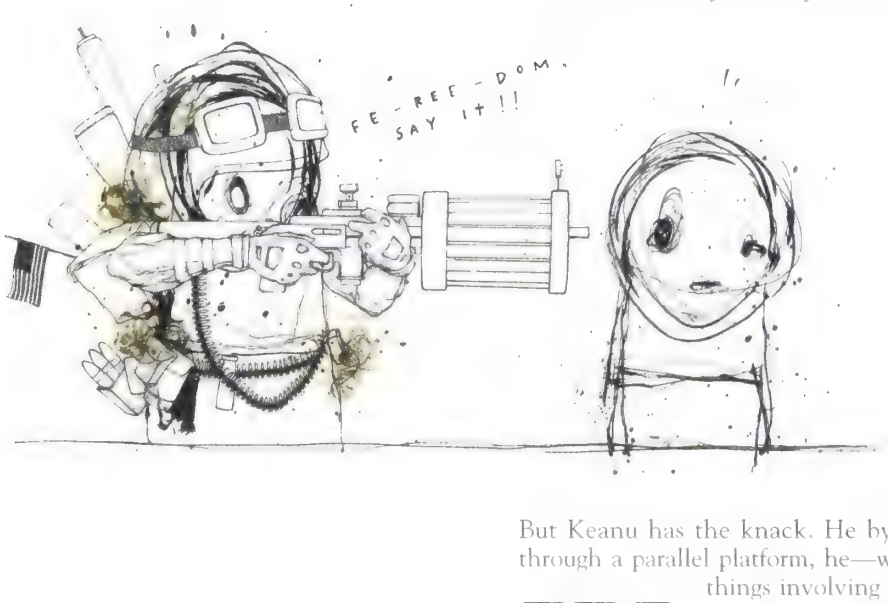
I REMEMBER AS A BOY THAT THERE WAS NOTHING QUITE LIKE MY IDENTIFICATION WITH THE TOYS OF WAR. OH, THE GUNS: HOW THEY *AIMED*

rations by Andrew Zbihlyj

THE PURPOSES INHERENT IN TOOLS FUSE WITH THOSE OF OTHER TOOLS AND, THROUGH THEM, WITH OBJECTIVES—WITH THE MISSION

fetish for the multiplex. Boots. Belts. Buckles. Bandannas and studded c[uff]. Gloves that tighten up the fist but leave the fingers free. Holsters and sl[ing]bards strapped to the thigh, but in neato odd places too, across the back, a[t] the calf—you can practically feel those fabulous accessories on your [av]body. And the weapons. The ammo. Cartridges and canisters. Laser bel[t]-aiming scopes. A huge multiround clip attached to a mammoth Gat[ling] bazooka, handheld by a professional wrestler doing his first movie gig. The [pa]ce quickens. Expert hands smack down on levers and bolts. Transitional cuts [co]incide with the percussive accompaniment of impossibly resonant Dolby [en]hanced clacks, shot after shot, lock and load, lock and load. The pace sl[ows]. Glimpses of grim faces looking up from weapons prep, eyes steady, a trac[e] of sweat, a glance exchanged between erstwhile rivals—you know one is g[oing] to take the fall for the other.

Another archetypal scene, more contemporary but importantly co[m]patible: Again it's gear clacking that sets the pace for the editor's c[ut]s. Only now it's more a clicking than a clacking, because now (did [you] guess?) the gear is digital and the tempo depends on the computer k[ey]board, at a workstation just like yours, only, instead of you, it's Ke[anu] Sutherland, with Jennifer Jason Peet at his side, in a tank top just [like] yours (except that, well, [you] know), and he has to break i[nto] the network and download the [file] containing a code that will p[re]vent—oh, something really te[rri]ble, even more terrible than l[ast] time. You know how annoying i[t is] at work when the system is sl[ug]gish and that thermometer [or] thing that tracks download t[ime] jerks forward in tiny increme[nts] instead of whisking across the b[ot]tom of the pop-up box? Well, [it's] like that, only now, instead of yo[ur] boilerplate prose, it's a matter [of] the vital code that will disable t[he] horrendous device that is, ev[en] now, approaching critical ma[ss]. But Keanu has the knack. He bypasses the security filter, he logs [on] through a parallel platform, he—well, he does a lot of mysterious tech[no] things involving so many fabulously precise microstr[uc]tures that it must all reduce to intuition after a whi[le] for someone like him, I mean.



What is it about gear?

Wielding things in general, wielding things in competition, wieldi[ng] things in an emergency, in conflict. Primordial stuff. But intricate and [ar]tificial as well. The skill and discipline required, all the more so unc[er] pressure, never more so than in combat. The most violent *ecstasis* giv[es] form by technique. Exquisite balance at the outer limit. Is the urge f[or] that balance irrepressible in us?

Skill with implements, hard or soft, is tantamount to fusion. *One litera[lly] derives purpose from the tool.* And the purposes inherent in tools fuse with tho[se] of other tools and, through them, with objectives—with the mission. This [is] the essence of the glamour of gear, and the Romance of Empire depends u[pon] on it. It always did, historically, in the coordinations of legions and fleets, b[ut] now we can take part not just derivatively—hearing the news, cheering th[e] parade—but vicariously, through our gear, the TV, the computer.

To attend an implement with skill in the service of a mission is to b[e] long, to be part of a greater whole, the aim of Romanticism fulfille[d]. There are other forms of such participation—anthems, ceremonies. B[ut]

ney are explicit. Gear works more subtly. In skilled wielding you merge rough other implements with the mission, with something like an embodied spirit. And that is the foundation for more explicit participations, or a certain kind of patriotic identification, for that most gratifying of experiences—self-love disguised as selflessness.

Prior to missions, tools are inert, their users at a loss in the realm of decision. People don't like that. They like decisions to have been made. They earn for missions.

That is why, once war starts, everyone is relieved. In turning to tools, you renounce the burden of considering what to do in favor of deciding how best to do it. This was the genius of the embedded reporter idea. The press, through its gear, fused inevitably with the military and *its* gear. The military was out to conquer Baghdad, and the journalists were out to tell the story of that conquest. So journalists, like soldiers, welcomed war when it started; they couldn't feel otherwise. And they were pumped up, too, like the soldiers, by the risk, the sheer excitement of participation—given form by their skill with their own not inconsiderable gear.

Swept up in the mission, braving danger, entranced by weaponry, doting on military personalities. No wonder they were inclined to lionize every grunt, to make a hero out of every POW. They felt not a little heroic themselves. Above all, they were busy, absorbed in their technical capabilities, whipping around the globe to get this or that from Ankara or London or Kuwait. Whipping around—the sheer activity—became the enterprise. After a while, it didn't matter if there was nothing new or substantive to show or say. Their mission was to whip around. That's what they were *equipped* to do.

What was it Robert E. Lee said, surveying some killing field? Something like "It's a good thing they made war so terrible, otherwise we would love it too much." Everyone says, "No one wants war." Soldiers say it. Statesmen say it. But it's not true. Obviously. Time and again we say it, and always war comes, and people rise to the occasion, taking up the gear they have prepared, lest in case, rise from the doldrums of the everyday, defiant, elated. And then, when it's over, people count the awful cost, and swear never again, never again. But we never learn. Time passes. Circumstances arise. A new generation seeks definition. And the equipment is waiting, unrelentingly purposeful. Is it bound eventually to override the wavering of human inclinations, human considerations, bound to outlast them just by being there, mute but unambiguously determined?

THE PRESIDENT'S HEART

When the president performs his public duties, how obvious it is that he is doing exactly that—performing. His awkwardness makes it all the more apparent, but that works to his advantage with a constituency that resents sophistication. Bush on the rubble at Ground Zero with his arm around a fireman. Bush on the aircraft carrier decked out in pilot's gear—oh, he understands the significance of gear, all right, he learned that much around the oil rigs of Midland, and he affiliates himself quite consciously with the kind of men who rose up on 9/11, the kind of men who "get the job done." And Bush understands how the glamour of gear fuels the Romance of Empire too. That is why he couches his decisions in terms of objectives, of missions. He keeps it simple because he is, he knows, a simple man. He thinks of it as his great virtue.

So when Bush mounts the podium to issue his lists of pithy truisms, he *performs* the simplicity upon which he prides himself as he recites lines like (rush of words, pause and stare; rush of words, pause and stare): "We are a good people," "We must keep our focus," "There is no doubt about the outcome," and so forth. And his eyes light up after each nugget is delivered, as if he is proud that he got it out without stumbling, as if hoping to ingratiate himself with parents he has disappointed, parents he hopes will dote on him again.

Bush is still a boy. He is still convincing himself that the attitudes and mannerisms he once decided were ideal are actually his own. You can feel him monitoring himself, practicing, just as he did all those years ago when he first

JOURNALISTS WELCOMED WAR BECAUSE OF THE SHEER THRILL OF PARTICIPATION—GIVEN FORM BY THEIR SKILL WITH THEIR OWN NOT INCONSIDERABLE GEAR

BUSH HAS SINCE 9/11 PRACTICED THE TROPES OF WORLD-HISTORICAL LEADERSHIP AS DILIGENTLY AS HE FOLLOWS HIS WORKOUT SCHEDULE

assumed the postures of Texas manliness—arms held out from his bo fist-side forward, swinging as he strides. That was how he distinguished h self from patrician Easterners back home, among whom he failed to be o erwise distinguished, coasting through those intimidating schools, clown for the hackers at the club. His adoption of those postures allowed real T ans to exploit him and his connections through the simple flattery including him in their doings, just as it now allows older, deep-down co dent men like Cheney and Rumsfeld to guide their prince's policy by def ring to him personally. All his life Bush has been protected by his birthri from the consequences of pretensions he might not have been able to l up to on his own. He became tough and confrontational—but without ri So he could never more than half believe that it was really him.

That accounts for the spoiled-bully quality. Bush is driven to assert hi self constantly, looking for resistance that would test his mettle if it were e there. The compulsive teasing, nicknaming—the symbolic subordination people with no choice but to submit to his humor—these forms of dominan can never be entirely convincing. Hence an aura of puppetry, which ari from a deployment of mannerisms that never quite settled in.

Bush has been adopting tropes of world-historical leadership since 9/11 much the same way. He practices them as diligently as he follows his wo out schedule, one day at a time, never deviating, Laura presiding, you may sure, for it was she who set him on the straight and narrow. And he is sustain in this discipline by his cast of courtiers, all of whom understand their ro If you are in the Bush White House, you are, above all, thrilled with your pr imity to power in a truly historic moment. When you go home for Thank giving, the hush around the table when you tell your stories is almost rev ent. You have a big investment in the credibility of it all. You have to belie in the Boss's act. You have to, for example, be inspired by his bizarre "sere ity," even though you know he is congenitally hyper.

The investment of the courtiers in the script deepens as a function of t coverage they get. They compare what they see with coverage of the Cub missile crisis, say. They find themselves playing to the coverage they hope get when history tells the tale. This may be the most self-conscious crew historical actors that ever lived, but, unlike Clintonian hipsters, who wou have enjoyed speculating about their reflexivity, the Bushites are willfully clu less. No irony allowed. From the Boss on down, they are *really* acting.

But above all—beyond the cast of courtiers, beyond the daily schedul beyond even Laura's loving, chiding eyes—Bush is sustained in his perfo mance by the kind of sentimentality that motivates revenge movies. Th current of feeling is shockingly shallow but, unlike his various poses, utte ly sincere. Hence the baffling references to his "heart," the maudlin botto line intensity with which he insists that he has one, that he feels with it in it, that his identity depends upon it.

Bush's heart was elevated on 9/11 from a personal to an historic plan He understood his role after that day in terms of divine election—don doubt that. He experienced himself being chosen by God to lead a W on Terror in exactly the way he once experienced his personal salvatio in his heart, where floods of feeling admit no doubt. So conceptualize this sentimentality appears to Bush as his own essential goodness, a goo ness that merges with the greater goodness of the American People, bin ing them together. Patriotic participation in a mission, embodied in gea is extended through this gesture to the romanticized polit embracing millions of Americans who identify their high est selves with this same sentimentality.

From this vantage point, then, uplifted by this sense of collective virtu Bush contemplates the enemy. Osama and Saddam, two manifestations o a single malignancy, aliens as loathsome as any that might burrow int Sigourney's bowels. Moral clarity? Not a problem. With attention to gory de tail, the kind of attention reality cop shows lavish on descriptions of crimes

considers the barbarities of Baathists, the villainy of fedayeen guerrilla tac-
cs, the whining ingratitude of hysterical Shiite mobs. Then he thinks
bout how much time and money his military spent on target selection to
inimize, to the degree possible—for war is cruel and accidents happen—
vilian casualties *on the other side*, and when he thinks about that, well, what
rther manifestation of national goodness, of his personal goodness, could
nyone possibly ask for? Imagine that, he thinks, choking up at the very idea
the care his military took in selecting targets, imagine that magnanimity
nd compare it with Saddam, and, really, if you aren't on America's side af-
r that comparison then you are beyond the pale, wallowing in some deca-
nt territory of the spirit where envy and guilt, cultivated by America-
aters—many of them Americans themselves, which is just plain perverted
hen you consider how lucky they are to *be* Americans—in some decadent
rritory, then, where envy and guilt and a lot of academic verbiage combine
blind you to the simple truth. Because, for Bush, this is an obviously valid
mparison, in just these terms. He has no notion of historical context at all.
one. The world is as flat as a set to a man who equates learning with af-
ctation, which Bush has done all his life. So the comparison between his
odness, which *is* the goodness of his people, and Saddam's evil is all he needs.
is that simple, and Bush prides himself on simplicity. Simplicity is what
lows him to follow his heart.

So minimally developed are Bush's habits of reflection that he could get
isty-eyed contemplating the decencies of American restraint even as he cal-
ılated that minimizing Iraqi civil-
n casualties was a strategic neces-
ty—what with all those Al Jazeera
ameras around and a country to
ıle after the war. But knowing that
e was making such calculations,
nd even knowing that priorities
ight change with circumstances,
n no way diluted the tide of senti-
ent that sustained him. Bush can
all warm and fuzzy about freedom
r Iraqis even as his policies ensure
at whatever this "freedom" yields
ill work to our advantage. One is
od, but one is not weak. As every
ction hero knows, to defeat Evil-
oers you do what is necessary. And
, as we slide over to the other side
f this emotional seesaw, we meet the other Bush, the one who refers with
vident relish to death and destruction, to the fate of enemies, who sneers
nd gloats and drops Eastwood understatements into his addresses, who can-
ot resist moments like, after a slight pause, during which we are to imag-
ne that he was considering more graphic language, he decides on: let's just
ay those folks are "no longer a problem to the United States of America,"
nother pause, a get it? glance around the room, the bloodlust visible yet con-
ained, as is only proper in mixed company, but the signals are there for the
ays to read—in the mocking little downturned grin, in that classic rhetor-
cal gesture of the American West, the slightly overemphasized underemphasis.

The gloating and the bloodlust are justified, you see, by the sentimental-
y, just like in the revenge movie. More than justified. A practical require-
ent, the kind gear-wielding Americans trust most. You can't kick ass if you
don't want to kick ass, whole-hog want it, and so, by this alchemy, what sentiment originally justified we are enabled to indulge.



The Grievance, instantly iconic, also gave Americans permission
o ignore the history of our involvement in the Arab and Islamic worlds.

AS EVERY ACTION HERO KNOWS, TO DEFEAT EVILDOERS YOU DO WHAT IS NECESSARY. AND SO WE MEET THE OTHER BUSH, THE ONE WHO SNEERS AND GLOATS

WHEN BUSH CONFOUNDS THE SNOBS WITH HIS SIMPLE WORDS AND DEEDS, HIS PEOPLE ARE VINDICATED. THEY WERE RIGHT ALL ALONG TO BE IGNORANT

"Nothing could justify what they did on 9/11 . . ." functioned as a bla- ket pardon for continued indifference to context. Conditioned by med to avoid anything they can't understand in a minute, our citizens ha learned to think of ignorance as sturdy common sense. They have int nalized the flattery heaped upon them by generations of political shyste serving various agendas, all of which have this in common: they rely u on the nation's civic laziness. The vaunted "wisdom of the Americ people"—even more vaunted than Iraq's Republican Guard—is the mo to be cherished for being theirs by definition, effortlessly acquired, no t dious study, no ethical reflection demanded, yet another convenien among so many. It is sufficient to declare that "you have to take a sta at some point!" in tones that thrill with conviction, because such br mides seem adequate to the tiny sphere of one's own experience. Projec ing such maxims onto the complexities of world affairs follows automa cally, because representations of that world have been reduced to ter that invite just those projections. Performing those reductions is t whole business of journalism, and the whole business of politicians is align their personalities and policies with them.

In the case of Bush, no particular exertions were required. Indifferen and ignorance were long entrenched, already cast as virtues. And peop in his constituency are drawn to him for just that reason. Jokes abo Dubya's mangled vocabulary, revelations of his inability to identify fo eign leaders and historical events—the educated classes in the blue stat might have been gleefully appalled, but folks in the heartland, folks wh take pride in describing themselves as "ordinary Americans," they we neither gleeful nor appalled. On the contrary. They resented the sno who jeered at his natural awkwardness and innocent errors in an i disguised attempt to draw attention to their own suave ways, their ow erudition. Bush's hold on his constituency depends not only on th rhythms of sentiment they share but on their common antipathy to a things intellectual and refined, an antipathy deriving from devotion practical enterprises. Bush's people know the difference between bei smart—as in quick, cunning, focused—and being educated, overeduca ed, psuedo, verbose, affecting an interest in the useless, the unintellig ble, the foreign. Unlike so many who mocked him for stupidity, th knew that Bush was smart; it showed in the way he looked people in th eye, always gauging, a gifted salesman scoping out the client. So whe Bush triumphs, his people triumph. When Bush confounds the highbro critics—the tenured radicals, the effete Frenchmen, the African dipl mats with thousand-dollar suits and Oxbridge accents—all those maste of gray nuance, weaving their paralyzing webs out of distant causes ar obscure consequences—when Bush the Bold confounds them all wi simple words and simpler deeds, well, his people are themselves vindica ed. They were right all along, right to be ignorant, right to h parochial—*right*, by God, just to be American.

THE LEADERS WE DESERVE

But it's not just Bush leading this national orgy of self-esteem, an indu gence so boundless that it makes Bobo narcissism look puritanical. It's th others, too, all those leaders who did practically nothing to prepare us f the inevitability of mass terrorism—in the same way they are doing pract cally nothing now to prepare us for the inevitable end of fossil fuel. wasn't "on the front burner"; maybe it wasn't even "on the radar screen Mind you, these are people who preen themselves on being responsibl who maneuver all their lives to get these positions, so that they can "im plement their agendas" on our behalf. Unlike carping critics (meaning m and possibly you, dear reader), they are in the arena, taking the heat. N for them the luxury of Monday-morning 20/20 yadda yadda.

What a load of crap.

Because, when the inevitable disaster happened, and their bogus sec

ty apparatus was exposed for all to see, what did they do? Why, they did ıe one thing they really are good at, the thing that got them where they ere in the first place—they proceeded to bullshit their brains out. For-t about the memoranda from field offices alerting higher-ups to the ınger signs. Forget about the terrorism experts who had repeatedly arned about the potential use of aircraft in suicide missions. Forget all ıat. No, suddenly these events were "incredible," "unthinkable," we ere at "the end of innocence," there were "no precedents" in these "un-ıarted waters." Suddenly it turned out that the FBI and the CDC had lifferent cultures" that made for "communication problems," and it ırned out that we didn't actually have any records on what institutions ork with anthrax and that "we didn't think the spores could get out of a ealed envelope."

Didn't think spores could get out of a sealed envelope? How hard was ıat to test? How obvious an issue was that? Teenagers playing war games ı a chat room could have come up with that one.

But not to worry. Some future commission will look into it later. Much ıter. This was not the time for finger-pointing and partisan bickering. erish the thought. What rascal would be so mean-spirited as to do such a ıing at such a time, a time for us to pull together, as Americans always o in a crisis. You didn't know we always do that in a crisis? Well, it's a ıct. Dan Rather and Tom Brokaw reported that we always do that in a risis, and a gospel rendering of the national anthem, signifying racial in-lusiveness, played as they delivered their indistinguishable tag lines they, too, were pulling together), with yet another fireman pictured—lus we also know from Tom (Brokaw, I mean, not Hanks, but from him, oo) that the greatest generation pulled together in a crisis, and, yay, veri-y, this was a crisis, and so it was time to put aside our differences and ınite to face a now uncertain future.

But not to worry. In the face of the new uncertainty, we were able to ely on the firm yet sensitive leadership of—guess who? Why, them again! They regrouped before our very eyes, as if these unimaginable emergency ircumstances had summoned them, like Cincinnatus from his farm, to ake up the burden after long retirement, to preside over the scene of a lisaster for which they bore no responsibility at all. How slick was that! And we saw how dramatically transformed, how irresistibly deepened and nnobled they were. All the commentators said so. Those gravitas tutori-ıls were paying off. Tempered by tragedy, yes, touched by danger even in heir own offices—talk about outrage!—but, in spite of that, they took on he responsibility. You could see that those anchorpeople were going without sleep, and so were the generals and cabinet secretaries. Gosh, talk ıbout sacrifice.

But the truth is they love it, they love every self-important minute of it. Suddenly they are at the forefront of what could be *another* greatest gener-ıtion, not some blurry interregnum. Kearns Goodwin is already brain-storming the storyboards for the history CD-ROMs, and our leaders won-der how their speeches will be featured even as they edit them. They taste the immortality, they are pumped, the air is electric with their own signif-icance—it shimmers around their every gesture like St. Elmo's fire. We see it when they emerge from counsels of state in the wee hours, caressing their shirt fronts, smoothing down those yellow dotted ties. But it's after that, in the limo, gliding through the night, the crucial meeting over, the hard choices made—it's the glimpse through the tinted windows of us little people in the street that yields the truly meaningful moment for our lead-ers. Because it's all about service, really, all about giving back, isn't it? All about us regular folks out there in the vague night. Especially the children.

And so to bed. The end of another long day at the top. A frisson of virtue to set off the bite of a well-deserved nightcap.

Oh, how they love it. But, more than anything, how they love themselves. ■

HOW DRAMATICALLY TRANSFORMED, HOW IRRESISTIBLY DEEPENED AND ENNOBLED OUR LEADERS WERE. ALL THE COMMENTATORS SAID SO

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A Gospel According to the Earth

Sown by science, a new eco-faith takes root

By Jack Hitt

I. The Book of Tomato

I first encountered the mysteries of compost when I rented a farmhouse in Connecticut a few years back. There was an apple orchard on the land and an old red barn. Alongside one listing wall were two old compost bins, both topped off years ago and neglected by a series of unconcerned tenants.

At the bottom of each bin was a slot with a door just big enough to accommodate a shovel. After a struggle involving my boots, a shovel, and some cuss words, out fell black dirt that crumbled like a muffin. And almost smelled like one, strangely sweet.

A friend who was becoming a fantastic gardener cautioned me to be sparing with the stuff. "It's nuclear," he warned. I was old enough to know better but still young enough to cling to the logical fallacy that if some is good, a lot more is better. So I filled two half barrels on my back porch with pure compost. From a nearby nursery I bought a couple of tomato plants. The pictures that came with them indicated they'd be just like the ones I grew up eating on John's Island, South Carolina—big, fat, deep red, juicy beauties that would need only to be sliced and salted. The plants seemed to tremble in anticipation, their ganglia of white desperate roots trapped in no more than a thumb of dirt. I poked a soft hole in the compost and inserted a single plant in each new bed. I couldn't wait.

And, given what I had done, I didn't have to. After a day or so of quietly settling in, the plants went berserk. They seemed to double in size every night, like some mathematical fable about the dark side of exponents. In the morning, standing out on the porch with a cup of coffee, I would eye them warily—the way I once stared at kudzu as a kid. Kudzu can grow eighteen inches a day in the South. Its nearly visible movement is languid and



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serpentine, even beautiful. My new plants, on the other hand, seemed to lurch toward the heavens with a beanstalk's intensity. Soon enough I had to stake them, then run strings to nearby eaves to hold the plants up. As the sun rose each morning and burned off the dew, the tomatoes appeared to shudder, as if in anguish at the steroidal mandate of the day. I came to fear my tomatoes.

The flowers appeared one morning, in full bloom, but soon enough they were gone. Not fallen to decorate the soil with romantic decay; gone—poof—incinerated by the strain of living so large. The tomato fruits that followed immediately grew just as quickly and reddened even faster. I didn't know whether or not to pick them. They didn't appear big enough, but they did seem ripe. No matter. The next morning it was obvious that some varmint had gotten to them. They hung like spent red balloons. Then I looked more closely. My tomatoes—wracked by compost overdose, forced (by me) to endure some unspeakable hellish chaos at the cellular level—had simply exploded.

II. The Book of Stag's Bladder



ROUGHLY a year later, I was visiting another friend deep in the woods of Appalachia, where he lived in a cabin. It was a late spring night, warm enough for five or six of us to sit on the porch and talk, unaware of time until rosy-fingered dawn fired off a few early warning flares suggesting we get some sleep.

In that long stretch of fluid darkness, an acquaintance and I talked while rocking on a porch swing. He lived "off the grid"—no electricity, no gas bills, grew most of his own food, shit in the woods. Every aspect of his comparatively ascetic existence involved thinking about the relationship between his desire and nature's. He strived for a kind of simplicity that I, as a man with more than a decade of Manhattan life behind me, could only listen to as some charming and exotic idea, like hearing a Zen monk explain that he can grip a prickly burr with the muscles of his sphincter and transport it backward via reverse peristalsis until it reappears at the other end, still sharp enough to catch on the bristly surface of his tongue.

Impressive, but, you know, why?

Then the man mentioned his compost pile, and I at last felt free to enter the conversation. I had my tomato anecdote. He listened to me without laughing. Compost had long ago ceased to be a source of humor for him. After my tomato fiasco, I wasn't surprised to hear him describe compost's physical warmth as transcendent. He, too, had experienced its mysteries, a where I had found a story for cocktail parti he'd found a way of life. He told me of h unusual and ornate method for preparing h compost. The system was developed by Rud Steiner, an early-twentieth-century think whose ideas ranged from the brilliant to t freaky. On the matter of compost, he indulg the far side of freaky.

"It involves remaking the soil itself," n acquaintance said hesitantly. "It's a complicat process. I can't really describe it. I'm not sure should. It involves using, you know, yarro flowers fermented in stag's bladder."

As a professional listener, I sit through bo ing stories all the time. But occasionally som detail will force me to pay attention. Th phrase "stag's bladder" pretty much is a dicta to listen until daybreak. Into the night h described an elaborate and mysterious proces Cow manure was buried all winter, dug up, an mixed with bark that had been fermented in a animal skull. He took this rich blackness an solemnly cut it into the beds of his carrots an his asparagus and his corn. Then he said thi "The food I grow from this soil is different fro other food. It's better. It's superior. It change you when you eat it. The vegetables from m garden, I believe, are actually structurally dif ferent from the ones you buy in the store. believe they actually are changing the cellula structure of my body. They're turning me int something different. When I eat now, it's lik I'm consuming something sacred, something holy, something divine."

Sitting on the porch swing, I didn't speak for oh, it might have been two minutes, or tw hours. At some point I excused myself and wen to the bathroom, where I wrote down a mess o notes like some pumped-up ethnographer wh had stumbled upon a new tribal ritual. My swing companion had described, almost exactly, the act of theophagy: the consumption of the divine essence, the total conversion born o epiphany, the payoff of transcendence. It was communion, but a rustic one not yet encumbered with liturgy and custom. No ceremony, no interpretation, just the thing itself.

In the clear light of the following afternoon, I reread my notes, and I couldn't quite decide whether what I had heard was important or absurd. I filed my papers away, but I couldn't shake this small moment. I never again thought of environmentalism as a movement about the politics of the land without noticing how often there were about it inklings of the divine.

II. The Book of Zealots



RITICS of the environmental movement frequently charge its members with being "zealots" on a "religious mission." They are usually talking about the kind of Green Party kid who ndcuffs himself to the fence of a nuclear plant gathers out front before a meeting of the World ade Organization. Calling people "religious alots" is mass-media shorthand for kook—a m of contempt applied to almost any group her than actual religious zealots. What I saw in e woods was less political. It was cultural, anropological. It made me aware of just how eply some of the new ecological ideas kicking ound about our relationship to the land were afting people.

"Communion" and "compost"—the words, idly, have similar roots in Latin, meaning a aring or putting together. The real differences tween the words exist in the extensive contations they have (or have not) gathered er time and the sound they make when spon. "Communion" hums serenely on the late like notes of celestial music; the other ops earthily from the mouth, suggesting someing else altogether.

Scribbling down these simple comparisons tween organized religion and environmentaln became a little game for me. "Off the grid," nonastery": Both are forms of asceticism, and e practices of friends of mine who live off the id do resemble a monastic life. Both involve a nd of sensual denial. Nature freaks (as they're own in the mass media's land of zealots) eat mple foods grown in the back yard in order to oid fast foods, processed foods, and environentally luxurious foods (such as winter strawrries flown in from New Zealand). The more strictive clans of monks avoided just such ods, though perhaps for different reasons. onks and off-gridders both resist the comforts urban living, whether electricity or a comfy d. Both groups try to integrate into the world ound them ideas they have about living a just e. Both find virtue in absence, and cultivate stention because they believe that by openg an intimate space within their daily lives, it ll be filled with something that is closer to od or Nature.

One of the comforts of religion is that it provides wide frame of understanding, a worldview that ves a devotee a sense of how everything works. nvironmentalism seems to do this in a harmssly practical way. Or maybe not so harmless. A great deal of current biblical scholarship regarding the advent of a much earlier worldview—that brought to the Roman Empire and Judaism by Jesus—is revealing just how grounded those ideas were in a practical and material understanding. We think of the Bible as chock-full of spiritual language, but that's not the only way early followers heard it. They also understood it, to use an anachronistic term, literally—as a *Weltanschauung* describing the concrete world around them, a view that very much resembles how we now think about the environment. These shifts in the power of words are not inconsequential. Religious leaders today strain to retrieve the literal quality of Scripture. Contemporary notions of apocalypse are (dangerous) efforts to re-anchor religious ideas to the realm we inhabit. Or take creation science, a nearly comic attempt to reclaim a factual reading of Scripture.

In the decades leading up to the odometer turn of Y2K, it was possible to hear from each of the three faiths of the Book—Judaism, Christianity, Islam—louder and louder cries for a return to a literal reading of the Word. From Christians we hear that wives should be subservient to their husbands or that queers should be stoned. To settlement-obsessed Jews, Yahweh is less a deity than an ancient real-estate broker whose original land grant preempts all subsequent claims. Among the new murderous wing of Islam, a novel interpretation of the word "jihad" has moderate Koranic scholars wincing in agony. Maybe it's just the inevitable periodic spasm of internecine destruction that has characterized the three great faiths over the ages. Maybe.

Or it may be that a competing framework—one that for now doesn't even begin to resemble what we call "religion"—is eroding the explanatory power of Scripture. Perhaps one day this time will be remembered as the moment when the academic, remote, and ancient quarrel between science and religion found a vernacular—environmentalism—that permitted many new ideas about the world to enter the hearts of the democratic populace. I'm not arguing for or against this proposition. I'm only noting an inexorable flow of explanatory power from one realm to another. I'm only stating the obvious: that even as middle-class moms forcibly drag their children to "church" because it's good for them, simultaneously these same people are mining other places, often literally their back yard, for deeper meanings that affect their lives.

Once you start thinking of environmentalism in this way—not merely as a set of nice feelings about land and animals but as a rival to the power religion has held in people's lives—then

the vocabulary game I had been playing becomes more revealing. Take "pollution," a simple enough word as it commonly is used in magazines or newspaper editorials, such as these recent headlines:

POLLUTION IS CHOKING LIFE OUT OF CITY
POLLUTION KILLS MILLIONS
POLLUTION-PROOF YOUR LIFE—BE A POLLUTION-FREE-ZONE

Now replace the key word with "sin" and you're reading a copy of *The Watchtower*.

Early one morning, I stepped out of my house with a large container and walked to the curb, only to look up the street and see three neighbors doing the same thing. We all nodded. In Connecticut one recycles by putting bottles and plastics in distinctive twilight-blue bins. Newspapers and cardboard are also presented to the garbage collector separately. It was an odd scene, men and women carrying what looked like votive baskets to lay them on the ground in front of their homes.

Try describing the purpose of recycling to a five-year-old daughter and you find yourself suddenly toiling like a second-year seminarian with a fresh allegory. Recycling is about redeeming old waste by transfiguring it into something new. The theological potential is almost too easy: "recycling" (Greek, "to come full circle") and "resurrection" (Latin, "to rise again"). The first word practically clicks in the mouth like a new machine getting started; the other murmurs with that harmony of the spheres.

As a household practice, recycling is quite recent, dating only to the 1960s. According to President George W. Bush, recycling's popularity throughout America managed to reclaim 64 million tons of the nation's annual 230-million-ton garbage pile in 2000. When he signed into law the new America Recycles Day (November 15, in case you've forgotten), President Bush urged his citizenry toward more participation in order to "close the recycling circle."

What's most curious about recycling is that it seems bulletproof to criticism. A few years ago, *The New York Times Magazine* ran an article exposing curbside recycling as a sham. Turns out there are much more efficient market systems that would dispose of our trash without all that individual participation. Worse, around that time one began to hear other reports that in many locales those newspaper bundles—bound with twine at a tremendous cost of hassle, if not of time—are just trucked to the dump and bulldozed into the steaming offal.

I seriously thought I would give it up, in part because, like the author of the article, I hate to recycle. But I found I couldn't give it up. My l had already heard the little story about d things being turned into good things. Somehw this puffball of a parable had staying power. It s one of those trends—you run across them fr n time to time in our culture—that logical ar- ment is impotent to stop. I often brought p the pointlessness of recycling with friends it would turn out that they, too, had read the - ticle. Yet they always said they recycled anyw y because "at least it's something." Such a packd word that last one.

Something?

You mean, something like a feeble sacrifice t out to slake the fury of a vengeful God an y with mankind's . . . sin?

IV. The Book of Fireflies



REATION science is a h- by of mine. I keep up. I re the reports of its research s and marvel at the baroc e fantasias about God's - chitectural career. Th r theories make no sense, t creationists show up in the headlines every th or four years. They persist, in some Americ way, like a signal from far off trying to tell s something else, which in a way they are. It does have much to do with science, but it has eve - thing to do with how we derive meaning from t world around us.

The original creationist notion emerg from the mind of a seventeenth-century Iri archbishop named James Ussher. He added all the begats in the Torah and combined th sum with the length of the rules of kings list in Judges to crunch a precise date for creatio October 23, 4004 B.C. It's no coincidence th while Ussher was engaged in his "research" t scientific method was sweeping the academi of Europe. The French Enlightenment was the way and, with it, a methodology that fe bold enough to draw conclusions about natu through observation while deliberately ignc ing scriptural revelation. By definitio Science had become a challenge to the pow of the Bible's words, so Ussher brought "sc ence" to Scripture.

Every time science has blazed with son achievement, creationism flares right beside When science in the public-school curriculu caused a controversy in the early twentieth ce tury, America took evolution to court with t Scopes trial. Most Americans willfully forg that science lost. Creationists ruled the day, in many ways they still do.

Beginning in the 1960s, the creationis

vatched a number of Supreme Court rulings estrict the telling of Bible stories in the public chools and immediately figured out how to hoehorn them back into the regular curricuim: recast them as geology. So the stories of God's first week and Noah's Flood, among others, were rewritten in the lingo of engineers nd newly labeled "creation science." These cientific rewrites could get quite elaborate. In 996, John Woodmorappe published *Noah's ark: A Feasibility Study,* which explained the echnical feats achieved during the forty days nd nights of Noah's Flood, or, to put it in cretionist jargon, the "960 continuous hours" of he "Noachic Deluge."

Science!

The book is laced with schematics of proosed ark floor plans, with page after page of naginative "conjectures" about how Noah ight have solved all the problems that natually come up when you're aboard a ship with, ccording to Woodmorappe's deductions, 7,428 ammals, 4,602 birds, and 3,724 reptiles. oing to the potty takes up A LOT of the book. He also notes that with persistent rain and loud cover, there would have been the probm of constant darkness. He theorizes that the nterior of the pitch-black ark might have been t by the glow of millions of fireflies. It is an nage so willfully naive it approaches beauty.

With each defeat by some school board or at the hands of enraged parents who want to see their children educated in the proper sciences, the cretionists go back once again to retranslate the esntials of what they believe the Bible says into he jargon of lab grinds. There has been "youngarth" creationism followed by "old-Earth" cretionism (in other words, the idea has *evolved*). few years ago, the smarter creation scientists onjured the term "intelligent design." This view rgues that the odds of a universe big banging s way into precisely the set of physical laws that ermit mankind to evolve are so remote that the cience of it can't be explained without the inervention of an extremely smart cosmic Engineer. nd not just an Engineer who ignited the bigang blast and then stepped back to observe his lockwork plans unfold like a 20-billion-year me-lapse photo. No, intelligent designers rect the uninvolved Engineer. This Designer *tinkers.* He's involved in the day-to-day goings-on f His creation, intervening in much the way, ell, that the personal deity of American Protesntism is said to be intimately involved in the ves of believers.

Meet God: He's wearing a pocket protector these days. And, had we cultural artists like Michelangelo who could tap the unarticulated zeitgeist for their inspiration, God's personage in a twenty-first-century triptych might bear a vague resemblance to Albert Einstein about the hair and Stephen Hawking in the sly ungovernable grin.

The alleged scientists behind intelligent design (one is a retired lawyer) have never published a peer-reviewed paper because that's a lot of work. And, frankly, "science" is actually marginal to the larger purpose of building their rickety Trojan horse to smuggle God back into the public schools. This is what I like most about intelligent design—besides its hilariously tendentious name. After three centuries of dickering, creationism has whittled itself down to a bare nub, a single idea, an assertion of epistemology—that we cannot "know" without God. Because that is, finally, all creation science really cares about.

This is why intelligent designers are so angry. They are angry at science. They are angry with this paragraph. They seethe at the certainty with which mainstream scientists approach uncertainty. They are furious with the (literally godless) way scientists achieve that certainty. IDers are livid with science's pretense that it is only "describing" nature without acknowledging the inherent power of having a narrative and a language so vivid they can describe all of creation. Creationists feel that they once possessed that language, but they realize that it has lost something—its literalness. Other modern theologians have come to terms with this denotative loss and are happy to describe Scripture as a "metaphorical" language or a "spiritual" language. But the creationists are not giving up the realm of the concrete that easily. They suspect that something much more important is slipping away from them. Literal meaning has a plain-Jane way of convincing people of simple truths. And religion is built on the pilings of simple truths.

Trying to prove the existence of the ancient story with the tools of the lab can lead to strange places, like the hypothesis of a million fireflies. Right now, for example, a schism is about to rip through the American Episcopal Church. The disagreement turns on whether Jesus Christ was literally resurrected. Well, say the new militant literalists, that's what the Bible says, so that's what happened. His reappearance was not in the "hearts" of his disciples or some such abstract thing. No. He physically returned after three days of death, and he walked among his apostles in his actual old body, bleeding nail holes and all. This wasn't "poetry" to describe how the apostles felt. Jesus returned from the dead. His soul came back and reanimated his old



A Tale Book of Jesus Christ, Freelance Writer



FORGET everything you think you know about Jesus for a minute. Imagine knowing him only by the few stories of his that have come down. His words. His sentences. His parables. These are the stories he told. He wrote them. Jesus was, first and foremost, a writer.

The notion of the parable existed before Jesus. The Greek philosophers had worked this genre. Jesus merely popularized it. But his real achievement was to take the parable out of the garden of academe and put it to work in the real world—that is, to apply the Socratic method and perfected this literary form by bringing to it the writer's sharpest tool, new metaphor.

Parables had been used in teaching, but often to make pointed lessons for their listeners. Jesus doesn't provide lessons. His parables are often half-finished, sometimes half-baked. They can feel like contradictions. Or the conclusion may seem unnervingly obvious. Jesus' stories stake out a new, almost democratic, ground between the detachment of the regal tales familiar among Jews and pagans (King David, Zeus) and the airy remoteness of mysticism. (One of the rejected gospels reads almost like a collection of Zen koans. The Book of Thomas has Jesus talking like this: "If you bring forth what is within you, what you bring forth will save you. If you do not bring forth what is within you, what you do not bring forth will destroy you." It's probably a good thing Thomas didn't make the cut. Jesus' parables work best not when they mystify but when they push the listener into supplying some intellectual sweat.)

"The parables were really lures for self-education," says John Dominic Crossan, the DePaul University theologian whose groundbreaking books used modern literary theory and anthropology to reexamine the stories of Jesus. According to Crossan, the audience was drawn to participate in the meaning of the parables. Jesus made the listener into a kind of assistant rabbi.

At the time, a teacher like Jesus had a ready-made warehouse of God comparisons waiting to him in which God was always beyond comprehension. It was the same store of language available to the hierarchical elites of Judaism. "Mightier than the thunders of many waters,/mightier than the waves of the sea,/the Lord on high is mighty!" says Psalm 93. In Hebrews, God is a consuming fire. In Genesis, God is a shield. In Exodus, God is a mountain. In Hosea, God is a lion. In Solomon, God is like the cedars of Lebanon. In the Psalms, He comes robed in light.

It's in this context that Jesus appears and achieves his literary mark.

The kingdom of God "is like a mustard seed," he said in one of his most famous riffs. At the time, anyone alive would have understood the reality of a mustard seed. It grew everywhere and was considered, especially among farmers, an annoying weed.

"Now, imagine a group of people listening," says Crossan. "You just said it's a big weed. Why don't you say a big cedar of Lebanon like everybody else? Why a big weed? Besides, mustard is dangerous in our fields. We prefer to control it. How is the kingdom like a weed just outside that grows everywhere? There's every reaction in the audience, this is the genius of parable. It trusts the audience to figure it out, to make up its own mind, doing exactly what Jesus wants."

If you look at all the parables together, it is clear that Jesus intentionally avoided the grandiloquence of the Temple (not to mention the larger-than-life grandeur of pagan Olympus). His stock of metaphor is drawn from the daily life of any soul struggling under the rule of Rome in the first century. Jesus goes for agricultural ref-



rences—seeds, weeds, plants, farming. He also kes to draw upon daily chores, but not those of ings and deities: the kingdom of God is like eaven that a woman took and hid in three easures of flour, till it all was leavened." Or ey tend toward quotidian family quarrels—gain, intensely familiar dramas—among prodi-l sons, feuding siblings, enraged fathers, all of hom are just regular working folks, fishermen, epherds. The prodigal son story in Luke may e the most famous parable ever.

Even Jesus' miracles have a domestic humili-y to them. The Man from Galilee doesn't part e Red Sea and save a nation. He turns a few ottles of water into wine at a wedding feast. He eals a single leper. You'd think a great messiah ould perform a miracle to teach an entire ation to fish. But, no, Jesus works his magic on human scale, turning a few fishes and loaves nto one afternoon's picnic lunch.

Jesus' stories draw upon metaphor that one ould experience every day, right at home. This ntimacy brought a sense of the divine down to e scale of an average person's life. In these lit-al actions—the pleasure and the pain of mun-ane life—one finds the kingdom of God. In a erse (Matthew 11:18–19) that few fundamen-alists like to quote these days, here is Jesus com-laining that authorities mock his daily-pleasure eology: "For John came neither eating nor rinking, and they say, 'He has a demon.' The Son f Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ook at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend f tax collectors and sinners!'"

Jesus made listeners realize what St. Teresa ould write a millennium and a half later: "The ord walks among the pots and pans." Or Vallace Stevens, some centuries later:

> Divinity must live within herself:
> Passions of rain, or moods in falling snow;
> Grievings in loneliness, or unsubdued
> Elations when the forest blooms; gusty
> Emotions on wet roads on autumn night;
> All pleasures and all pains, remembering
> The bough of summer and the winter branch.
> These are the measures destined for her soul.

The achievement of Jesus' quotidian parables was that the listener got to intimately tailor a personal sense of God o his or her understanding of the world. One arable Jesus taught was this one, from Matthew dig the first question): "What do you think? A an had two sons. And he went to the first and id, 'Son, go and work in the vineyard today.' nd he answered, 'I will not,' but afterward he anged his mind and went. And he went to the ther son and said the same. And he answered, 'I go, sir,' but did not go." Jesus' disciples all stren uously raised their hands. They knew the an swer! The first son was the most virtuous!

Whereupon Jesus (whose sense of humor is underrated) replied: "Truly, I say to you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes go into the king dom of God before you."

What does that mean? Frankly, I am not sure. I have my own thoughts, but they all feel tenta tive, and I can only hope I'm right. Jesus doesn't accuse his disciples of being wrong; he just mocks the easiness of their quick answer. Taken as a whole—straight through Jesus' slapstick rebuke—it's not a parable with a clear and right answer. You have to sort of toss it around in your head, think about people you've dealt with who've said one thing and done another, and then try to come to some answer. Chances are that few will agree in their interpretation, which is rhetorically so sly.

Jesus is telling his listeners—poor folks, out casts, and anyone else standing around—that evidence of the divine is right beside them. He invites them ("What do you think?") to look among the weeds, the family quarrels, the prob lems at work, for intimations of immortality. The audience is seduced into examining their own experiences as they relate to these stories. What results is an explanation of the world not only grounded in literal occurrence but cus tomized to one's own experience. The stories gather power by building cumulatively on the small truths of daily happenstance. Who hasn't planted seed, weeded mustard, quarreled with dad, eaten a fish, or hoped the wine would hold out? These literal actions of pedestrian life formed the foundational pillars on which this new religion was built—a scaffolding of truth erected out of simple domestic actions packed with hidden meaning, like carrying a load of recycled bottles to the curb or a bucket of pota to peels to the compost bin.

II. The Book of Jupiter, Role Model



AS RELIGIONS go, paganism wasn't much to write about. There was no standardized text of stories, no Bible. Even if there had been, what good would it have done? Pagans didn't study the gods for moral guidance the way Jews and Christians studied their stories. Pagan gods were not to be emulated; they were to be avoided. Jupiter, Venus, Minerva, Mars—these were troublesome figures who lived on Olympus, and when they descended, basically you got raped,



kidnapped, or killed. Pagan gods were like drunken rich kids who occasionally decided to slum among the peasants, who in turn paid dearly for the privilege of acquaintance.

So from time to time the authorities would sacrifice an animal and hold a big festival to keep the anger of the gods placated. That was the best you could do. There were great temples to some of the gods. But in most small towns and villages throughout the Roman Empire, paganism's daily rituals might have entailed going to a grotto at the edge of town devoted to particular niche deities, say Lares and Penates. These were the household gods. If you were having trouble with your debts or some other household problem, you lit a candle to them. If your love life was tanking, you visited Venus' grotto, as it were. If a big fight was looming, Mars got a candle. And so on.

Paganism was partly like astrology is today. It was more private than anything else. If a pagan wanted moral guidance, he would consult the philosophers. A Greek might read Plato; a Roman, Marcus Aurelius. God knows, you wouldn't want your kids imitating the gods. Zeus a role model? That would be like expecting American parents to turn to the private lives of Winona Ryder or Robert Downey Jr. for moral instruction. Pagans loved their gods' doomed adventures for the same reason we voyeuristically keep up with our celebrities. We are drawn to the same mythic stories—Joan Crawford's Medea-like butchery of her own offspring, Michael Jackson's Ovidian metamorphoses, Elizabeth Hurley's Venus-esque promiscuity—because we marvel at their excess, scanning the tabloids to learn each star's tragic flaw so that we can make sense out of the inexorable self-destruction that is satisfyingly to come.

Pagans easily segregated morals from their gods because that's the way people thought then. It was really one of the innovations of monotheism, in Judaism and Christianity, to imagine the divine being as having any moral significance at all. One can argue that this segregation is beginning to occur again. Today when we ponder the Solomonic questions of our time—Who gets the limited resources of donated organs? How should cross-cultural adoption work? Is human experimentation right?—we turn to think tanks that employ working philosophers known as "ethicists."

Still, it's difficult nowadays to imagine a religion divorced from morals, because the Western tradition has so seamlessly married the two. Likewise, it's hard for us to reimagine Jesus' teaching as it affected those who first heard it. We too readily separate the literal from the figurative. But doing precisely that is an epistemological habit we all picked up after the Enlightenment. It's a holdover from that same impulse that taught our scientists to look at nature without the benefit of transcendental wisdom. It's why we so often read the Bible with a modern eye; that is, as a collection of good life-lessons for the kiddies. We fail to see that the original power of Jesus' teaching was grounded in hard-core reality.

Imagine the average pagan. Festival time was pretty much the only time he ate meat and didn't feel hunger. Otherwise, life in the kingdom of Rome was a desperate bargain. And against it Jesus posited the kingdom of God, which on Earth meant people banding together in communities and forging among themselves a sense of a living divinity built on quotidian reality—the provision of bread, the maintenance of shelter, some kindness.

Archaeological digs of the earliest Christian communities show that many of them were headed by women and many smashed through Roman class divisions, bringing together former slaves with people of means. This was a real communion, not some fuzzy feeling of middle-class moms cooing about the joys of "community." These groups were life-support systems. In those days, a woman whose husband died was pretty much finished. But perhaps not if she were a Christian. These people had figured out how to live outside Roman norms in a way that was grounded in the provision of life's basics. Food, shelter, help.

"Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, 'Take, eat; this is my body.'" Did he mean it literally? Of course, both literally and figuratively. The breaking of bread and the drinking of wine, the essentials of being human, were also the essentials in knowing the divine. ("The Son of man comes eating and drinking . . .") It's only during the Enlightenment, when we bifurcated our habits of thinking, that theologians started arguing enthusiastically about these ideas and priests started poking around blessed bread looking for bits of flesh and holding up the wine chalice to look for corpuscles.

In the first centuries of the last millennium, several high-impact publicity opportunities launched Jesus' new idea on its way to continental recognition. The first and greatest, however undesired, was the bloody occasion of martyrdom.

The accounts of the early martyrs still have power. In A.D. 203 a rich twenty-two-year-old named Perpetua was accused of being a Christian. Every attempt to give this wealthy man's daughter a break failed. She did not fear death, and on her appointed day this young beautiful woman was stripped naked and wrapped in a net with her servant and friend, also a Christian. They were

ossed into a coliseum to be mauled by a savage east. (It actually was a wild "cow.") Even the Romans, though, suddenly became horrified by the utchery of a lovely, well-to-do madonna (Perpetua was nursing her newborn up until the moment of her slaughter). So the governor paused he Grand Guignol and ordered that a tunic be rovided and that a gladiator be sent in to finish er off. According to written accounts, the gladator was totally unnerved by her calm. The rable sitting on the stone benches could see that he hand in which he held the sword was trembling. He froze. So Perpetua did him a favor. She reached up, steadied his weapon, and lunged it into her throat.

Picture that pagan guy again, sitting there, watching this. Um, Lucia, tell me again the name of this new religion?

After the conversion of Constantine in A.D. 12, the techniques for attracting followers had o become more creative. Martyrdom was no onger an option, so the more innovative folowers relied upon unusual types of performances. n some locales, Christians tried to get closer to God, paradoxically, by isolating themselves in ome way. These were sort of beta tests for behavior that would eventually be codified as monastic life. With these early proto-monks, hough, the point seemed to be to draw attention o their beliefs. They were performance artists of orts, and in fact they make our own—the folks who stick yams up their rears or publicly pierce heir bodies with pins—look like hopeless pikers.

Take the boskoi—the word means "shepherds" n Greek. Intentionally homeless, these early monks wandered hillsides alone and were said o eat grass on all fours like beasts of burden. They were hard to miss, according to Ephrem he Syrian, because "in appearance their hair ears a closer resemblance to the wings of an eagle than the hair of a human." Observers of the boskoi also seemed obsessed with the improbable ength of their fingernails. Ephrem wrote that hey were often "mixing with stags and leaping with fawns." They didn't do this just for a onetime appearance at the Performing Garage in SoHo. They did it for the rest of their lives.

The Catenati wrapped themselves in chains nd dragged their literal burdens everywhere. Other devotees, such as the stylites, climbed up a pole and never left. St. Alypius spent fifty-three ears standing upon his pillar. When age and fatigue reduced him to lying on his side, he spent the next fourteen years on his pillar, couchant.

Nearly all these early saints drew crowds. Their very oddness was the point. It disconcerted the Establishment and made people try to understand what powerful idea nested in the hearts of these lunatics. Tell me again, Lucia, the name of this new religion? One subset of stylites chose not to live atop man-made pillars. Even that was too easy, too comfortable. They were called the Dendrites. They built their platforms in trees.

III. The Book of the Tree-sitters



N OCTOBER 4, 2001, a radical environmentalist who had taken the forest name Tre Arrow shimmied up a tree as a crew of loggers arrived to cut timber on a parcel of Oregon public land called God's Valley. Then Tre Arrow fell, breaking his sixty-foot plunge by slamming into some limbs before crashing to the ground, his head split open, a lung punctured, bones broken.

The news coverage was interesting. The Associated Press simply reported that he "tumbled 60 feet from a treetop perch in the Tillamook State Forest and suffered multiple broken bones." What none of the stories reported was that the loggers chased this radical higher and higher up the tree, lopping off all the lower branches. When the chain saw got close, Tre Arrow leapt into another tree, so they sheared the bottom limbs off that one too. With no way out, Tre Arrow sat in the tree with no water or food. The loggers and law-enforcement officials below shouted insults, shone lights, and blared music at him throughout the night. The jeering and mockery at this guy lasted for forty-eight hours. It only ended when the object of their hatred passed out right in front of their eyes and plummeted to the ground. The state forestry spokesman, Jeff Foreman, told a newspaper: "That was unfortunate and obviously something we hoped would not happen."

Or precisely what we hoped might happen. You know, depending.

Tree-sitting dates only to the late nineties as a form of protest. The practice became popular in 1998 after a young woman named Julia Hill climbed up a giant redwood tree in California and stayed there for two years. She took a forest name, Butterfly, and gave her tree a name, Luna. She later wrote a book about her experience at defeating a timber company's intention to cut down thousand-year-old redwoods. On some websites, the denunciations of "dreadlocked bongo-playing hippies" and rage at their "stupidity" are commonplace. Tree-sitters tend toward odd language, like calling their trees "ancient ones," one of those crypto-aboriginal terms that drive opponents berserk. In terms of private property, tree-sitters are obvious trespassers. The timber companies have legal permits. Often they are cutting trees on land



they own. As a matter of law, tree-sitters are completely wrong. As a matter of logic, they don't make any sense: saving one tree, as often happens, would appear to accomplish nothing.

"We climb the trees so people will look at them differently," said a tree-sitter named Spindle whom I contacted by cell phone. "These trees want to survive. They are not just lumber to be milled. We want people to see that they are homes to dozens of animals, they hold the soil, and they are there because they want to be."

Beginning in 2002, the Fallen Angels Group in Oregon called Cottage Grove grew concerned that some of ancient Douglas firs that they had all grown up near was going to be timbered. They protested to the state and federal governments but were rebuffed. So a few of the locals joined with Janine Nilsen, who runs a horse stable outside of town, and contacted some tree-sitters. Under cover of darkness, they slipped onto this publicly owned land and erected a platform 130 feet up a Douglas fir to support three newly baptized dryads—Talcon, Savage, and Kiwi. The cut has been postponed as the owner tries to find out what his legal options are.

"It's more than just the tree-sit," Nilsen said. "We need to take a look at our forest. We're letting our natural resources go. But we are part of it, and we can't lose that part of ourselves. It's hard to put into words. It's a feeling. Language is so limited. It's something we need desperately. We have a misapprehension of nature. We're trying to make the world live by our standard instead of understanding how the world works."

Now many in Cottage Grove support the bongo-playing hippies. It might not have happened only a few years ago, but, according to Nilsen, there is mainstream support as folks bring water and provisions to supply the dryads in the trees.

"I think it's very dangerous the way we're cutting trees," Nilsen said. "I think that's the message of the tree-sitters. You can't replant a thousand-year-old forest. We're destroying something we don't understand."

The middle-class acceptance of tree-sitting broke new ground last fall when a man climbed a tree in northern California. This single old tree was scheduled to be cut to make it possible to widen a road. Public support gathered regularly near the tree. In the end, the police got him down with a court order, but only after the developers agreed to hire a company that specializes in the moving of giant ancient trees.

Since Julia Hill's debut, dozens of tree-sitters have popped up in California and Oregon. Right now, to the best of my research, I can find five active tree-sits, three in Oregon and two in California. In each case, the trees have been given names. A giant 800-year-old Douglas fir named Monteverde is currently being occupied to prevent the Zip-O Lumber Company from clearing out its stand. Down the road, Happy is being occupied by two sitters, Life and Glisten. The names can get funky. One tree-sitter who went by the name Dirt inspired classrooms of children to write him letters. Their thoughts aren't all that different from my own: "Why is your name Dirt? Is it because trees don't have showers? Maybe it's because you love dirt."

What's truly peculiar about tree-sitting is that its inherent danger hasn't stopped the flow of volunteers. Two people have died. One was a twenty-two-year-old girl who accidentally fell to her end, as local reports noted, "falling from a tree that the logging protesters called Truth."

In California, another forest dryad named Gypsy—formerly David Chain of Houston—was killed on the ground, but in a particularly ugly way. An infuriated logger cut down a tree and crushed him to death. At first the logger said he didn't know that there were activists in the area, at least not until other activists produced a video tape revealing that in fact he had been yelling things such as "I wish I had my fucking pistol."

No charges were filed in the death of this hero. The company settled with his mother out of court for an undisclosed sum of money. It also did something else that it thought, from a financial perspective, was a brilliantly cheap buyout of these zealots. It permitted the fallen tree to become a memorial, creating a zone of nature around it. Lying on the ground, decomposing, it is what foresters call a nurse log, a dead tree whose detritus refeeds the woodland floor. There is an access route off the highway now, and people have begun to call the area by a new name—Gypsy Mountain—drawing young pilgrims to the site of one of their early martyrs.

III. The Book of the Weather Channel, Revealed



THE Weather Channel opened for business in 1982, and its owner, Frank Batten, endured a persistent shower of media hooting at the idea that forecasts of precipitation could pull down any kind of audience in a broadcast medium. Twenty years later it is one of most recognized cable brands after CNN. Have you spent any time watching the Weather Channel? It is the cable station of the environment—not in the Sierra Club sense but in the sense that I am talking about. It is the unnoticed explainer of the

ırger world around us. It has insinuated itself ıto the lives of millions as harmlessly as a coun- / ag show. Watching it, though, is a caution, a re- ıinder that as descriptions of the environment be- in to take on the coloration of religion, the moral ɔne will not be Jesus' Good News but decidedly ıore Elijah's Old Testament.

When Batten was getting the station up and ınning, it faltered until he had an epiphany. Severe weather caused large spikes in our rat- ıgs, and quiet weather depressed our ratings," e confessed in his own history of the channel. ike all television producers, Batten went in earch of "action news." So, he explains, he dramatically ramped up our live coverage of urricanes, tornadoes, blizzards, and other evere weather." Fortunately, a seemingly disin- egrating planet happily obliged. Batten hired ohn Hope, the hurricane expert at the National Weather Service. But he needed more scolding rophets, so he got them: "tropical-storm expert Dr. Steve Lyons, tornado and severe-thunder- orm expert Dr. Gregory Forbes, and winter- eather expert Paul Kocin."

This season the Weather Channel is pro- ucing a highly anticipated series called *Storm tories*. In its promotional material, the pro- ucers described the show in terms that sound ke the lamentations of Job scraping his ounds with a potsherd: "Viewers witness a aby ripped from its mother's arms by a vio- ent tornado; victims who survive a shipwreck nly to face deadly sharks; and the panic of ciers as they realize their friend has been uried alive under a suffocating blanket of ıow. In every *Storm Stories* episode, there are ıree 'stars'—the rescuers, the survivors, and, f course, the weather."

Great epics always need a trinity, like Moses, is suffering people, and, of course, Yahweh.

It may sound ridiculous to talk about envi- ɔnmentalism and religion as if the two were in ɔmpetition. Especially because, if history is ıy guide, the current crop of organized faiths ıay simply absorb any compelling environmen- ıl ideas into the older traditions. Such efforts re already under way. Harvard recently spon- ɔred an Ecology and Religion seminar at which ıe brainier wings of the world's major religions iscussed methods for incorporating the "val- es" of environmentalism into traditional ameworks of God. The sessions produced a 00-page book full of niceties that, despite my est efforts, proved unreadable. Even among ıe evangelicals, who prefer the Bible's talk bout holding "dominion" over all living ıings, there are eco-stirrings. The Christian ociety of the Green Cross declares its purpose to be "Serving and Keeping Creation." And evangelical teenagers—on those rare occasions when they interrupt their proud talk about all the sex they're not having—ask themselves, What Car Would Jesus Drive?

The question is curiously jarring and has by now attracted a certain amount of scorn. But is this not, in a way, the sort of question (and answer) we are already engaged in? As we begin to ponder the values buried deep in our environmental choices (buy a super-polluting SUV or not), we are writing our own parables and crafting a new morality born of the ethics inherent in the relationship between ourselves and our planet. In the face of this process, trying to yank Jesus into the twenty-first century and locate him inside a furor born of scientific inquiry is not just anachronistic. It's desperate.

Maybe organized religion will succeed in co-opting this new scaffolding for knowing things and creating values, but there's a sound argument it can't. As a basis for understanding the world, the cool rationalism underlying environmentalism is about as compatible with "faith" as, say, Christianity's single-minded deism was when it got adopted into the multifarious pagan state by Constantine.

New paradigms do not take over in a generation or even a half dozen of them. And *Homo sapiens* is, in the end, not all that fleet an animal intellectually. We take our time, so that any new paradigm has to work on us like a shaggy-dog story (or a shaggy-god story), whose point is its windy telling and retelling. How long did it take for Christianity to drive the pagan gods into the musty books of "mythology" and emerge as a fully organized religion? Three or four centuries, easy.

We are more bound up than ever in a fight that dates back to the Enlightenment. Ideas this large, changing over temporal landscapes that outlast a single human life, are hard to limn accurately. Think about "race," another large idea whose shadow we huddle beneath. Only a hundred and fifty years ago, redheaded freckled Irish boys were perceived by the racialists of that time as comparable to "Negroes." Like evolution among the species, well-entrenched norms can be completely upended—it just takes time.

Some of these ideas, such as environmentalism, have a power to affect us on a level that may eventually alter the way we describe God, or our relationship to all that is unknown in the universe. Any shift will begin with kids in school, and already has. Complaints that children can't pray in school or that the Ten Commandments can't be posted are the fights some religious institutions have chosen to take on. But which prayer



and which Ten Commandments? The Jewish, Catholic, and Protestant faiths all have slightly different versions of the Ten Commandments. So as that battle becomes more prominent, expect it to devolve into internecine bitterness—and, in the process, to totally miss the thing happening down the hall.

It's not uncommon these days for high schools to have an ecology course in which the kids marvel at the tidiness of forest succession, or a biology teacher who builds an earthworm compost bin that transforms the scraps from the lunchroom into sweet topsoil. In New Haven, Connecticut, where I live, there is a charter school called Common Ground, essentially a farm. It was easily sanctioned by the political powers, because who could be against the values of a farm? Besides, the concept of teaching the essentials of learning—reading, writing, arithmetic—by threading them through a single framework of understanding is an old pedagogical notion. It's what parochial schools do.

Any visitor to Common Ground cannot miss the huge compost pile. It's a vast, horizontal runway of organic decomposition, a smoldering heap of meaning that confronts you when you first drive up. At one end are mounds of leaves and sticks and chunks of various stinky rotting bits. As the students turn it all over and over, day after day, the muck forms little knolls that grow smoother and more funereal as they migrate down the way until they appear as black mounds at the end. An enormous square sieve on a swing allows students to sift out the sticks and clods to produce perfect aromatic dirt. They shovel it onto their greens, cut it into the soil, and grow their own crops. They harvest their vegetables, cook and eat them, and throw out the scraps in the compost pile. The seasons, they go round and round.

And so do ideas. The work of the land is no longer friendly 4-H science. Gardening was once the province of little old ladies giddy about this season's bulbs. Now Americans garden with a near-British passion, not merely for the beauty of their orange gazanias, Iceland poppies, or Johnny-jump-up violas but also for their meaning.

Still, science makes a lousy *Weltanschauung*, doesn't it? It's so cold and rational. In terms of a sense of place, the sterility of the lab can't hold much power next to the mysterium of a good Romanesque church. As a worldview, Darwinism feels lonely. Before it could insinuate itself in the hearts of people, science needed warmth, blood, feeling, love, poetry, spirituality. As far back as the Enlightenment itself, philosophers such as Giambattista Vico resisted the humorless Cartesian universe and argued that science need some funk. Vico called it "culture."

If you look at the metamorphosis of scientific rationalism into modern environmentalism, you can see the beginning of just that. Science has always had that potential (which is another reason creationists are so angry). When astrophysicists conjecture about the big bang theory, or when Stephen Hawking talks about funneling all creation into a single grand unified theory, or when other synthesizers wheel out the TOE (theory of everything)—it drives the intelligent design crazy that these alleged scientists don't perceive that they are knee-deep in creation stories, universal explanations, and theology.

But Hawking's remote and cold universe needed to find a way into the daily life of the average human being. The groundbreaking book in the poetry of science was Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*. The very title hints at what the Garden of Eden must have sounded like after the Expulsion. And that is the trope of her book. The first chapter is entitled "A Fable for Tomorrow." Its first line reads: "There was once a town in the heart of America where all life seemed to live in harmony with its surroundings." The style is declarative and scriptural. The story is one of a Fall from Grace. In this second Eden, the animals were expelled, and the snake was man. Carson's real achievement was to take the science of DDT poisoning and the intricacies of ecological studies and write them as a story that speaks to us.

Her book was published in 1962. Not long afterward, NASA's moon-bound astronauts returned with their famous photo: Earth as seen from God's perspective. It was a view that had previously been depicted only by great masters who dared to envision God peering down upon His creation. Now NASA's photo, always described as showing a small "blue-green planet," put us on the celestial throne and implied a new kind of responsibility, if not understanding. A new holiday, Earth Day, appeared a year after Neil Armstrong returned with his pictures, and, soon enough, so did a new word. Etymological dictionaries pin down the origin of "environmentalism," as a general term describing this new understanding of Earth's workings, to the surprisingly recent year of 1972. America, famous for domesticating and democratizing every supercilious notion to come out of Europe (we turned operas into musicals, Parliament into Congress, Trollope into Hemingway, Greek mythology into *The Sopranos*), at last had found a cozy habitation and name to put to the old country's austere rationalism, brought down to earth, like Jesus' sense of the divine, into something as nearby as a park or a back yard—environmentalism.

What catalyst might shock the current sense we have of the environment into something else? It's not hard to imagine one when you consider what the murder of 3,000 people on September 11 did to the nation's sense of liberty. Nature could shrug her shoulders tomorrow and kill 10 million people. That might change things. A massive plague, desertification, a tectonic collapse—these things have happened before. What's different today is that we understand them and, way down deep, we fear we are to blame.

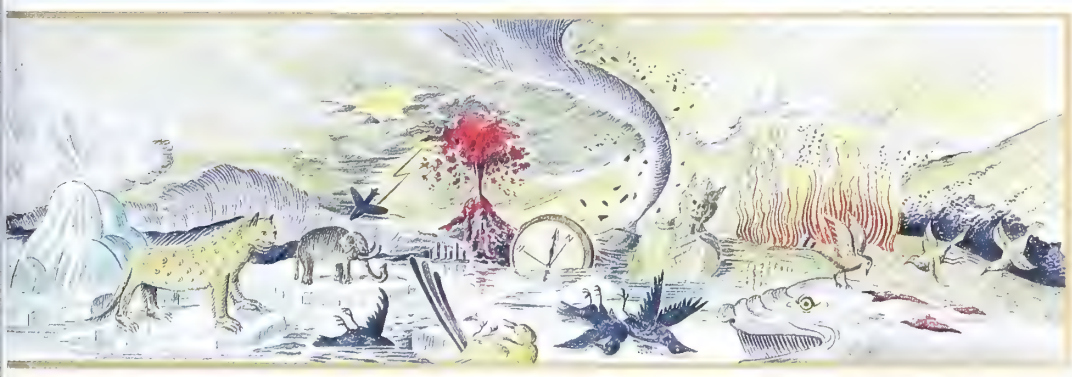
Who reads the news of last January's Pacific typhoon, with razor winds of 250 miles per hour, that sheered off the tops of islands or reports that the Austrians are closing ski resorts in the Alps due to bare peaks and does not feel a deep transspecies dread far more troubling than the fear of terrorists? How about that claustrophic nausea you felt when you first read about the transmission of SARS? A disease spread by breathing, with six billion potential victims all now crowded into an ailing habitat?

California has opened a Tsunami Warning System, while folks in the Midwest report that their average annual tornado count—200 or 300 back in the fifties—regularly reaches over a thousand every year now. Scientists recently determined that melting in Canada has made the mythical Northwest Passage a near reality. Every few years, an Antarctic chunk (always described as the size of Rhode Island or Delaware) cracks off and melts away. New plagues erupt, often enough that health officials wonder which bug will be adaptive enough to overpower our usual bag of epidemiological tricks. Unnerving studies report that banana trees flourish in Boston and that 80 percent of species—ranging from tropical butterflies to arctic foxes—are blazing new migration trails farther and farther north. The famous snows of Kilimanjaro will soon exist only in the writings of Ernest Hemingway and on vintage postcards. The Andean glaciers of Peru—whose seasonal waxing and waning provide the country with most of its water supply—have lost a third of their ice pack in the last twenty years. Where will those Peruvians go when their water supply disappears, as is projected in the coming decades? Agronomists now fear that the equatorial belt may one day be too hot to produce edible crops. Will the people who live there stay put, or will they jump in their rattletraps and follow the South American vicuña's new northern migration?

In the political realm, anti-environmentalists (a term no one, revealingly, would ever use about oneself) argue that there's no science to back up all this Chicken Littlism. Maybe it *is* all bad science, and the fretting about global warming or disappearing species is nothing more than projections of fear from our scientists. But, as these stories mount, that may be little more than a quaint paradox. The fear, scientifically valid or not, is there. Maybe we can't prove that a billion cars spewing carbon monoxide are causing a specific harm, but we know it's bad. It's enough to drive a nation of homeowners feckless to their curbs every week with their blue bins of wretched offerings.

Three centuries of reason have taught us that we are not under God's special protection, though we are very much part of something larger than ourselves that we don't really understand. We fear the effects of our own collective hand every time we turn on the TV and see the coast of Florida festooned with dead whales or that tanker sink beneath the swells off Spain taking with it 20 million gallons of crude to leach out into the deep blue sea for the next two centuries. Or this more recent item from the *Washington Post*, flashed to me via Internet alert while I edited the previous sentences: "World's Fish Ravaged. Large-scale fishing since the '50s has wiped out 90% of every big species." These stories feel like sin.

All of which may be contributing to the sense of apocalypse gripping the Western faiths. Even though they seem hell-bent on creating a



crusadelike battle among themselves, their real frustration is with modernity. Bin Laden's enemy is not America but a hip contemporary Islam. And Jerry Falwell doesn't fear Muhammad nearly as much as he fears a secular society in which tolerant Christians wear their faith with as much gusto as a Shriner his fez.

In America this desperation has reawakened a need for literalism. America is currently governed by an evangelical Christian who swaggers with self-proclaimed moral clarity. Just before the first shock-and-awe bombs fell last March, President Bush announced that God had weighed the merits of the invasion and was "not neutral." Bush has publicly advocated the teaching of creationism in the schools. He makes a show of his religion and his faith in a micromanaging, interventionist God.

That old medieval God has had a rough go of it lately. Pat Robertson, who had once said he "prayed away" a hurricane from hitting his beach in Virginia, explained in 1998 that God was so furious with gays having a special day in Disney World that He might whip up a hurricane and direct it precisely at the amusement park. (God, working that cruel streak of black comedy for which He is famous, did whip up Hurricane Bonnie that year. It bore down on Orlando, as promised, but then skipped out to sea and slammed ashore at Virginia Beach, where Robertson lives.)

That very winter season a new god had descended, an advent missed by Pat Robertson. His arrival was announced by meteorologist Ants Leetmaa. Leetmaa is credited with making the first accurate forecast of a new environmental phenomenon: El Niño, a term that adapts the Spanish nickname for Jesus used by Peruvian fishermen to describe this very weather pattern. The Son of God had indeed returned to Earth and did in fact routinely call down the wrath of the heavens upon us, but on science's terms this time.

El Niño is now an accepted part of the meteorological and cultural pantheon, whereas Robertson's occasional summoning of the medieval Christian God provokes media ridicule. When Robertson and Falwell both noted that the attacks of 9/11 occurred because their God was angry with America's indulgence of homosexuality and abortion, and consequently had lifted His "veil of protection" for America as His most special place, the denunciations were so fierce that Robertson distanced himself from Falwell, and Falwell lamely retreated from his own belief.

(Neither of them has interpreted heavenly signs lately, despite many golden opportunities to do so: during the buildup to the Iraq War, the shuttle *Columbia*—carrying a Christian, a Jew, and a Hindu—exploded. A few weeks before the invasion, a plane carrying Governor Jeb Bush of Florida was struck by lightning, blowing a hole in one of the wings. Shortly after the invasion itself, the heavens descended with a sandstorm that stopped the war for several days and that elderly Iraqis described as the worst they had ever seen. When it lifted, and British prime minister Tony Blair flew to Washington, lightning blasted his plane, prompting an emergency landing. The logorrheic Falwell, for once, was speechless.)

Organized religions seem enraged these days, all over the world. Scriptures are brandished like swords. Talk of apocalypse is in the air. Secret cabals hope to use the power of government to prompt the rapture. It may be millennial fallout, or the end of the world may actually be imminent. But there may also be another reason for all the noise. According to a comprehensive survey by The City University of New York in 2001, as well as other studies, organized religion in America is in trouble. The number of people identifying themselves as Christian is dropping one percent per year. And regular attendance at services, that is, people who give money—the more important number to organized religion—has plunged from 49 percent in 1991 to 36 percent by 1996. A lot of the action that is interpreted by the mainstream media as a return to faith has been a clamorous shift from the lame liberal theologies to the more righteous infuriated evangelisms. As marketing experts would put it, these shifts don't show any new product introductions, just some changes in brand identification. With one exception: the most rapidly growing religious niche—most of whose adherents are under thirty—goes by the demographic rubric "No Religion," ranking as the third largest cohort after Catholics and Baptists.

It may seem as if a growing multitude is marching to Jerusalem, their heads high, in a bold show of faith. Then again, all the noise may be coming from a dwindling band slouching to Washington, their hands out, for a mess of desperately needed pottage called "faith-based initiative."

IX. The Book of the Dead, Again



LD cynical priests (they're easier to find now than ever) like to tell you that you can judge a culture by looking at those moments people consider most sacred—birth, marriage, and death. Cynical priests, when they loosen their cassocks and have a scotch in hand, refer to their life's work as "hatching, matching, and dispatching."

It's no secret that birth and marriage are both red-hot centers of contemporary public debate. Consider abortion, stem-cell research, disposal

fertilized eggs, postmortem inseminations, as ·ll as gay marriage, single motherhood, and w definitions of the "extended" family. All ese issues go right to the heart of an old religious ndard being threatened by science's unblink- g sense that these things aren't sacred in the way evious generations believed (stem cells are just lls; gayness might be nothing more than a ne). The emerging new sense of marriage is ılly just an acknowledgment that we couple e way Nature works: by the grace of selection d the miracle of contingency.

The place where you can see the real effect the environmental paradigm on the sacred is th the disposition of the dead body. Its place the pantheon of the sacred was once prima-

The dead bodies of saints held magical wer. The ritual of putting a dead relative into e ground had to be done with care, because ıen the day of reckoning occurred, just like us, he'd come back to recycle his old body. rly concerns with amputations centered ound the fear that the limb would be missing en in heaven. In the nineteenth century, ough, with the development of surgery, the ed for cadavers created a popular fight that als our current abortion clash. In the pursuit science, Dickensian doctors employed grave bers even as official clergydom wailed about e consequences of abandoning the sanctity of e body.

In time, though, we cut a deal—abandoning e body in return for the benefits science uld reap from it. First, bodies became tools surgeons to learn from; now they are ware- uses of potential organs, skin, bone, and all nner of other tissue. Increasingly, we see the ad body as nothing more than inanimate sh. We consider it a noble act to donate the l coil to science, to be dismantled by medical idents. We agree to plunder it, right at the int of death, for living organs. This shift is rly recent. Some religions still prohibit organ nation, but most of the mainstream ones ve agreed to approve of it, almost without cognizing what's happened: we have resancti- d the body, on science's terms. Donation is w widely considered a more noble act than rial. "The greatest gift," says the family of the ild who receives the donated organ. But at's not all they're saying.

Among the growing class of organ recipients, ries circulate that the habits of the dead donee e on in the body of the grateful host. "Actu- y, I'm dying for a beer right now," said middle- ed housewife Claire Sylvia when she got out the Yale–New Haven Hospital. She had re- ived the heart and lungs of an eighteen-year-old boy who had died in a motorcycle accident. Her book, *A Change of Heart*, introduced a new kind of story to the public—the literal resurrection of the dead.

Meanwhile, the entire elaborate ritual of preserving the body—the formaldehyde, the clothes, the ornate coffins with mattresses and box springs and decorations—is now understood as part of an ancient fiction that we can slowly let go. Beginning in the 1960s, the shift toward cremation took off. But now even cremation, so reminiscent of chimneys belching pollution, is being shunted aside.

Billy Campbell runs Memorial Ecosystems in Westminster, South Carolina. His idea is radical in its simplicity. He just buries the body, and not much else. I have been corresponding with Campbell for a while, hoping to see one of these new funerals. "FYI," he wrote me in an email recently, "we are having a burial in the next couple of days—a guy from near Orlando, who died of cancer. Wants to be buried in his poncho."

Simply put, you are wrapped in a sheet (or your favorite poncho) and put into the ground to immediately decay. The great reward is no longer a chance to physically reclaim the old body on the day of rapture but (perhaps after donating your best organs to science) literally to be composted in the bowels of the earth. Often folks request that the sapling of a favorite tree be planted above them. The detritus of the body begins at once a process of reconstitution, becoming something as simple, literal, and inarguably good as a tree. There's a cleanliness to it, a purity. It feels right, in part, because it makes sense as an idea. It's the ultimate in recycling. But that word practically bangs and clatters in its new context, doesn't it? Maybe at some later date it won't seem so contrived to say it and hear allusions to resurrection.

We live in end times, all right. But it's not the end of the world that's coming; it's the declining power of the sacred word to reach our hearts as something other than shibboleth. Elsewhere new words appear in the culture and assume a subtle power, one that begins to feel like truth. For now, we might not be able to hear the fullness of their meanings or foresee the ripe possibilities of their future connotations. *Compost. Global warming. Off the grid. Pollution. Renewable. Tree-sitting.* Just words, literal in meaning, only now accruing layers of associations. But where does any idea start? For the answer, let us now turn to the Gospel of the Lord, as revealed by John, when he wrote, "In the beginning was the Word." ■



Lighting Technology for eye comfo

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The balanced spectrum floor lamp will chan the way you see and feel about your living o work spaces.

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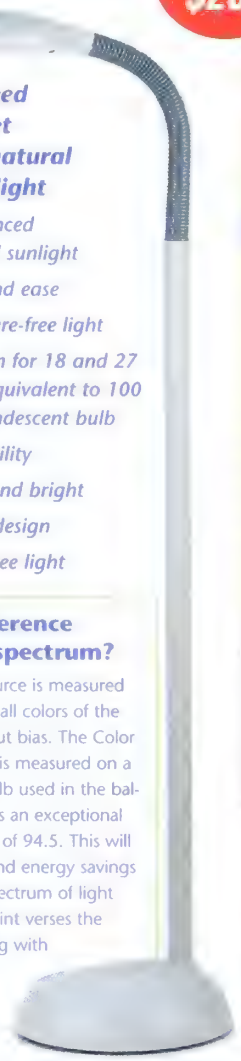

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Its 27-watt compact bulb is the equivalent to a 150-watt ordinary light bulb. This makes it perfect for activities such as reading, writing, sewing and needlepoint, and especially for aging eyes. For artists, the balanced spectrum floor lamp can bring a source of natural light into a studio, and show the true colors of a work. This lamp has a flexible gooseneck design for maximum efficiency and a dual position control switch for 18 and 27 watts of power, with an "Instant On" switch that is flicker-free. The high fidelity electronics, ergonomically correct design, and bulb that lasts five times longer than an ordinary bulb make this product a must-see.

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CHRONICLE OF A WAR FORETOLD

On the move with Ahmad Chalabi, the man who would be king

By Charles Glass

Photographs by Don McCullin

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2002, LONDON

A headline on a newspaper outside the Metropole Hotel, where factions of the Iraqi opposition are convening this week, declares: "Troops Start Countdown to War." One can feel the expectation among the exiles, hundreds strong, in the hotel's lobbies and cafés. War is coming, and on its winds they will be carried back to Iraq, where they imagine they'll govern. But among the turbaned mullahs and dark-suited Arabs and Kurds are the men from Washington: State Department, Defense, White House, and CIA are all here, conspiring in corridors. On the fourteenth floor, George W. Bush's special envoy to the Iraqi opposition, Zalmay Khalilzad—fresh from his king-making exercise in Afghanistan—pulls the strings of the Iraqi marionettes below.

This, a sign says, is "The Iraqi Opposition Conference, London, 14–16 December 2002. For Democracy and Salvation of Iraq." It's a bit of the Middle East in England, so the conference begins late and with a recitation from the Koran. On a dais before the 320 delegates are the



MARKETPLACE, ERBIL, NORTHERN IRAQ

principal figures of the Iraqi opposition: Jalal Talabani, Massoud Barzani, Abdul Aziz al-Hakim, and Ahmad Chalabi. Talabani and Barzani, who represent the two main Kurdish parties, are the only Iraqis here who can be said to govern any part of their country. They fought a civil war from 1993 to 1996 and divided Iraqi Kurdistan into two, Barzani running the northwest, Talabani the southeast. Abdul Aziz al-Hakim and his older brother, Ayatollah Mohammed Baqir al-Hakim, head the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI). Supported by Iran, they represent much of Shiite Muslim religious sentiment in Iraq. The fourth, Ahmad Chalabi, runs the Iraqi National Congress (INC). He represents . . . what he represents is not clear. He is a Shiite Muslim exile, a brilliant mathematician, a banker who was convicted *in absentia* of fraud in Jordan, a secular democrat, and the Iraqi whom most of the new crowd at the Pentagon like. He is also the best-dressed man here, smooth-faced and short, in a tie that is pure silk and a suit that looks Savile Row. His record of opposing Saddam Hussein, going back to when Saddam exercised power through the nominal president, Ahmad Hassan al-Bakr, is more consistent than that of any other politician. The State Department and the CIA have their own man, Iyad al-Allawi, and disparage Chalabi.

Outside, some fifty demonstrators chant and hold signs: "Bush and Blair Will Murder Thousands for Oil" and "We Demand an End to Western Interference in the Islamic World."

Charles Glass's review "The First Lies Club" appeared in the January issue of Harper's Magazine.

All photographs © 2003 Don McCullin/Contact Press Images

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2002

A young Kurdish journalist takes me aside to tell me what happened during the night. At three in the morning a delegate stormed out of one of the working committees saying, "I cannot work with these people." Then, he says, "Khalilzad sat between Talabani and Barzani all day, hearing the words 'federalism' and 'Kurds' from every speaker. But Khalilzad never said 'federalism' or 'Kurds.' It is worrying." The Kurds fear that the United States will sell them out by taking away their autonomy and letting a new pro-American regime in Baghdad restore direct rule.

Khalilzad addresses the assembly. My friend is right. He mentions neither the Kurds nor the federal structure they demand. "Today," he says to the delegates, "the free Iraqis are here to liberate their country from a brutal dictatorship." He pauses to allow an Arabic translation. "I see many old friends, committed Iraqi patriots." This goes on and on, until he concludes in the new White House style, "God bless the people of Iraq."

When an Assyrian Christian addresses the conference, the Chaldean Christians walk out. Their dispute dates to A.D. 1550, when the Chaldeans went with Rome and the Assyrians remained with the Orthodox Church. They tend to hate each other more than they do the Muslims. All of the Iraqis are fractious, and they take their differences to Bush's man, Khalilzad, for mediation.

The delegates are going to choose a smaller group to meet next month in Salahuddin, northern Iraq. They cannot agree on the number of delegates, who they should be, or the percentage of seats that should be given to each party. SCIRI is demanding 40 percent of the seats. Talks continue all night. And the leader of this new body? One delegate says, "Whoever he is, he should be decent. So that lets Chalabi out." Another tells me that the Iraqi opposition are in accord on only one thing: they do not like Ahmad Chalabi. This, he says, gives Chalabi the advantage over them all.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 30, 2003, NORTHERN IRAQ VIA TEHERAN, IRAN

At 3:00 A.M. I am up for a rendezvous with the INC in the Shohreh Palace Hotel in north Teheran. Chalabi and his young daughter Tamara, who has just finished her Ph.D. in history at Harvard, are staying in a government guest palace with their bodyguards. They meet us at Teheran's domestic airport. Chalabi is wearing brown tweeds and snow boots that he bought in Teheran. His daughter is uncomfortable in her chador. When we pass a sign that reads, "Hijab is like shell for a pearl," she is not convinced.

The 6:00 A.M. flight to Urumieh takes an hour. At the clean, provincial airport, Iranian officials greet Chalabi as if he were a head of state. Flunkies carry the luggage to vans outside, and local dignitaries invite the Chalabi entourage to drink tea.

I assume we will head straight to the border, but I am mistaken. Chalabi's Revolutionary Guard hosts drive to their headquarters, where we remove our shoes and sit amid armed guardsmen to have tea, bread, sweet water-buffalo cheese, and honey. One of the INC people complains that, the night before, Zalmay Khalilzad called Abdul Aziz al-Hakim of the SCIRI but not Chalabi.

Back in the cars, we head through town and up the snowy mountain. Climbing for over an hour, we reach the last Iranian town, Piranshahr, where we stop for lunch at a local restaurant. I have yet to digest breakfast. When the Iranians like you, as they seem to like Chalabi, they kill you with hospitality. It is not pleasant for Ahmad, whose dieting in the last few years has seen him drop about forty pounds that he does not want back. Chalabi's chief of operations, a young Kurd named Aras Karim, tells us what the border protocol will be. It is, he says, as if for a head of state, not that many ever cross this border. The Revolutionary Guards will stand to attention for Chalabi, salute, and hand him over to the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) on the Iraqi side.

We drive on icy roads out of the rough breeze-block border town and into open country, past smugglers leading cigarette-laden donkeys up winding trails. The Land Cruisers [illegible] cend a desert of snow, where you [illegible] drive all day without seeing a tr[illegible] At the border we see nine Iranian [illegible] diers standing at attention, shiver[illegible] in their flimsy camouflage fatigu[illegible] white tunics, and white spats. Th[illegible] salute Ahmad, who shakes the ha[illegible] of Iranian dignitaries and poses [illegible] photographers. The last pictures [illegible] see are of Ayatollah Khomeini a[illegible] his successor, Khamenei.

We drive on the Hamilton Ro[illegible] built by British army engineers to c[illegible] trol the Kurds, winding along the ba[illegible] of coursing rivers through gorges th[illegible] shoot up to the sky and onto soft me[illegible] ows of late-winter earth awaiting wi[illegible] flowers. Our first stop is the village [illegible] Harir. Last night Chalabi said that t[illegible] United States had landed 300 Spec[illegible] Forces troops at Harir's airstrip to p[illegible] pare the way for 3,000 more. In t[illegible] valley below, beside a stretch of tarm[illegible] are white tents and a Humvee. "Co[illegible] here," Chalabi calls to me, standi[illegible] on the front steps of the local KDP [illegible] fice. "There are your compatriots." [illegible] American troops are present, they [illegible] not visible from the village. I wa[illegible] down to the end of town to get clos[illegible] but, without binoculars, cannot s[illegible] who is there.

Near sunset our convoy reaches [illegible] destination, the mountain resort [illegible] Salahuddin. It is headquarters to Ma[illegible] soud Barzani, his tribe, and his KD[illegible] members of which usher Chalabi a[illegible] his delegation into a dingy recepti[illegible] room. There we sit, backs to the wa[illegible] facing coffee tables laden with banan[illegible] sodas, apples, and tea. We wait. W[illegible] wait a little longer. If Ahmad Chala[illegible] has left Iran like a king, he is enteri[illegible] Massoud Barzani's Iraqi Kurdistan li[illegible] a pauper. No one is here to welcon[illegible] him: no Barzani, no semi-dignitary, [illegible] deranged cousin. Chalabi sits, qui[illegible] and restrained, but his friend Mudh[illegible] Shawkat is furious. He shouts at t[illegible] KDP guards. They cannot treat Al[illegible] mad Chalabi like this! He must be r[illegible] ceived by Barzani in his home at onc[illegible] A KDP official pulls out a telephor[illegible] and leaves the room. Later he retur[illegible] to announce that our group of twent[illegible] six is to be separated, some to gues[illegible] houses in Salahuddin, some to a hot[illegible] in Salahuddin, and two—Zaab Sethn[illegible] the INC spokesman, and me, th[illegible]



AHMAD CHALABI IS GIVEN ASSISTANCE WITH HIS HEAD SCARF, TALLIL AIR DEFENSE BASE, SOUTHERN IRAQ

ıly journalist—down the hill to the ty of Erbil. It is a hierarchical plan, ce seating at a queen's banquet, and e journalist is as far down table as ssible without finding himself in the tchen. Actually, I suppose Erbil *is* e kitchen.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 31, 2003,
SALAHUDDIN, NORTHERN IRAQ

At Massoud Barzani's guesthouse, Chalabi and the INC's inner circle are enjoying the luxury of KDP ospitality. The Kurdish chief is attempting to make up for the insult of eir arrival. I stand around until udhar Shawkat takes me outside, vay from indoor recording devices.

A Sunni Muslim and once head of ı INC rival, the Iraqi National ovement, Shawkat is now a devot- Chalabi loyalist. He says the opsition is going to declare a provi- onal government. This is precisely hat the United States has told em not to do. There will be a leadship council, Majlis as-Siadi, with seven to eleven members. The provisional government will have twenty-one ministers with Ahmad as prime minister. Ahmad will discuss the idea with Barzani at seven o'clock this evening. Tomorrow he will seek the agreement of Jalal Talabani, head of the other Kurdish movement, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), and Barzani's rival. The Hakims of SCIRI already support the idea. Bush's man, Zalmay Khalilzad, is coming in four days, and the opposition groups hope to present the Americans with a *fait accompli*. The problem, Shawkat believes, is over federalism for the Kurds. Turkey, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the United States do not want a federal Iraq. "Don't use this, Charlie," he asks. "It's too delicate. Keep it off the record." While we talk outside, Ahmad is inside telling an AP reporter the same thing, albeit in less detail, on the record. I suspect the Americans do not much care what these Iraqis do.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2003,
ASHUR HOTEL, LAKE DOKAN,
NORTHERN IRAQ

If Barzani's welcome left a bitter taste, Jalal Talabani's is a wedding feast. He seems to be making a point of treating the INC better. The PUK caravan of unmatched cars meets us on the barren hills before Khoi and takes our party—Chalabi's delegates, advisers, bodyguards, et al.—along the rough road through magnificent mountain passes and over the plain to the Dokan Dam. At Lake Dokan, Talabani kisses and hugs Ahmad and some of the entourage. In a reception room above the lake, the PUK serve tea. The two parties, Talabani's and Chalabi's, sit in a rectangle of chairs to listen to Talabani laugh and tell jokes. Always smiling, he is a large, good-natured man who eats too much and lacks pretension. Massoud Barzani is more or less his opposite. Quiet, withdrawn, ascetic, almost shy, he is younger than Tala-



MARKETPLACE IN SULAIMANIYAH, NORTHERN IRAQ

bani. Barzani leads the movement and the tribe he inherited from his father. Talabani left the KDP to form what he called a more modern, non-tribal party. He tends to attract the middle classes, the educated, and those who have lived overseas. The Barzanis depend on feudalists, farmers, and herders.

After lunch a few of us drive up the mountain to see the holiday lair of Ali Hassan al-Majid, who conducted the genocide operation against the Kurds in the late 1980s and earned the name Chemical Ali. From the front porch of a vulgar and small round house, he must have watched the Kurds then like some Roman proconsul at Carthage. His view was all the better for the trees he removed and the houses he destroyed. "They made a desert and called it peace," Tacitus wrote. Zaab says it is like Berchtesgaden. The PUK's military chief, Kosrat Rasul, owns the house now, and he is going to lend it to Ahmad if he wants it.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2003, PALACE HOTEL, SULAIMANIYAH, NORTHERN IRAQ

Ahmad has vanished for "secret" talks with Massoud Barzani, Jalal Talabani, and Abdul Aziz al-Hakim somewhere on the KDP side of Kurdistan. This gives his family and colleagues a respite from banquets. He hopes to return with an agreement on the transitional government with seven or eleven elders and a cabinet of twenty-one.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2003

Today, Mudhar Shawkat tells me he is in touch with Sunni officers of the Iraqi army, who say they want contact with Ahmad. We discuss his war plans, and he says the INC is building an armed force to go into Baghdad. "We must be in Baghdad," he says. He assures me that when the advance begins my ABC crew and I can con with them.

At dinner I sit next to the beard Nibros Kazimi, an American-rais Iraqi who works for the INC in Was ington. He says, "I've spent five years Washington fighting the American a ministration. There is no institution difference between Clinton and Bus They do not want Iraqis involved Iraq. They do not listen. They will b defeated by Muslim fanatics."

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 20

The BBC World Service reports Pentagon announcement tha 110,000 U.S. troops are now in pos tion. Khalilzad has invited Chala to see him in Turkey. He also invi ed Barzani (who is sending his son Talabani, and the Turkish foreig minister. So while Baghdad an Washington exchange insults, th discussion on Iraq's future will co tinue in Turkey. Khalilzad has tol the Kurds and the SCIRI that th

nited States will not accept a pro-sional/transitional government, a deral Iraq, or Iraqi interference in merica's coming military adminis-ation. In the evening Zaab tells e that Ahmad will not meet alilzad in Turkey. He does not ant to receive the message the mericans gave the others. In-ead, he will visit Iran. The Irani-s, he says, will oppose the de-oyment of Turkish troops and merica's rejection of an Iraqi pro-sional government. He has to find pport somewhere.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2003

unch at the house of a local politi-cian, Omar Fattah, with most of e INC group. No one likes the deal e United States has made with rkey to allow a Turkish occupation the border areas. The snows are lting, laying bare the dull brown of e mountains. The Iraqis' desire for eration from tyranny blocks their w of what they should see beyond: nerican occupation, the exclusion of iqis from decisions on their fate, and sh-Cheney-Rumsfeld's long-term ans for the Middle East. Ahmad still vors an American invasion, be-use he believes he can outsmart em. "We are using the Ameri-ns," he says. "One hundred and ty thousand American soldiers e going to get rid of Saddam for " When I remind him that Amin emayel, who was president of banon, thought he was using the nericans in 1983, he says, "We e not a minority of Maronites. ok at us. We are on excellent ms with Iran and the people of q." Gemayel expected the Unit-States to protect him from Iran d most of the people of Lebanon, t it didn't.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2003

The INC people say that the KDP and PUK, who were the ly Iraqis there, briefed them on e Turkey meetings. Khalilzad is d to have proposed an Ameri-n military government with an iqi board of advisers, a judicial mmission chosen by the United ites to write a constitution, a con-tutional convention with elected delegates to ratify the constitution, and American advisers in each ministry. "Maybe they'll design the flag," Kanan Makiya says. He's an academic and author whose book *Republic of Fear* (written under the pseudonym Samir al-Khalil) exposed Saddam's crimes to the Western world before the United States cut its support for him. "It is an unmitigated disaster from the point of view of the United States itself," he goes on. "Here you had an Iraqi opposition, doing something no Arab opposition group had ever done. It worked hand in glove with the U.S. It openly took money. It isolated itself in the region."

"We broke the language," Makiya continues. "We said Palestine is not the be-all and end-all. We said dictatorship is. The INC's declared position is for democracy and federalism, and has been for many years. It worked closely as part of an opposition of Kurds, Assyrians, and others. It has its failings, sure. It sits on 20 percent of Iraqi territory. The whole of this legacy is being tossed aside. And these people"—he means all of the INC people around us—"are going to have to oppose the United States the day after." The day after means after Saddam. "And the U.S. is driving us to use that old crappy language of anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism." Makiya's distress is visible, as if a lover had discarded him. "So, I think they've decided to lose the opposition."

If not to these Iraqi opponents of Saddam, where will the Americans look for Iraqis to govern Iraq?

"The U.S. is going to use the existing structures of power. The regime will remain intact: the institutions, the organizing structures. They're back to the politics of '91 with the exception that they know now a coup doesn't work. And it's the same people who wanted a coup in '91." He coins a phrase for what the Americans may be seeking: "Saddamism without Saddam." The United States, he believes, does not really care. "I told the president and Condi Rice, 'Let the Iraqis make their own mistakes. The Americans should not run the streets.'"

Mudhar Shawkat interrupts, "They will be surprised at how much support we have."

With Mudhar and Zaab, I ride over to Ahmad's new safe house in town. He is having a late breakfast. Workmen are buzzing about to make the concrete bungalow cozy. Ahmad, dressed in a gray jacket and blue tie, is relaxed and, as ever, buoyant. It is as if he is immune to Makiya's pessimism. "I haven't heard the plan directly. In fact, I haven't heard from the Americans since the middle of last month."



KURDISH REFUGEE FROM THE '91 WAR, ERBIL, NORTHERN IRAQ

SUNDAY, MARCH 9, 2003

The Voice of America announces that Bush is pushing for a U.N. resolution setting a March 17 deadline for war. In Dokan, Jalal Talabani and Massoud Barzani meet for most of the day at the Ashur Hotel. Chalabi is not part of their internal Kurdish machinations. By late afternoon, they give a long-awaited press conference to announce they are combining their forces to meet any Turkish threat. They are also opening more party offices in each other's territory. Talabani ends the conference, "See you in Baghdad."

Meanwhile, Francis Brooke, an INC representative in Washington,

has arrived. A Virginian and a Christian fundamentalist, he is a fountain of glowing quotes. When we meet, I tell him the Kurds just said they were combining their two forces to face Turkey. "Great," he says. "They can run away together." A few minutes later he says, "As far as I'm concerned, Syria's next. When they say Perle and these guys like Wolfowitz want to get Syria, they're right. These guys are my friends, and I know." Fair-haired, tall, nearing forty, all he wants is a cold beer.

THURSDAY, MARCH 20, 2003

Five forty-five A.M. local time. The London desk calls to inform me that the bombing of Baghdad has begun: "Ari Fleischer is about to go to the podium." I play with the idea of returning to sleep. My source had said the war would not begin until tomorrow at 6:00 P.M. While dressing, I watch the BBC: static shot of a quiet Baghdad morning. Fleischer says that the opening stage has begun.

SUNDAY, MARCH 23, 2003

For the first time since I came to Iraq, I suspect that there will be a northern front. The United States never needed it for military purposes, any more than it needs the British army. It wanted to involve Turkey, and thus NATO, for political reasons. NATO refuses to "protect" Turkey from Iraq, not that Turkey needs protecting from its militarily inferior neighbor, and Turkey won't let the Americans come overland into northern Iraq. So American forces will not conquer Kirkuk and Mosul and drive south to smite Tikrit [illegible] to connect with the southern offensive in [illegible]. When [illegible] Iraqis in the north surrender. What else will they be able [illegible] Despite Kurdish assurances, no planeloads of U.S. Special Forces or infantry arrived last night. The Kirkuk front is quiet.



FRIDAY, MARCH 28, 2003

The war [illegible] elsewhere, and there is not much for me to do. With the photographer Don McCullin, I drive up to the INC house in Dokan. We end up having dinner in the Ashur Hotel bar with an American colonel, Ted Seel; Francis Brooke; and some of the other INC people.

McCullin and Seel talk about Vietnam, where McCullin took some of his most memorable photographs and Seel was in what he called, or the army called, helicopter observation. He flew as close to the ground as this—his hand sways a foot above a bowl of pistachios on the table. "And I could see them, just like I see you," he says. "Observation? It was assassination. You get used to it. We just shot them at close range. I didn't care anymore. Then I asked myself, was there anyone I would not kill?" He stops speaking, and we wait for the answer. I think he will swallow more whiskey—he is already through half a bottle of Teacher's—but he doesn't. He says, "No."

Francis Brooke says he would support the elimination of Saddam, even if every single Iraqi were killed in the process. He means it. "I'm coming from a place different from you," he says in the soft southern drawl one hears from preachers and con men. "I believe in good and evil. That man is absolute evil and must be destroyed." That Virginian voice honed itself for twelve years in Decatur, an Atlanta suburb, and mellowed in the corridors of Washington. But I don't know where the ideas come from. He says he believes in Jesus and in resurrection and in eternity. If all the Iraqis die, he says, they will live in eternity. But the "human Satan" must go, no m[illegible] what. Seel tells Brooke he canno[illegible] that far. Seel knows more about kil[illegible] than Brooke does.

TUESDAY, APRIL 1, 20[illegible]

A week has gone by with only sm[illegible]-scale, sporadic activity in [illegible] north. The BBC World Service rep[illegible] this morning that U.S. troops [illegible] a checkpoint in the south shot a [illegible] carrying thirteen women and childr[illegible]. Seven are dead and two are woun[illegible]. ABC has no interest in the north n[illegible]. It has too much combat footage fr[illegible] the south to bother with us.

The Special Forces and PUK giv[illegible] a joint press conference in Halabj[illegible] advertise their victory over a few hu[illegible]-dred Islamic irregulars. They belie[illegible] the Ansar operation is a model for j[illegible] attacks on Kirkuk and Mosul. Zaab[illegible] the Americans are getting ready to [illegible] nearly 700 INC volunteers to the sou[illegible]. This means that the INC may fin[illegible] see the war. They will let us know wi[illegible] in twenty-four hours whether we c[illegible] accompany them. I suspect an Ap[illegible] Fools' Day connection.

The INC, meanwhile, are not t[illegible] only volunteers in Iraq. Several hu[illegible]-dred are coming from Palestin[illegible] Yemen, Sudan, and Jordan to fight [illegible] Saddam.

THURSDAY, APRIL 3, 20[illegible]

At 7:00 P.M., Barham Saleh, t[illegible] PUK prime minister, gives [illegible] press conference on the hotel mezz[illegible] nine. Hacks who have nothing el[illegible] to do jam into the small receptio[illegible] room to listen to a bald politician [illegible] a blue suit and red tie. Saleh says th[illegible] "environment is one of flux. . . . W[illegible] had a meeting yesterday with Cha[illegible] abi and the United States. We a[illegible] working from the same sheet of m[illegible] sic." It is no surprise that he lived f[illegible] years in Washington. "The PUK wi[illegible] not move against Kirkuk as Kurdis[illegible] fighters [but] as the Iraqi oppositio[illegible] and in tandem with the U.S. W[illegible] and the KDP have decided not t[illegible] wage any unilateral military actio[illegible] It must be in the context of the driv[illegible] to Baghdad. It requires consultatio[illegible] between the Iraqi opposition and th[illegible] U.S. . . . We don't have representa[illegible]tives in Doha, but we have Amer[illegible] can officers here. We need to oper[illegible]



AHMAD CHALABI DINING WITH TRIBAL SHEIKHS. HIS DAUGHTER, TAMARA, IS SEATED TO HIS LEFT. AT HER LEFT IS MUDHAR SHAWKAT. AT THE FAR RIGHT IS COL. TED SEEL. NASIRIYAH, SOUTHERN IRAQ

te as the Iraqi opposition. Baghad's fate cannot be settled by the urds alone. We have a deliberate olicy decision to act as Iraqis, to ıove to overthrow the dictatorship. . . We have one single objective: aghdad. We might as well claim ur part of this country, and to do ıat we need to be in Baghdad."

Most Kurds, I know, want an independent Kurdistan. Because urkey, Iran, and the Arabs will ot allow them to have what they ant, they'll take a Kurdish state ithin an Iraqi republic. So they ıy. But how will they get to Baghad? Will the Arabs of the capital elcome the baggy-trousered warors who have fought against Iraq nce its birth?

FRIDAY, APRIL 4, 2003

Baghdad is falling, and we are stuck here north of the war. ımerican forces are all over Saddam ıternational Airport, as the televion pictures are showing. Just when I fear we have missed the war, Zaab calls. "Come to Dokan," he says. "We're leaving. You can go tomorrow." If Barham Saleh is right about cooperation between the Iraqi opposition and the United States, the deployment of Chalabi's volunteers could be a replica of the Kurdish-American cooperation against Ansar, the Kurds' own Taliban-style Islamicist militia, whom they wiped out a few days ago.

At the INC safe house, enthusiasm for battle is uncontained. A new checkpoint of armed men and oil drums guards the entrance to the driveway. Men in uniforms, carrying AK-47s, parade about the concrete yard. A few American officers are among them. Inside, the usual INC tea drinkers slouch on stuffed chairs watching Al Jazeera.

Zaab says that the airport we are flying to is near Nasiriyah and is now called George W. Bush Jr. International Airport. The INC is taking seven hundred men south to join the Americans. Shades of Davy Crockett heading to the Alamo with his Tennessee volunteers.

SATURDAY, APRIL 5, 2003, SULAIMANIYAH TO TALLIL AIR BASE, SOUTHERN IRAQ

At the INC house at Lake Dokan, Zaab issues me and a few of my colleagues jungle camouflage uniforms and badges with numbers that he says we must wear in order to get on the plane. (In the event, we don't put on the uniforms, and no one notices.) He tells us that the INC's "troops" are at a "muster point" just outside town. They are assembling to board buses to take them to the airport at Harir. We drive there to film and find them fighting among themselves. They wear identical fatigues, but they are not singing from the same sheet of music. Northerners and southerners, Kurds and Arabs, exiles and those who stayed, veterans of Saddam's army and veterans of no army, they have their differences.

They are standing around on a big field, while buses stand empty waiting for a few of them to stop beating each other up. Just before we arrived, an officer tells us, one of them took a shot at another. U.S. Army Colonel Grosso says that there must not be any more problems. He cannot allow men onto American transport planes with weapons. The planes are expensive. One more incident and he will recommend to his chain of command the cancellation of the flights. One of the INC men orders the "troops" to stand in queues, where U.S. Army soldiers frisk them and guide them onto the buses.

We drive up to Chalabi's lair, where the last sunlight of our stay in Kurdistan struggles to reach the lake through the mist. A guard in a sharp new uniform opens a gate, smiles, and salutes us. The first person I see in front of the house is Mudhar Shawkat. He is wearing khaki and carrying a weapon. "I left Baghdad on June 24, 1986," he says. "I'm going to Baghdad. We'll go straight there."

When Ahmad comes outside, the "troops" do a war dance around their new flag and cheer him. Ahmad bids farewell to the tribal chiefs, who have come to see him off. At dusk, we head west, with Ahmad's Land Cruiser in the lead.

The road moves up and down the hills, and headlights bring lone trees and bare villages into focus. After an hour, we reach the border. It is the point where the last PUK checkpoint faces the first KDP checkpoint. We stop in the town of Shaqlawa, where breezy kabob smoke flavors the air. Someone has just told Ahmad about an article in the *Washington Post* saying that the State Department opposes the interim Iraqi authority. At meetings, Rumsfeld and Bush apparently supported it. But, the report said, the Americans would not crown Chalabi as head of the authority. "Good," Ahmad says. "I don't want them to. It would be the kiss of death." So who will it be? He smiles. "They're still saying ABC: Anyone But Chalabi."

It is nearly midnight, and I wonder why we haven't left Shaqlawa for the air base. Beside the main road, the INC guards and officials are agitated. Ahmad and others are on their sat phones. Someone takes me aside. "Washington does not want Ahmad to go to Nasiriyah. The rest of us can go, but he must wait another twenty-four hours." He does not tell me who in Washington issued the diktat or why Chalabi shouldn't go. A half hour passes. Chalabi and Washington reach a compromise: the INC, including Chalabi, will fly to Nasiriyah as planned; but Chalabi should go on to Qatar for a quick meeting with General Tommy Franks before returning to Nasiriyah.

Our convoy resumes its journey. It is a half hour from Shaqlawa to the new U.S. checkpoint at Harir, where we wait for fifteen minutes at the barbed-wire entrance. An American officer with our convoy speaks to the sentries, and we start up again, now in the zigzag pattern through dirt obstacles that have become a feature of U.S. overseas bases since the destruction by suicide bomber of the Beirut Marine H.Q. in 1983. We rumble onto the tarmac. What was a bare strip of asphalt when I arrived here in January is now a massive American Air Force base, with tents, equipment stores, vehicles, and medical facilities. So many cars and Humvees are driving around the base that a woman soldier is directing traffic. This is at 2:00 in the morning.

There are two planes for the 280 INC troops. They are now officially the FIF, Free Iraqi Forces. The Americans have issued them shoulder patches and made them part of the coalition of the willing. It is as dark inside the plane as out when we take off at 3:35 A.M.

Ahmad's men gradually stretch out along the floor, as they would in their villages where whole families sleep on the floor of one room. The flight is two hours, during which Ahmad listens to classical music on his headphones, removing himself as always from uncomfortable realities. For us this is the end of the northern front, of waiting, of Kurdistan. We land at a conquered airfield, the Tallil Air Base, 190 miles south of Baghdad.

SUNDAY, APRIL 6, 200
TALLIL AIR DEFENSE BAS
SOUTHERN IR

We unload our equipment a pile it onto a pallet. We sta in the hot sun, waiting. The IN party should be joyous, but they a bewildered in this desolation. Is t what they have come home to?

After a short trip we arrive what was, until the United Stat Air Force destroyed it in 1991, t Tallil Air Defense Base, about fo miles away. At the gate, a your Iraqi in a FIF uniform waves through. Inside, the base is not base so much as a section of wast land. Its single-story brown buil ings have collapsed under the hea bombs. Wind is scattering san through its glassless windows. Ru ble lies everywhere, rubble and ru bish. Our trucks stop in the midd of it, and we unload the luggag Our boxes of water are missing.

In our five-room compound, a ha dozen FIF troops are already camped The only decoration is filth. Chala and his group have a large warehous a few hundred yards away. They ar already sleeping when we walk dow to see them. They must be dreamin of palaces in Baghdad. We go bac to our motor-pool barracks, wher the FIF troops are grumbling abou conditions.

Colonel Ted Seel comes over an explains that CENTCOM does no care for this mission. That is why i is providing no logistical support. I is then that I realize why our wate was taken. There isn't any on th base. Seel says that there are short ages of cars, trucks, and armored per sonnel carriers for the American forces, and they are a higher priority than the Free Iraqis. The supply o transport for U.S. forces is at leas two weeks behind schedule, he says.

FIF volunteers ask us for water "*may-ah*," if they are Arabs, "*av*," i they are Kurds. Some come with empty plastic bottles and hold them out forlornly. The pathos would be unbearable but for the fact that we have no water ourselves. Some of them have scavenged a bag of flour, but without water they cannot make bread. The ones who arrived yesterday have repaired some abandoned

aqi army trucks, but they dare not ive them off the base. If they do, e U.S. Marines on the roads will oot them. Seel says the Marines ve already shot one Special Forces ldier in the neck at a checkpoint, d he was in a U.S. Army Humvee. agine how they would react to a nch of uniformed Iraqis in an aqi army truck. "They," Seel says the Marines, "are scared and are lling people."

Mudhar Shawkat and some of the her INC people are angry about e conditions. Colonel Seel tries to lm them. He tells Ahmad and udhar that CENTCOM has a plan r them but it needs two days. "I lked to Wolfowitz today," he says. he CIA was convinced that we'd ver get here, but we got here. Be- re we can be integrated into the r plan, those guys over there" (he eans a Special Forces A-Team o are stationed with us) "have to ll the Combined Forces Land mponent commander—" Mud- r, the most vocal of the Chalabi crew, interrupts him. Seel, sounding more like a New Age psychologist than an army colonel, tells him, "I'm trying to help you get your frustration into focus."

It is dark, and someone has found some fuel to get a generator going. They have hooked up an arc light, and it shines from the front door of the warehouse where the senior INC people are living. Mudhar takes me outside the perimeter of light to confide that he wants to go with fifty armed men and "take" Nasiriyah.

MONDAY, APRIL 7, 2003

In the morning, Chalabi takes a power walk with his permanent companions, his Thoraya phone and his bodyguards. When he is finished, he sits outside and drinks tea. The water has finally arrived, during the night, thanks to a returned Iraqi exile who has a vast family and tribal network in the south.

"They've got enough supplies for 10,000 people on the base," Chalabi says, referring to the U.S. forces, "and this is all we have." He points at the generator. "They said we wouldn't come." He sits on a concrete plinth sticking out from the warehouse. In the heat, he wears a black Hugo Boss T-shirt. I ask him about reports from Washington of Condoleezza Rice saying that the Iraqi Interim Authority will exclude him. "Condi Rice said it? The interim authority is irrelevant. Only the constituent assembly matters. It's not a big deal. There will be elections in two years. The interim authority cannot influence elections. The important thing is to make the constitution go right." He thinks again about Condi Rice. "She thinks I'm waiting to be crowned? I don't want to be crowned by her."

The sun is hiding behind a relentless sheet of windblown sand. The horizon is a permanent beige, and it makes people nervous. On this, our second day, visitors begin coming to the court of Chalabi. First an Iraqi soldier who has deserted. Then a tribal chief in a light robe. While he



AHMAD CHALABI WALKING WITH BODYGUARDS FROM THE FREE IRAQI FORCES, TALLIL AIR DEFENSE BASE, SOUTHERN IRAQ

meets his potential supporters, U.S. troops arrive from Tallil in full battle dress, with flak jackets, helmets, and rifles. Five of them march up to us and announce that they intend to do [illegible] all the [illegible]. No one will say why.

TUESDAY, APRIL 8, 2003

Ted Seel says he could not sleep all night in the warehouse, where twenty men were snoring. When he sees another officer, he says, "I got about an hour's sleep last night, because these motherfuckers were moving around all night shouting at each other. So if you want to move over there"—with his fellow Americans in the Special Forces—"you should."

The Free Iraqi Forces begin training this morning. Two platoons of thirty-six men—aged from nineteen to fifty—stand at ease on a dirt road between the Special Forces house and ours. Ten U.S. soldiers are talking with Hamid Shraeder, a former Republican Guardsman who has joined Chalabi's army. More sheikhs, all in desert robes and kaffiyehs, gather to see Ahmad. They seem glum. Perhaps liberation is not what they had hoped. Ahmad tries to assure them, but no one on the American side assures him of anything.

FRIDAY, APRIL 11, 2003, TALLIL AIR DEFENSE BASE TO UMM QASR, SOUTHERN IRAQ

In all Ahmad's time up north and down here, he has never addressed a crowd. Today, he will. He expects about a thousand people for a speech he is delivering at the governorate in Nasiriyah. We leave at 10:20 in a long convoy of passenger vans and Special Forces Humvees. We arrive in Nasiriyah before noon. On the wide boulevards, a few children wave at our convoy. Most of the adults ignore us. The Humvees are obviously American, but people may wonder who the Free Iraqi Forces are. As we go closer to the center, the roads narrow and more people crowd the streets. Most of the shops are open now, and people are smiling. Some wave at the convoy, including adults. "That's right," Francis Brooke says from the front seat. "Wave. These are my friends." He does not know them, their language, their beliefs, their worries, their names. People approach our car and demand the same thing: electricity.

A crowd masses around the convoy. Men are standing ten and twenty deep on the sidewalks. This is the governor's headquarters, still charred from the war. The guards rush Ahmad around some eucalpy[illegible] trees to the back of the buildi[illegible], clearing a path through the mass of people. A religious sheikh, who h[illegible] driven with Ahmad from the ba[illegible], addresses the crowd in back. A f[illegible] hundred young men, most of wh[illegible] seem to know him, are cheering.

Ahmad may have expected a thousand, but there are two or th[illegible] times that many. They are shout[illegible] and waving their arms. Ahmad s[illegible] addressing them through a bullho[illegible] from the apex of an outside sta[illegible] case. I hear the words in Arab[illegible], "Your government. Your count[illegible] Your Iraq." These are t[illegible] phrases they want to he[illegible] The megaphone carries h[illegible] voice all the way back, hu[illegible] dreds of yards to the river a[illegible] the edge of the crowd of me[illegible] They chant, "By our blood, our souls, we will die for y[illegible] O Iraq!" Until now in Ira[illegible] that traditional Arabic mant[illegible] ended with, "O Saddam."

Ahmad is still speaking wh[illegible] suddenly there are two loud e[illegible] plosions from the other side the Euphrates. The crowd i[illegible] nores them and goes on chee[illegible] ing and listening. Then it sto[illegible] for a moment. I see, comi[illegible] from the left, another group men, perhaps another thousa[illegible] of them. They look much lik[illegible] those already here, but the chant is different. Some a[illegible] beating their chests. I listen a[illegible] hear the words, "*Ya Husayn. Y[illegible] Husayn!*" Among them are tu[illegible] bans, looking as if they hav[illegible] come from the mosque with th[illegible] name of their ancient Shii[illegible] martyr on their lips. The tw[illegible] crowds melt into one witho[illegible] conflict.

Concentrating on th[illegible] crowd, I do not realize th[illegible] Ahmad has stopped speakin[illegible] I go back into the buildin[illegible] and see him pressed against[illegible] wall by his guards. They a[illegible] holding his new supporte[illegible] back and trying to make way out for him. Mudha[illegible] pulls out a pistol, and th[illegible] guards hold up their AK-47 No one fires. The crowd







AHMAD CHALABI SPEAKING IN NASIRIYAH, SOUTHERN IRAQ (TOP). CITIZENS WELCOMING CHALABI (BOTTOM)



WOMEN RETURNING FROM PRAYER, NEW HALABJA, NORTHERN IRAQ

t threatening Ahmad, but the
ards rush him down the stairs at a
n. Ahmad tries to stop, to greet
ne of his admirers, but they won't
him. At the door, they push
ough the young men still massed
he back. They force Ahmad into
car and tell the driver to leave.
t the religious crowd that came
e was not threatening him or his
porters. This was the first time
st of them had ever been to a
y that had not been organized by
Baath Party or Saddam's securi-
ervices. They were in a receptive
od, and most looked like they
re enjoying the gathering. This is
en, I think, Ahmad should have
en control of his guards and of
crowd. But he and the crowds
finding their way in the new
q, and no one is sure yet quite
w to behave. It is hard for him,
doubt, after a lifetime in exile,
d for them after a lifetime during
ich one man controlled every
t of their lives.

THURSDAY, APRIL 10, 2003,
UMM QASR, SOUTHERN IRAQ

A fresh ABC crew arrives from Kuwait. The cameraman is Johnny Saunderson, a Northern Irish Protestant. We covered the war in Bosnia together. In 1993 he risked his life to drive me through a battle in Kiseljak to get me home in time for my daughter's First Communion. Standing on the roof of his Jeep, Johnny hands me down a camera case. He complains that he has been waiting for weeks in Kuwait to get into Iraq. "Story's over," he says. "Now they want me to do this guy who's gonna run Iraq."

"Ahmad Chalabi?"

"No."

"General Garner?"

"That's the one."

WEDNESDAY, MAY 14, 2003,
THE LONDON LIBRARY

For a few weeks, Garner is the one. Then it's an ambassador, Paul Bremer. And they may need someone after him, the way they kept changing generals to run Saigon. But give them time. They are getting the hang of it. They may yet look around State or Defense or the White House for someone to run Syria, then Iran. In fact, it might be a good idea to build a Colonial Service to run the world. You cannot trust the locals.

Friends call from Iraq to say that the Americans, as I saw around Nasiriyah, are relying on ex-Baathists to be their native administration—under American guidance. Here in the library I have come across a book by Thomas Lyell, *The Ins and Outs of Mesopotamia*, published in 1923. Lyell, one of the Garners or Bremers of his day, served in the civil administration that the British established in Iraq after their invasion in 1917. He wrote that a mullah in Karbala told the British civil commissioner, "'When a man pulls down a public latrine because it smells too bad, it is a mistake to build the new one with the same bricks!'" Lyell called the sheikh's observation "trite." The civil commissioner ignored his advice. ■

BEYOND BAGHDAD

Lost in the cradle of civilization

By Paul William Roberts

Dear Queen Earth
What keeps the rush
When all Sol's team
With the sun plain and sun
Lavishes on Saddam
With a million madmen?
Roughly translated, the latest popular chant

FREEDOM

The Iraqi people were free. And, first and foremost, freedom meant the freedom to loot. Driving around Baghdad in late June, that is a week in April, I saw handcarts, flatbed trucks, cars, mules, even baby strollers, laden with electronic items—generators, stereos, photocopiers, TVs, office carpets—from Saddam's palaces and the various luxurious outposts of the Baath Party nomenklatura. I saw a wheelbarrow piled high with cash. The banks were being looted. Admittedly, they contained only Iraqi dinars—you'd need the wheelbarrow to carry any serious amount—but I assumed that my mother had removed all the zeroes, I'd clothed myself in old bullion with a three-factor trailer, two Uzis by the way, and I also saw a shoot-out between rival robbers. It seems three brothers had not received their fair share of the loot and ended up killing one another.



Next up were the hospitals. Sister Barbara of the Dominican nuns who run the Al Hayat maternity hospital gave me a list of the items looted and for which the hospital is now in desperate need. It includes:

Fan-cooled
Operating theater cooling light
Operating table
Anesthetic machine with accessories
Stethoscopes
Set of obstetrics theater full sets of
head gear
medical gloves
Antiseptics
Antibiotics

All the generators, it seems, were the building and its patients.

BOMBS

"What am I to do?" asked Awad Jandis, a professor of engineering at Baghdad University. "I have nine persons in my family. Who will my salary? I hear from no one. No knows when university will open."

His students were due to pres their theses, but he did not know wh any of them were now, if they w alive or dead. It was a wasted year.

His house had also recently be demolished by a large bomb, wh shock waves had shattered the w dows of every house in a residen area half a mile square. Were th military installations or missile laun ers nearby?

"No, there was nothing military the area," he reported. "Nothing at a

The bomb was dropp at 11:45 A.M. Everyone w home. I imagined the bl must have been deafeni but Professor Jandis, the s entist, explained that at t center of an explosion y hear nothing, because t sound waves travel outwa There had merely beer tremendous shuddering the building cracked ap around them. I could r recall ever having heard th fact about the sound wav before, but, of course, o tends not to encount many people able to test on the subject.

What seemed most remarkable w that of the ten people home only or a son, sustained any serious injuri To explain this miracle, the profess had come up with something like equation that combined the various cations of family members at the tim of impact with the reasons for the precise whereabouts. The solution

equation, though, was somewhat scientific: "God. Only the God do this."

God had clearly devoted so much to positioning the Fardis family ns that He had been unable to de- a similar scheme for the professor's er and her family in the adjacent se. Of thirteen people, two were d and eleven seriously injured.

Here are my books, my research, hopes and dreams," said the pro- or, indicating a charred pile of hard- ks, binders, and ashes. "What am I lo?" His eyes brimmed with tears, then he pulled himself ether.

We are a strong people. have seen many war nany. We will survive. will rebuild. And we ot nothing from the ket of America. We e our own oil and that be enough. Don't wor- or us."

OIL

eneral Al-Mokhfar and I are now in the business together. 're partners. He used get a concession from Oil Ministry of two million bar- a month. If he can get the same cession from the new Oil Min- y—when there is one—we will 2 percent of the profits, for the eral cannot travel to make deals, I can. No Iraqis can now leave . The so-called coalition has ed this country into a vast con- tration camp.

THE MEDIA

We were up at the U.S. Army's front line for the highway th. There had clearly been some nt and very heavy fighting go- on. The road was littered with ll casings, some of which punc- d our tire. As we stopped to re- it, I realized that what I'd taken e oil garbage was in fact the ckened corpse of a man whose er torso—arms, head—seemed ave melted into a tarlike pud Beyond him were more such h-fried humans. Many more. nauseating, somewhat sweet odor of dead human flesh permeated the air. Local villagers were doing their best to carry off the bodies, or body parts, to a hastily dug mass grave. The hard machines fared no better than the soft ones: Iraqi tanks, wherever I saw them, were charred, crumpled skeletons.

Limping down the highway toward us was a motley crew of men holding a black flag. They were neatly dressed in tracksuits but wore no shoes.

"Deserters from the Iraqi army!" announced the reporter for a leading Western newspaper. "They discarded



their boots so no one would realize they were Republican Guard."

I pointed out that the black flag and lack of shoes probably indicated Shia pilgrims on their way to Karbala for their grieve in—long banned by Saddam—to celebrate the martyrdom of Husayn, the Prophet's grandson. This Shia Easter was now unbanned and imminent.

"Well," said the reporter, "for readers of the _____, they're going to be deserting Iraqi soldiers now."

He instructed his photographer to capture these scenes of dispirited desertion.

But the moment we had retired to our rooms in the Al Arabee Tourism Apartments—whose rates had inflated 100 percent in three days—behind the Palestine Hotel, the reporter's editor back home decreed that the day's most important story was not deserting Iraqi troops. What readers wanted was an update on the state of "Stumpy."

"Stumpy" was the media term of endearment for a young boy named Ali, who, in a rare and unfortunate incident of collateral damage, had lost his entire family, both arms, and received severe burns on 35 percent of his body. Some days earlier Ali had been a celebrity victim—indeed, U.S. military spin doctors were encouraging the media to visit the hospital bed in legions, which created the impression that Ali was perhaps the *only* tragedy of collateral damage this war had produced. Had its chief architect, Donald Rumsfeld, not spoken, on March 21, of "the humanity" that now goes into the implementation of America's weapons of mass destruction?

But Ali's celebrity had swiftly waned. Bureau chiefs directed their ground troops to the wholly more appealing celebrity of the fetching Jessica Lynch, whose heroic story every reporter I discussed it with found dubious. For a start, her injuries were inconsistent with the shoot-out that allegedly caused them but were consistent with a crash rumored to have occurred as a result of careless military driving.

Either way, news audiences, it was believed, had tired of Stumpy. They wanted no more of him, let alone news of the hundreds of other Alis bleeding in the corridors of a dozen Baghdad hospitals whose contents had been looted and whose staffs were heinously overworked and totally unpaid.

Yet, it seems, readers of the were more moved by the plight of young Ali than readers elsewhere. A fund had been established to help compensate for his loss of arms and family.

So the reporter and his photographer were ordered to proceed immediately to the Saddam City hospital where the forgotten Stumpy still languished.

When they returned I was told that doctors were not optimistic about Stumpy's future.

"He's going to die of septicemia," said the reporter, mournfully.

It was not the story his editor wanted, but it *was* a story. The photographer went to work on his images of

ggraph of civilian attempting to extinguish fire in tire in ladi "Shimchi Murata PP"./Woodlin Camp/IPPI

the bereft boy, emailing them off to his photo editor. I had seen a few of the ones he sent. They were heartbreaking.

An hour later the photographer came to my room.

"Do you know what my editor asked me?" he said.

Naturally, I did not know.

"He said, 'Don't you have any of him smiling?'"

THE GOOD MAN OF SAMARRA

Samarra is a pleasant, sleepy little city 100 kilometers north of Baghdad whose chief claim to fame is a unique spiral minaret dating from the ninth century. The town in between Tikrit—Saddam's hometown—and Baghdad, Samarra was never exactly keen on Saddam or his Arab Stalinism.

Omar T. Ali al-Samarrai, to whom I had been introduced by mutual friends, had invited me to Samarra. By now I'd grown tired of the media circus around the Palestine Hotel—the events staged by the military for a gullible media—so I accepted. The journalists I knew said I was crazy to go alone, yet when I invited them to come along they refused.

There were no Americans in Samarra when I showed up there with Omar. The fact distressed him. Because Omar claimed to have done a courageous thing on behalf of the so-called Coalition: he had freed seven U.S. POWs—two pilots captured in Karbala and five soldiers taken during the fighting in Nasiriyah. The captives had been brought to Samarra by "Chemical" Ali Masjid, believed erroneously to have been killed in Basra. The orders from General Ali were to kill the POWs, but Omar had instead freed them and reported the fact to U.S. forces on April 11. One would have thought that his bona fides were established.

I expressed an interest in tracking down "Chemical" Ali, but he was protected by some twelve Syrian mercenaries and evidently moving from house to house in outlying villages. Even in Samarra there were many deeply indebted to the old regime and willing to hide the fugitive. Like all the fleeing Revolutionary Command Council members, Ali was rumored to be carrying hundreds of millions of dollars in cash, and even where tribal and blood ties run deeper than religion or politics, this buys you a lot of protection.

The stories I'd heard from "embedded" journalists were far better than the reports they sent their editors. I encouraged a few to write about their experiences for this magazine, but their reluctance proved the case against "embedding." The Pentagon's psychwarfare boys must feel truly vindicated: It's jailhouse psychology—the innocent man imprisoned with several hardened felons will inevitably bond with them. As Jimi Hendrix observed, "Loneliness is such a drag."

So I became "embedded." Dressed like an Arab I was more comfortable, for a start, and I was so inconspicuous that, with my rudimentary Arabic, most people assumed I was Omar's idiot nephew.

And Samarra proved an Aladdin's cave of intrigue. I'd interviewed Captain Abdullah Mohammed, who assured me Chemical Ali had come to him on April 9—nearly two weeks after his "death"—to have a stack of fake identity cards properly stamped, so I had little reason to doubt the veracity of Omar's intelligence sources in that area. Like Chemical Ali, Ahmed Hussein—Saddam's personal secretary—was also in town, hiding. So was "Comical" Ali—Information Minister Mohammed Saeed Sahhaf—reported earlier by the Iraqi press to have blown his brains out ("this is not a gun"). I'd heard the confession of one Mahi Atta, who, along with Ibrahim Alawi and two others, had allegedly buried alive some seventy-eight Kuwaiti civilians, mainly women and children, captured from a bus in 1990. Furthermore, Omar assured me that something very secret was located beneath Samarra's Shaheen Hotel. Exactly what it was he couldn't say. It turned out to be an Iraqi military communications facility. On top of this I had an interview with Tariq Aziz set up. By now my laptop had been stolen and I had $300 to my name in a land where credit cards are the subject of jokes.

Omar claimed to have planned, in 1995, an elaborate coup attempt against Saddam, which was nixed at the last minute by his wife's brot[her] the preeminent Iraqi dissident W[afiq] al-Samarrai, who had been base[d in] London since 1994. Before that, st[ar]ting in 1980, he had been Saddam's [di]rector of army intelligence.

Wafiq was due in town the next [day] to begin his leadership campaign [un]der the National Salvation Moven[ent] banner, and I persuaded Omar t[hat] Wafiq would be the ideal person f[or] whom to receive help in managing [an] information overload. It would su[r]ly boost his political clout to be involv[ed] in the capture of so many crimin[als] and the discovery of so many atrocit[ies].

THE AMERICANS

The visit with Wafiq was a b[ust]. Omar's brother-in-law, as it tur[ned] out, was less than enthusiastic ab[out] the P.R. opportunity. So we made [an] egregious mistake of approaching [a] U.S. Army 3rd Brigade Combat Te[am] which had finally arrived to initi[ate] date a city already prepared to f[ete] their presence and victory.

I don't know what it is ab[out] coiled razor-wire barriers with tan[ks] behind them, or about men a[nd] women not so much dressed as [de]decked for extreme danger and lac[k] down with the stuff of killing, [or] about those wraparound sunglas[ses] that all grunts seem to wear, but t[he] overall effect is both alien and lu[di]crous. Packed into the old Baa[th] Party headquarters in Samarra, t[he] U.S. Army looked very much like [a] bunch of poorly educated, ve[ry] scared post-teens from a dista[nt] planet, beamed down into what th[ey] believed to be very hostile terra[in] and absurdly over-armed.

"Hey!" shouted one of these cre[a]tures as I approached. "Stop rig[ht] there!"

The *dishdasha* and turban had [ob]viously thrown him, so I reached f[or] my *Harper's* press card, saying, "I[t's] okay, I'm a Brit journalist."

"I said, 'Stop,' fucker!" he growle[d], pointing his machine gun at me. "Y[ou] understand 'stop'?"

I nodded.

Another soldier appeared and ask[ed] me in an Arabic worse than my ow[n] what I wanted.

"I do speak English," I pointed ou[t] in my best Oxonian accent.

A day later, Stumpy was airlifted to Kuwait for treatment and to retain the appearance of a happy ending. There may yet be pictures of him smiling.

"Get this motherfucker!" the first
dier shouted to no one in particular.
After the grace and courtesy of the
abs, this jolt of American culture
nerved me. I removed the turban
an attempt to convince them I was
end and not foe, but the combina-
n of tightly wound cloth and heat
t my hair looking like a toupee bast-
in Vitalis or motor oil.
The second soldier patted me down
ghly, then scrutinized my *Harp-*
s press card minutely. I had just got
self ready to defend its authentic-
when he said, "What the fuck is
rper's?"
For the first time in my life I wished
as on assignment for *National Re-*
w, to which I hastily compared
rper's—inasmuch as they were both
gazines with a political focus.
'It have naked chicks in it?" he
ed next.
'Not as many as we'd like . . ."
'Am I gonna see my name in it?"
'If you tell me what it is, I guaran-
it."
I noticed that many soldiers, de-
erately or otherwise, concealed
name patches on their helmets
der sand goggles. Flak jackets hid
breast patch. He now turned
press card over and examined
two dense paragraphs on its
k. I realized I'd never read them
self.
'Who the fuck is Ben Metcalf?" he
ed, after two minutes.
'Editor. *Senior* Editor."
The expression on his face made me
nder if I'd said "pimp" or "crack
ler."
'You report to him?"
'Yeah. He's like the general. And
like . . . you guys. The ground
ops."
thought this inspired.
'I never talk to no fucking generals,"
said, bitterly.
quickly demoted Ben Metcalf to
geant.
'Sergeant he'd fucking be here. Like
."
wondered how he even knew
ut Ben, soon discovering the tiny
t on the press card's back declared
t all questions regarding the I.D.
uld be directed to Ben. I hoped
knew about this.
What the fuck is this?" the sol-

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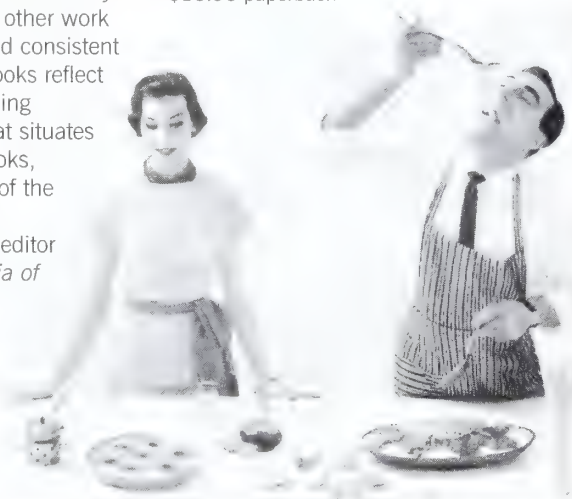
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dier then demanded, thrusting the [illegible] my nose and scrutinizing the second paragraph angrily, as if it contained something terrible. Maybe it did . . .

Mercifully, it proved to be a French translation of the former paragraph.

"Why the fuck is that there?"

"Good question," I said. "Maybe it's because I live in Canada."

"Let me get this straight," he said. "You got a British passport, you live in Canada, and you write for an American magazine . . ."

"Right."

"You gotta admit it sounds weird."

I admitted it did.

"So why you dressed like this fucking scum?" He indicated the growing crowd of locals, some of them clearly concerned for the welfare of Omar's idiot nephew. I told him I found his remark deeply offensive.

"Thatta fact?"

"Yep."

"Fuck you."

THE COLONEL

I was about to walk away, back to the "scum" whom I'd come—over thirteen years of documenting their joys and sorrows—to respect more deeply than any other people on earth, when brigade commander Colonel Frederick Rudesheim showed up. Tall, humorless, with a face so dry and blotchy it looked camouflaged like the rest of him, the colonel at least asked, in English, what I wanted.

As I rattled off the embarrassment of intelligence riches, and mentioned the POWs freed by Omar, I could see more than a flicker of interest in his ungenerous eyes. He sent me to fetch Omar, who had been waiting patiently in his car outside.

We were then taken into the Baath Party H.Q. and interrogated by Rudesheim. Also present was a Kurdish translator wearing a U.S. Army uniform and a frightening pair of those wraparound shades.

"Why you concern yourself with Kuwaiti civilians dead when so many Kurdish peoples also dead?" he demanded at one point.

I wasn't sure what the right answer to this might be. Kuwaitis, it must be said, are not the most beloved of Arab peoples. Kurds, of course, are not Arabs but rank high among the most oppressed of peoples.

The Kurdish translator then flashed a smile his face appeared incapable of seconds earlier, and I gathered that he was joking. Kurdish humor is probably worth a doctoral thesis.

Half an hour into the grilling, Colonel Rudesheim announced, somewhat surprisingly, that he had a lunch appointment. Omar and I said we'd go back to Omar's house for lunch, but that didn't suit Rudesheim.

"You're the best intelligence assets I've come across," he informed us. "I'd rather not let you out of my sight."

What did that mean? Were we being detained?

"I'm just concerned for your safety," the colonel assured us, unconvincingly. "I'd prefer you just wait here. Then we're gonna fly you up to Tikrit so the C.I. guys can talk with you. Okay?"

I made another futile attempt at persuading him that we'd be fine driving back and forth to Omar's, but I could tell we were "detained."

"We'll make sure you're fed," the colonel added. And with that he was gone.

LUNCH

A "Meal, Ready-to-Eat," or MRE, is more loot bag than meal; the fat khaki plastic pouch announces its main course but contains many surprise items, though the only unannounced item anyone wanted to find was the "dairy shake," a satchel of flavored coffee-creamer-like powder to which one added water and shook vigorously. They were unusually good—even the chewy sludge invariably left at the bottom. But "dairy shake" appeared in only one out of twenty MREs, and there was no chance of divining which pouch contained it.

The MRE menu is eclectic and daring: Country Captain Chicken, Beef Enchiladas, Beefsteak in Gravy, Spaghetti with Meat Sauce, Seafood Jambalaya, Chicken Tetrazzini, etc. But the in-flight meal supplied by Aeroflot at the height of the Cold War was a gourmet tour de force by comparison. The pouch pointed out, for those who may not have noticed, that active combat duty was more demanding than hanging around the base back home, thus a soldier required more nourishment. Then, [illegible] riously, it conceded that soldi[illegible] might not want to eat the actual [illegible] in the MRE, and if so should be s[illegible] to consume its high-carbohydr[illegible] side dishes, which were largely cra[illegible] ers and long-life bread products.

I require little from food—steak a[illegible] potatoes is fine seven nights a week[illegible] but the main courses in MRE pou[illegible] es plumbed culinary depths undream[illegible] of even by the Brits. Among the pa[illegible] phernalia designed to enliven the g[illegible] eral tedium of a soldier's day—a fru[illegible] punch mix, jam, two squares [illegible] chewing gum, four sheets of toilet [illegible] per, a miniature bottle of Tabas[illegible] sauce, a green book of matches [illegible] signed to function in damp conditi[illegible] (but, the blurb admitted, not in v[illegible] damp conditions), cocoa mix, a pl[illegible] tic spoon, a "moist towelette" sachet[illegible] was a large, clear plastic envelope c[illegible] taining a thin slab of brittle foam.

The instructions explained ea[illegible] stage of the heating process in ter[illegible] that made it sound like the assem[illegible] of a cyclotron. There were numer[illegible] diagrams, too—one of an amphibi[illegible] blob labeled rock, illustrating the [illegible] struction to place the heated meal [illegible] its pouch against a "rock or som[illegible] thing." There were several warnin[illegible] about not eating the slab of brit[illegible] foam in the bag, which apparen[illegible] played a crucial role in heating t[illegible] meal. Evidently, every year a few s[illegible] diers did try eating it. No one seem[illegible] to know whether these soldiers w[illegible] counted as "friendly fire" casualties.

My MRE was not in fact ready to e[illegible] for more than twenty minutes, [illegible] which point I extracted the pouc[illegible] tore off a notched strip near the t[illegible] dug in my plastic spoon, and ate.

One mouthful of Country Capta[illegible] Chicken was enough to convince m[illegible] not to attempt another. Omar, ho[illegible] ever, approached his Chicken wi[illegible] Salsa like a man offered $10,000 [illegible] eat a bag of earthworms. He was sta[illegible] tled and perhaps disappointed to fi[illegible] the scarlet sludge had no taste at al[illegible]

RETURN OF THE COLONEL

By the time Colonel Rudesheim r[illegible] turned from lunch, Omar and th[illegible] Kurdish translator behaved like o[illegible] friends—something the colonel clea[illegible] ly did not like. Rudesheim told us

ıck Hawk helicopter would soon be iving to take us up to Tikrit, and :n he resumed his questions.
At the point where I stated that ıfiq al-Samarrai had little support his National Salvation Movement Samarra, the colonel bristled.
'I've just attended a big lunch host- by him," he said, "and all the local ikhs were there. Looked to me like had a ton of support."
told him the two most prominent al sheikhs—Adnan and Fadhel Has- —had assured me the previous day ıt Wafiq would be lucky to get percent of the vote in any election. had three strikes against him, the ikhs had pointed out: he was a mil- 'y figure, and no one wanted the itary involved in a new regime; he a close associate of Saddam from 30 to 1992; and, lastly, he had been ng in exile, which meant he had ided the suffering in Iraq yet now ected to return as a leader.
Looked like a popular guy to me," lesheim repeated, making me re- e how ignorant he was of the cus- ıs and social norms in the land he upied.
The sheikhs are there out of cour- ," I told him. "And no one would w disrespect to their host. But they also support the candidate they ık will win."
They're two-faced?"
If you like, yes. But in different 's than we are two-faced . . ."
We?" Rudesheim narrowed his eyes. Like when Bush says this war is to rate Iraqis . . ."
S'right." He was daring me to go her.
We all know he's lying, don't we?" I don't believe the president of the ited States is a liar," Rudesheim in an eerily quiet voice.
Wafiq is trying to impress you."
And he succeeded."
told him that Omar's wife was fiq al-Samarrai's sister and that she willing to testify in court that her her was guilty of mass murder.
udesheim was now edgy but de- ained not to show it.
explained that Omar had arranged elaborate coup against Saddam in 5 involving two jet fighters and a usand troops. It was carefully ught out and might have succeed- ed. But Wafiq, from his exile, had nixed the plan and undermined support for it, mainly because, in Omar's opinion, it did not involve Wafiq.

"Put it this way," I said. "If this war had been fought in '91, Wafiq would have been on your top-ten most wanted list."

"I'm sure C.I. will be fascinated," said Rudesheim.

Soon enough our Black Hawk was waiting. The colonel told us we were to be flown to Saddam's palace complex in Tikrit, where the CIA were eager to hear all we'd told him.

"They'll probably put you up in Saddam's bedroom," he shouted, over the din of revving Humvees. ■

Editor's Note:

Here the manuscript, handwritten by Mr. Roberts, and faxed from Le Hotel Royal Amman by a friend, trails off. We have had only intermittent contact with the writer and so can only hope that his tale will continue in these pages.

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BIRTHDAY GIRL

By Haruki Murakami
Translated by Jay Rubin



She waited on tables as usual that day, her twentieth birthday. She always worked on Fridays, but if things had gone according to plan that particular Friday, she would have had the night off. The other part-time girl had agreed to switch shifts with her as a matter of course: being screamed at by an angry chef while lugging pumpkin gnocchi and seafood fritto to customers' tables was not a normal way to spend one's twentieth birthday. But the other girl had aggravated a cold and gone to bed with untoppable diarrhea and a fever of 104, so she ended up working after all on short notice.

She found herself trying to comfort the sick girl, who had called to apologize. "Don't worry about it," she said. "I wasn't going to do anything special anyway, even if it is my twentieth birthday."

And in fact she was not all that disappointed. One reason was the terrible argument she had had a few days earlier with the boyfriend who was supposed to be with her that night. They had been going together since high school, and the argument had started from nothing much. But it had taken an unexpected turn for the worse until it became a long and bitter shouting match—one bad enough, she was pretty sure, to have snapped their long-standing ties once and for all. Something inside her had turned rock-hard and died. He had not called her since the blowup, and she was not about to call him.

Her workplace was one of the better-known Italian restaurants in the tony Roppongi district of Tokyo. It had been in business since the late sixties, and, although its cuisine was hardly leading edge, its high reputation was fully justified. It had many repeat customers, and they were never disappointed. The dining room had a calm, relaxed atmosphere without a hint of pushiness. Rather than a young crowd, the restaurant drew an older clientele that included some famous stage people and writers.

The two full-time waiters worked six days a week. She and the other part-time waitress were students who took turns working three days each. In addition there was one floor manager and, at the register, a skinny middle-aged woman who supposedly had been there since the restaurant opened—literally sitting in the one place, it seemed, like some gloomy old character from *Little Dorrit*. She had exactly two functions: to accept payment from the guests and to answer the phone. She spoke only when necessary and always wore the

Haruki Murakami is the author, most recently, of the story collection after the quake *(Knopf). He lives outside of Tokyo.*

Illustration by Hollie Harper

same black dress. There was something cold and hard about her: if you set her afloat on the nighttime sea, she could probably sink any boat that happened to ram her.

The floor manager was perhaps in his late forties. Tall and broad-shouldered, his build suggested that he had been a sportsman in his youth, but excess flesh was now beginning to accumulate on his belly and chin. His short, stiff hair was thinning at the crown, and a special aging-bachelor smell clung to him—like newsprint that had been stored for a while in a drawer with cough drops. She had a bachelor uncle who smelled like that.

The manager always wore a black suit, white shirt, and bow tie—not a snap-on bow tie but the real thing, tied by hand. It was a point of pride for him that he could tie it perfectly without looking in the mirror. His job consisted in checking the arrival and departure of guests, keeping the reservation situation in mind, knowing the names of regular customers, greeting them with a smile, lending a respectful ear to any customers' complaints, giving expert advice on wines, and overseeing the work of the waiters and waitresses. He performed his duties adroitly day after day. It was also his special task to deliver dinner to the room of the restaurant's owner.

"The owner had his own room on the sixth floor of the same building where the restaurant was," she said. "An apartment or office or something."

Somehow she and I had gotten onto the subject of our twentieth birthdays—what sort of day it had been for each of us. Most people remember the day they turned twenty. Hers had happened more than ten years earlier.

"He never, ever showed his face in the restaurant, though. The only one who saw him was the manager. It was strictly *his* job to deliver the owner's dinner to him. None of the other employees knew what he looked like."

"So, basically, the owner was getting home delivery from his own restaurant."

"Right," she said. "Every night at eight the manager had to bring dinner to the owner's room. It was the restaurant's busiest time, so having the manager disappear just then was always a problem for us, but there was no way around it because that was the way it had always been done. They'd load the dinner onto one of those carts that hotels use for room service, the manager would push it onto the elevator wearing a respectful look on his face, and fifteen minutes later he'd come back empty-handed. Then, an hour later, he'd go up again and bring down the cart with empty plates and glasses. Like clockwork, every day. I thought it was really weird the first time I saw it happen. It was like some kind of religious ritual, you know? After a while I got used to it, though, and never gave it another thought."

The owner always had chicken. The recipe and the vegetable sides were a little different every day, but the main dish was always chicken. A young chef once told her that he had tried sending up the same exact roast chicken every day for a week just to see what would happen, but there was never any complaint. Of course, a chef wants to try different ways of preparing things, and each new chef would challenge himself with every technique for chicken that he could think of. They'd make elegant sauces, they'd try chickens from different suppliers, but none of their efforts had any effect: they might just as well have been throwing pebbles into an empty cave. Every one of them gave up and sent the owner some really standard chicken dish every day. That's all that was ever asked of them.

Work started out as usual on her twentieth birthday, November 17. It had been raining on and off since the afternoon, and pouring since early evening. At five o'clock the manager gathered the employees together to explain the day's specials. Servers were required to memorize them word for word and not use crib sheets: veal Milanese, pasta topped with sardines and cabbage, chestnut mousse. Sometimes the manager would take the part of a customer and test them with questions. Then came the employees' meal: waiters in *this* restaurant were not going to have growling stomachs as they stood there taking customers' orders!

The restaurant opened its doors at six o'clock, but guests were slow to arrive because of the downpour, and several reservations were simply canceled. Women didn't want their dresses ruined by the rain. The manager walked around tight-lipped, and the waiters killed time polishing the salt and pepper shakers or chatting with the chef about cooking. She surveyed the dining room with its single couple at a table and listened to the harpsichord music flowing discreetly from ceiling speakers. A deep smell of late autumn rain worked its way into the restaurant.

It was after seven-thirty when the manager started feeling sick. He stumbled over to a chair and sat there for a while pressing his stomach, as if he had suddenly been shot. A great sweat clung to his forehead. "I think I'd better go to the hospital," he muttered. For him to have medical problems was a most unusual occurrence: he had never missed a day since he started working in this restaurant more than ten years earlier. It was another point of pride for him that he had never been out with illness or injury, but his painful grimace made it clear that he was in very bad shape.

She stepped outside with an umbrella and hailed a cab. One of the waiters held the manager steady as he climbed into the car with him to take him to a nearby hospital. Before ducking into the cab, the manager said to her hoarsely, "I want you to take a dinner up to room 604 at eight o'clock. All you have to do is ring the bell, say 'Your dinner is here,' and leave it."

"That's room 604, right?" she said.

"At eight o'clock," he repeated. "On the dot." He grimaced again, climbed in, and the taxi took him away.

The rain showed no signs of letting up after the manager was gone, and customers arrived at long intervals. No more than one or two tables were occupied at a time, so if the manager and one waiter had to be absent, this was a good time for it to happen. Things could get so busy that it was not unusual for even the full staff to have trouble coping.

When the owner's meal was ready at eight o'clock, she pushed the room-service cart onto the elevator and rode

o the sixth floor. It was the stan-
l meal for him: a half bottle of red
e with the cork loosened, a thermal
of coffee, a chicken entrée with
med vegetables, dinner rolls, and
ter. The heavy aroma of cooked
cken quickly filled the little eleva-
It mingled with the smell of rain.
ter droplets dotted the floor of the
rator, suggesting that someone with
et umbrella had recently been
ard.

She pushed the cart down the cor-
or, bringing it to a stop in front of
door marked "604." She double-
cked her memory: 604. That was it.
cleared her throat and pressed the
ton by the door.

There was no answer. She stood in
ce for a good twenty seconds. Just as
was thinking of pressing the bell
in, the door opened inward and a
nny old man appeared. He was
rter than she was, by some four or
inches. He had on a dark suit and
ecktie. Against his white shirt,
tie stood out distinctly with its
wnish-yellow coloring like with-
d leaves. He made a very clean im-
ssion, his clothes perfectly pressed,
white hair smoothed down: he
ked as though he were about to go
for the night to some sort of gath-
ng. The deep wrinkles that creased
brow made her think of deep
ines in an aerial photograph.

"Your dinner, sir," she said in a
sky voice, then quietly cleared her
oat again. Her voice grew husky
enever she was tense.

"Dinner?"

"Yes, sir. The manager suddenly
k sick. I had to take his place today.
ur meal, sir."

"Oh, I see," the old man said, al-
st as if talking to himself, his hand
ll perched on the doorknob. "Took
k, eh? You don't say."

"His stomach started to hurt him
of a sudden. He went to the hospi-
. He thinks he might have appen-
citis."

"Oh, that's not good," the old man
d, running his fingers along the wrin-
es of his forehead. "Not good at all."

She cleared her throat again. "Shall
ring your meal in, sir?" she asked.

"Ah yes, of course," the old man
id. "Yes, of course, if you wish. That's
ie with me."

If I wish? she thought. What a strange way to put it. What am I supposed to wish?

The old man opened the door the rest of the way, and she wheeled the cart inside. The floor was covered in short gray carpeting with no area for removing shoes. The first room was a large study, as though the apartment were more a workplace than a residence. The window looked out on Tokyo Tower nearby, its steel skeleton outlined in lights. A large desk stood by the window, and beside the desk was a compact sofa and love seat. The old man pointed to the plastic laminate coffee table in front of the sofa. She arranged his meal on the table: white napkin and silverware, coffeepot and cup, wine and wineglass, bread and butter, and the plate of chicken and vegetables.

"If you would be kind enough to set the dishes in the hall as usual, sir, I'll come to get them in an hour."

Her words seemed to snap him out of an appreciative contemplation of his dinner. "Oh, yes, of course. I'll put them in the hall. On the cart. In an hour. If you wish."

Yes, she replied inwardly, for the moment that is exactly what I wish. "Is there anything else I can do for you, sir?"

"No, I don't think so," he said after a moment's consideration. He was wearing black shoes that had been polished to a high sheen. They were small and chic. He's a stylish dresser, she thought. And he stands very straight for his age.

"Well, then, sir, I'll be getting back to work."

"No, wait just a moment," he said.

"Sir?"

"Do you think it might be possible for you to give me five minutes of your time, miss? I have something I'd like to say to you."

He was so polite in his request that it made her blush. "I...think it should be all right," she said. "I mean, if it's really just five minutes." He was her employer, after all. He was paying her by the hour. It was not a question of her giving or his taking her time. And this old man did not look like a person who would do anything bad to her.

"By the way, how old are you?" the old man asked, standing by the



LISTEN UP

I got a brand-new invention: me. 'Cuz yo I gotta ghetto name and suckas don't know how to play me. I mean, a black-ass writer named Donnell—who gets good reviews. And I'm in the game.... There were hella dues to pay, but I did that shit. It was not supposed to happen.... You were not supposed to read this line. There are rules against me.

—DONNELL ALEXANDER

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—Touré

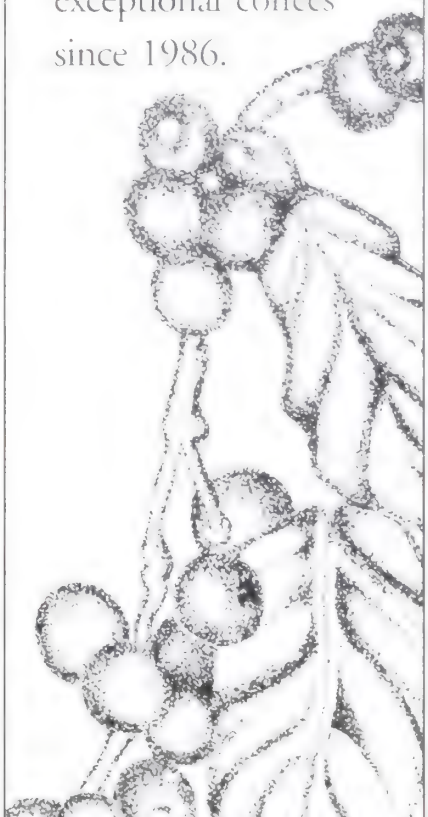
"If Eazy-E had written *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, it would have been this book."

—Neal Pollack

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...folded arms folded and looking directly into her eyes.

"I'm twenty now," she said.

"Twenty *now*," he repeated, narrowing his eyes as if peering through some kind of crack. "Twenty *now*. As of when?"

"Well, I just turned twenty," she said. After a moment's hesitation, she added, "Today is my birthday, sir."

"I *see*," he said, rubbing his chin as if this explained a great deal. "Today, is it? Today is your twentieth birthday?"

She nodded silently.

"Your life in this world began exactly twenty years ago today."

"Yes, sir," she said, "that is true."

"I see, I see," he said. "That's wonderful. Well, then, happy birthday."

"Thank you very much," she said, and then it dawned on her that this was the very first time all day that anyone had wished her a happy birthday. Of course, if her parents had called from Oita, she might find a message from them on her answering machine when she got home after work.

"Well, well, this is certainly a cause for celebration," he said. "How about a little toast? We can drink this red wine."

"Thank you, sir, but I couldn't. I'm working now."

"Oh, what's the harm in a little sip? No one's going to blame you if I say it's all right. Just a token drink for celebration."

The old man slipped the cork from the bottle and dribbled a little wine into his glass for her. Then he took an ordinary drinking glass from a glass-doored cabinet and poured some wine for himself.

"Happy birthday," he said. "May you live a rich and fruitful life, and may there be nothing to cast dark shadows on it."

They clinked glasses.

May there be nothing to cast dark shadows on it: she silently repeated his remark to herself. Why had he chosen such unusual words for her birthday wish?

"Your twentieth birthday comes only once in a lifetime, miss. It's an irreplaceable day."

"Yes, sir, I know," she said, taking one cautious sip of wine.

"And here, on your special day, you have taken the trouble to deliver dinner to me like a kindhearted fai

"Just doing my job, sir."

"But still," the old man said wit few quick shakes of the head. "But s lovely young miss."

The old man sat down in the leat chair by his desk and motioned he the sofa. She lowered herself ginge onto the edge of the sofa, with wineglass in her hand. Knees align she tugged at her skirt, clearing throat again. She saw raindrops t ing lines down the windowpane. room was strangely quiet.

"Today just happens to be y twentieth birthday, and on top that you have brought me this w derful warm meal," the old man s as if reconfirming the situati Then he set his glass on the desk with a little thump. "This has to some kind of special convergen don't you think?"

Not quite convinced, she mana a nod.

"Which is why," he said, touch the knot of his withered-leaf-colo necktie, "I feel it is important for to give you a birthday present. A s cial birthday calls for a special c memorative gift."

Flustered, she shook her head said, "No, please, sir, don't give second thought. All I did was br your meal the way they ordered me

The old man raised both han palms toward her. "No, miss, d *you* give it a second thought. The k of 'present' I have in mind is not so thing tangible, not something wit price tag. To put it simply"—he pla his hands on the desk and took long, slow breath—"what I would to do for a lovely young fairy such you is to grant a wish you might h to make your wish come true. A thing. Anything at all that you w for—assuming that you *do* have s a wish."

"A wish?" she asked, her thr dry.

"Something you would like have happen, miss. If you hav wish—one wish, I'll make it co true. That is the kind of birth present I can give you. But you better think about it very caref because I can give you only one." raised one finger into the air. "

e. You can't change your mind afward and take it back."

She was at a loss for words. One h? Whipped by the wind, rainps tapped unevenly at the winwpane. As long as she remained nt, the old man looked into her s, saying nothing. Time marked irregular pulse in her ears.

'I have to wish for something, and vill be granted?"

Instead of answering her question, old man—hands still side-by-side the desk—just smiled. He did it the most natural and amiable way.

'Do you *have* a wish, miss —or not?" he asked gently.

This really did happen," she said, oking straight at me. "I'm not king it up."

'Of course not," I said. She was t the sort of person to invent some ofy story out of thin air. "So . . . did u make a wish?"

She went on looking at me for a ile, then released a tiny sigh. "Don't me wrong," she said. "I wasn't tak- him 100 percent seriously myself. nean, at twenty you're not exactly ing in a fairy-tale world anymore. his was his idea of a joke, though, I d to hand it to him for coming up th it on the spot. He was a dapper fellow with a twinkle in his eye, so iecided to play along with him. It s my twentieth birthday, after all: I ured I ought to have *something* not so dinary happen to me that day. It sn't a question of believing or not lieving."

I nodded without saying anything.

"You can understand how I felt, u sure. My twentieth birthday was ming to an end with nothing spe- al happening, nobody wishing me a ppy birthday, and all I'm doing is rrying tortellini with anchovy uce to people's tables."

I nodded again. "Don't worry," I said. "I understand."

"So I made a wish."

The old man kept his gaze fixed on r, saying nothing, hands still on e desk. Also on the desk were sev- al thick folders that might have en account books, plus writing im- ements, a calendar, and a lamp with a green shade. Lying among them, his small hands looked like another set of desktop furnishings. The rain continued to beat against the glass, the lights of Tokyo Tower filtering through the shattered drops.

The wrinkles on the old man's forehead deepened slightly. "That is your wish?"

"Yes," she said. "That is my wish."

"A bit unusual for a girl your age," he said. "I was expecting something different."

"If it's no good, I'll wish for something else," she said, clearing her throat. "I don't mind. I'll think of something else."

"No no," the old man said, raising his hands and waving them like flags. "There's nothing wrong with it, not at all. It's just a little surprising, miss. Don't you have something else? Like, say, you want to be prettier, or smarter, or rich? You're okay with not wishing for something like that—something an ordinary girl would ask for?"

She took some moments to search for the right words. The old man just waited, saying nothing, his hands at rest together on the desk again.

"Of course I'd like to be prettier or smarter or rich. But I really can't imagine what would happen to me if any of those things came true. They might be more than I could handle. I still don't really know what life is all about. I don't know how it *works*."

"I see," the old man said, intertwining his fingers and separating them again. "I see."

"So, is my wish okay?"

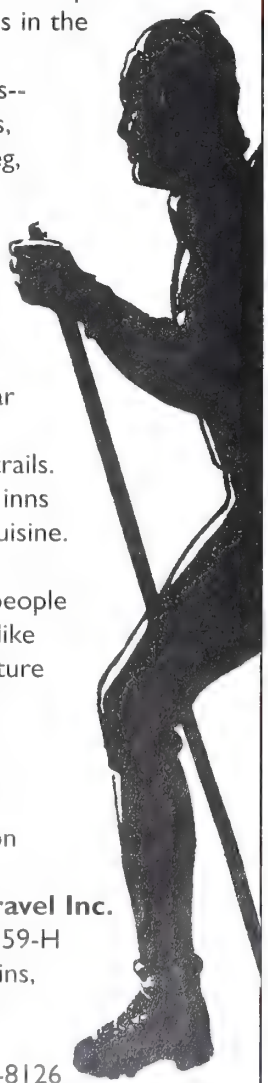
"Of course," he said. "Of course. It's no trouble at all for me."

The old man suddenly fixed his eyes on a spot in the air. The wrinkles of his forehead deepened: they might have been the wrinkles of his brain itself as it concentrated on his thoughts. He seemed to be staring at something—perhaps all-but-invisible bits of down—floating in the air. He opened his arms wide, lifted himself slightly from his chair, and whipped his palms together with a dry smack. Settling in the chair again, he slowly ran his fingertips along the wrinkles of his brow as if to soften them, and then turned to her with a gentle smile.

"That did it," he said. "Your wish has been granted."

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wish has been granted, lovely miss. Happy birthday. You may go back to work now. Don't worry, I'll put the

She took the elevator down to the restaurant. Empty-handed now, she felt almost disturbingly light, as though she were walking on some kind of mysterious fluff.

"Are you okay? You look spaced out," the younger waiter said to her.

and shook her head. "Oh, really? No, I'm fine."

"Tell me about the owner. What's

"I dunno, I didn't get a very good look at him," she said, cutting the conversation short.

An hour later she went to bring the cart down. It was out in the hall, utensils in place. She lifted the lid to find the chicken and vegetables gone. The wine bottle and coffee carafe were empty. The door to room stoneless. She stared at it for a time, any moment, but it did not open. She brought the cart down on the elevator and wheeled it in to the dishwasher. The chef looked at the plate, empty as always, and nodded blankly.

"I said. "Not once. The manager turned out to have had just an ordinary stomachache and went back to delivering the owner's meal again himself the next day. I quit the job after New Year's, and I've never been back to s better not to go n

there really happened, and it had an important meaning for me too."

The two of us kept silent for a time, drinking our drinks and thinking our separate thoughts.

"Do you mind if I ask you one thing?" I asked. "Or, more precisely, two things."

"Go right ahead," she said. "I imagine you're going to ask me what I wished for that time. That's the first thing you'll want to know."

"But it looks as though you don't want to talk about that."

I nodded.

She put the coaster down and narrowed her eyes as though staring at something off in the distance. "You're not supposed to tell anybody what you wished for, you know."

"I'm not going to try to drag it out whether or not it came true, though. And also—whatever the wish itself you later came to regret what it was you chose to wish for. Were you ever sorry you didn't wish for something

"The answer to the first question is yes and also no. I still have a lot of living left to do, probably. I haven't seen how things are going to work out to the end."

"So it was a wish that takes time to come true?"

"You could say that. Time is going to play an important role."

"Like in cooking certain dishes?"

She nodded.

I thought about that for a moment, but the only thing that came to mind was the image of a gigantic pie cook-

"And the answer to my second

"What was that again?"

"Whether you ever regretted having chosen what you wished for."

A few moments of silence followed. The eyes she turned on me seemed to lack any depth. The desiccated shad-

CA three years older than me. And

Audi, and I play tennis with my gi friends twice a week. That's the life I living now."

"Sounds pretty good to me," I sa

"Even if the Audi's bumper has t dents?"

"Hey, bumpers are *made* t denting."

"That could be a great bumper sti er," she said. "'Bumpers are for de ing.'"

I looked at her mouth when s said that.

"What I'm trying to tell you this," she said more softly, scratchi an earlobe. It was a beautifu shaped earlobe. "No matter wh they wish for, no matter how far th people can never be anything themselves. That's all."

"There's another good bump sticker," I said. "'No matter how they go, people can never be a thing but themselves.'"

She laughed aloud, with a re show of pleasure, and the shad was gone.

She rested her elbow on the and looked at me. "Tell me," s said. "What would you have wish for if you had been in my position

"On the night of my twentie birthday, you mean."

I took some time to think abo that, but I couldn't come up with single wish.

"I can't think of anything," I co fessed. "I'm too far away now fro my twentieth birthday."

"You really can't think of anythin

I nodded.

"Not one thing."

"Not one thing."

She looked into my eyes again straight in—and said. "That's beca you've already made your wish."

Answers to June Quiz, "I Do Knots"

1 Sappho; 2 [illegible]; 3 Irene of Athens; 4 To crown him emper 5 Queen Victoria; 6 Edward 7 [illegible]; 8 [illegible]; 9 [illegible]; 10 Iron Chu 11 Hera, wife of Zeus; 12 One, Moso of China; 13 Friedrich Nie tzsche; 14 Ralph Waldo Emerson.

NEW BOOKS

By John Leonard



In his previous frolic as a biographer, Walter Isaacson was more forgiving than he should have been of Henry Kissinger, as if a secret bombing of Cambodia and a coup in Chile were mere blemishes on the same face of the great statesman. Isaacson has come a long way since, but of the swamp fevers of AOL Time Warner unto a Rocky Mountain high, from managing editor at *Time* magazine to CEO at CNN to president of the Aspen Institute. At Aspen every summer, the humanists used to dress up in togas and reenact *Antigone*, and perhaps they still do. Regardless, the change has been gracing for Isaacson. His new subject is a nicer person who did less harm.

AMERICAN LIFE (Simon and Schuster, $30) synthesizes nearly everything ever written about Ben and decides that "the roots of much of what distinguishes the nation"—our "cracker-barrel humor and wisdom," "technological ingenuity," "pluralistic tolerance," "ability to weave together individualism and community cooperation," "celebration of meritocratic mobility," and even "the idealistic streak" in our foreign policy—can be found in his personality and example. Not only was he our "first great publicist" and "best scientist, inventor, diplomat, writer, and business strategist" but he was also (the phrase is David Brooks's) "our founding Yuppie." Franklin, says Isaacson approvingly, "saw middle-class values as a source of social strength, not as something to be derided."

He was every bit as complicated as the eighteenth century: speaking in tongues, hiding behind pseudonyms, and inventing alter egos; taking most of his long life to change his mind about slavery; staying as far away as he could get from his Philadelphia wife and daughter, preferably in Paris (though wherever he was he would create surrogate families); and spending almost as much time flirting with the ladies as he did experimenting with electricity, inventing bifocals, starting libraries, and organizing fire brigades (even if, in Isaacson's opinion, such flirting seldom led to bed). Franklin was a child of the Enlightenment—short perhaps on poetry and "anguish," lacking "moral gravity," unacquainted with a "tragic sense," but a democrat and a mensch.

Like many readers of American history, Isaacson thinks we need to choose between exemplary national character types—either Ben Franklin or Jonathan Edwards—and he implies that he can do without a tragic sense. Isaacson doesn't hesitate to line up against the Puritan, with the Rotarian, but where does this leave those of us who want Abe Lincoln on our side?

As comfortable as Franklin always managed to become, the writer Richard Yates made himself miserable. An alcoholic, a chain-smoker, a manic-depressive, a failure at both marriage and money, in denial about everything, and tubercular to boot, Yates seemed to write such remarkable novels as *Revolutionary Road* and *The Easter Parade* in spite of himself. And also in spite of the monstrous mother, who shows up everywhere in his tormented fiction and throughout Blake Bailey's relentless biography

YATES (Picador, $30). In penury, sickness, squalor, and resentment; attended to by students, fretted about by friends; beset upon by ghosts; con-



temptuous of his literary competition;

to Scott Fitzgerald, and not only because of their boozy good looks. He needs us to take the novelist as seriously as the biographer has, in a 600-page book that includes every dangling participle, muddled vehemence, and tawdry tittle-tattle. He proposes Yates as a kind of human sacrifice, a variation on the Philoctetes myth, according to which the Greek warrior got to play so brilliantly with his bow and arrow because he had a purating wound. I refuse this romanticizing of neurosis. There has never been a scarier novel about male vanity and cowardice than *Revolutionary Road*. But after he published it in 1961, Yates ignored the counsel of doctors, children, and friends: instead of trying to heal his wounds, he embraced and cultivated them, even nested in them. This too is cowardice and vanity.



Vanity abounds in Mark Pendergrast's

TION (Basic Books, $27.50), a breezy tour of reflecting surfaces in science, literature, folklore, art, and religion—from, as it were, magic to murder; from Sumerian epic poetry to Star Wars; from Egyptian tombs to Greek myth to Etruscan caves to Chinese jade to Olmec jaguar eyes to Aztec obsidian "Shew-stones"; from (gulp) Narcissus and Medusa and Pythagoras and Archimedes to (gasp) such Chinese "cosmic mirrors" as the Blue Dragon, the White Tiger, the Red Bird, and the Dark Warrior—as well as the alchemists, kabbalists, Taoists, and Zoroastrians; not to mention gnostic cultists, Persian magi, the *Popol Vuh*, and *The Canterbury Tales*; in addition to Snow White, Prester John, Nostradamus, Avicenna, Roger Bacon, and Isaac Newton; plus telescopes, microscopes, kaleidoscopes, periscopes, space shuttles, and David Hockney. Rainbows' Ends

If only for the poetry—Borges, Yeats, Rilke, Shakespeare, Dante, Donne—*Mirror Mirror* is a cultural-studies treat. But Cervantes and Lewis Carroll both show up and then get out of the way for Leonardo, Dürer, Bosch, Brueghel, and Caravaggio, after which industrial espionage will shatter the Venetian glass monopoly, making possible the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles, only to be followed by Casanova and radio astronomy. As much as Pendergrast likes to look into concavities and convexities, he also wants to dish, serving up gossip about John Dee, for instance, in Elizabeth's court, who would inspire Faust in the Marlowe play and Prospero in *The Tempest*. Or perhaps you'd like to know why, when you look in the mirror, right and left are reversed but up and down are not.

Great fun here, concluding with a chapter on experiments, conducted in 1964 by a twenty-two-year-old graduate student named Gordon Gallup, that tested "self-recognition" by apes, elephants, and dolphins who looked at themselves for hundreds of hours in laboratory mirrors. The same experiment just happens to be mentioned in the first chapter of THE FACE IN THE

(Ecco, $24.95), whose principal author may be neuroscientist Julian Paul Keenan but whose over-the-shoulder collaborators include, besides anthropologist Dean Falk, the aforementioned Gordon Gallup, all grown up and a senior professor of psychology. They assume you will want to know why, like you and me and Biami tribesmen in New Guinea, chimpanzees come to recognize and even groom themselves in mirrors, whereas monkeys and elephants don't. Dolphins are a maybe, and B. F. Skinner would appear not to have told the whole truth about his pigeons.

The Face in the Mirror, while unfail-

ingly interesting, imagines itself to
more profound than it really is, for
the thrashing about in Lacan
Chomsky. It wants us to locate
recognition and self-awareness—as
as memory, empathy, deception,
their associated feelings of pride, g
and shame—in the right he
sphere of the brain, whic
making a comeback at the
pense of the heretofore m
glamorous left hemisphe
where language hangs o
There are evolutionary reas
for such a "consciousness"
going back to our reptilian
history, and Keenan seeks
"neuroimage" it. But his
posed new model of the br
while it might help to diagn
neurological disorders, doe
seem especially "revolutiona
it just seems to be scoring points aga
the grammar guys. Besides, I am
clined to believe that what dist
guishes *Homo saps* from the rest of
primates is that we alone dream up
ror tests and write books about the

Not that the behavior of mos
the primates in John Burde
BANGKOK 8 (Alfred
Knopf, $24) is anything for human
ings to be proud of. In a thriller as
otic as it is enthralling, and as provo
tive as it is obscene, a half-Th
half-American Bangkok cop nam
Sonchai Jitplecheep investigates
only the murder of a U.S. Mar
sergeant in a car full of snakes but
related death of his own partner
"soul brother" at the scene of the cr
and the skinning alive of a Rus
prostitute. His inquiries and
vengeance take him deep into di
smuggling, jade trading, the sex ind
try, police corruption, transsexual
and reincarnation. He'll need ever
of his Buddhism—a source of wisd
irony, and humor—to survive, m
less prevail. And he finds out th
about his mother he'd really rather
have known. This is a novel for any
who admires the Zen Buddhist A
sterdam mysteries of Janwillem van
Wetering, the Yellowthread St
Hong Kong mysteries of William M
shall, and Michael Dibkin's Au
Zen. But it also requires its own ge
"intellectual horror show."

)ARKNESS VISIBLE

ıe intrigues of Alan Furst

) *Nicholas Fraser*

ussed in this essay:

Book of Spies, edited by Alan Furst. Modern Library, 2003. 374 pages. 24.95.
)d of Victory, by Alan Furst. Random House, 2003. 237 pages. $12.95.
ɣdom of Shadows, by Alan Furst. Random House, 2000. 239 pages. $11.95.
Gold, by Alan Furst. Random House, 1999. 258 pages. $11.95.
World at Night, by Alan Furst. Random House, 1996. 257 pages. $11.95.
Polish Officer, by Alan Furst. Random House, 1995. 287 pages. $11.95.
k Star, by Alan Furst. Random House, 2002 (1991). 437 pages. $12.95.
ht Soldiers, by Alan Furst. Random House, 2002 (1988). 456 pages. $12.95.

Are novels about history supposed to supply us with an accurate view of the past? Or is it timate to accept the fiction rer's realm of history—not ays truthful, but nevertheless in possession of some privileged relationship to reality? iters such as Robert Harris e artfully raised the profile heir fictions by basing them bizarre, and often conspiratorial, premises (the possibility t the Holocaust might never ave been uncovered, or that lin had a son), which they n try, at great expense of en-, to render credible.

The hidden world of espiage supplies some justifica- for a paranoid belief in a cret" history. Novelist Alan st, who lives in espionage- Sag Harbor, creates shady plots that cunningly debe sideshows: the smuggling, Britain in 1938, of fortifica- plans for the Sudetenland's der; the attempt to stop the nsport of oil from "neutral" nania to Germany in 1940; the res-, from Vienna, of an imprudent rish Hollywood exile trying to re-



claim his patrimony. These sideshows are depicted as they might have been understood at the time, without the distortions of hindsight. Because they appear as gestures motivated by a reasonable degree of hope, they have the power to engage us. Furst's secret, simple as it may seem, is the patient accumulation of credible historical detail.

Night Soldiers, the novel that begins Furst's seven-book series, opens with the kicking to death of a teenager on the Bulgarian bank of the Danube in 1934. The murder itself is skillfully described, but our attention is immediately drawn to one detail lurking behind the gruesomely banal scene. The stylish, newfangled headgear worn by the fascist aggressors (a grocer, a schoolteacher, a local matchmaker) has, we learn, been designed and manufactured by a Jewish tailor, Levitzky, whose family performed similar tasks on behalf of previous occupying forces. Apparently untroubled by his clientele, Levitzky also happens to be "a progressive":

> A reader of tracts on Palestinian repatriation, a serious student of the Talmud, a man who wore eyeglasses. Levitzky had an old book of illustrations; he thumbed through it by the light of a kerosene lamp. All Europe was represented, there were Swiss Vatican Guards, Hungarian Hussars, French Foreign Legionnaires, Italian Alpine regiments of the Great War. From the last, he selected a cap style, though he hadn't the proper materials. But Levitzky was resourceful: two layers of black drill were sewn together, then curved into a conical shape. The bill of the cap was fashioned by sewing material on both sides of a cardboard form. All that was lacking, then, was the feather, and this problem was soon solved by a visit to the ritual slaughterer, who sold the tailor an armful of long goose quills.

At first glance, this could be reportage from Patrick Leigh Fermor, Arthur Koestler, or George Orwell; it also possesses the quality of historical writing in which events are observed and reconstituted at leisure. Yet this isn't ordinary historical fiction—the passage suggests the beginnings of an ambitious wrestle with the past. For it is not just the evilly punished teenager who is consigned to his fate; the tailor, the grotesquely dressed fascists, and their similarly ridiculous military forebears are all part of a doomed Europe in its prolonged suicide act. Like the pageants in *Macbeth*, the soldiers, the thugs, and the uniforms will soon disappear. We understand at once that the end of Europe

holas Fraser's last article for Harper's gazine, *"Le Divorce," appeared in the tember 2002 issue.*

t Reflection, New York," by Lisette Model © Lisette Model Estate/Baudoin Lebon, Paris

ill be the real subject of these novels.

The world's few people puzzle over the accuracy of literary definitions. But Furst, who is properly finicky with language, does seem uneasy with them. "The word *spy* is more or less understood as a noun or a verb, but it's a lousy adjective," he tells us in his introduction to *The Book of Spies*. Rather than the unappealing "*spy novel*," a more suitable description might be "*the literature of clandestine political conflict*" (but, as he observes donnishly, "you wouldn't want to pin that on a shelf in your bookstore").

If my own fairly extensive sampling is worth anything, Furst is better known in Britain than in the United States, and his readers—rumpled, predominantly male, and over forty—are most intensely clustered around the foreign desks and editorial pages of posh London papers. They are the sort of folk who still go to the kind of megacalorie Hungarian restaurant in Soho once peopled by happy as well as unhappy Communists, and on occasion (in between the contemplation of protracted diplomatic crises, or of brief, nasty wars) do serious crosswords. Upon opening Furst's latest novel, *Blood of Victory*, they won't be bothered when they find themselves on board a Bulgarian ore freighter carrying "Ukrainian manganese for Turkish mills"; nor would they mind the company of I. A. Serebin, sometime spy and editor of a Russian émigré literary magazine, who is joined by a Vichy diplomat and the diplomat's luscious wife, Marie-Galante. They might even be pleased somewhat by the fact that Serebin and Marie-Galante discover a carnal attraction for each other. And they'd already know, without being told by Furst, that Corneliu Zelea Codreanu, "God's executioner" and founder of the fascist Romanian Iron Guard, was murdered in 1938, and that afterward his followers "took to wearing little bags of dirt around their necks, supposedly the sacred earth on which their leader fell."

I would guess, too, that Furst's work is so enthusiastically received in skeptical, foot-dragging Britain because it isn't infected with the illusion of moral clarity—a rarity at a time of high-tech, patriotic espionage-ware, peddled by the likes of Tom Clancy and as anonymously guided as drones. Furst's real achievement has been to repeal all the pieties of our day, restoring to prominence a small store of disabused wisdom. His plots are filled with blind alleys, canals leading nowhere much, cars propelled by dubious substances, brothels in which intrigue rather than sex takes place, and hotels the only purpose of which appears to be the procurement of secret messages. Finishing one of his novels, one cannot but believe that our destiny is to pick our way through an old, half-ruined landscape, where slogans and moral exhortations are useless.

Of course, as the wiseacres say, history never wholly repeats itself. But we might pay more heed to what Churchill called "the dark valley" of the 1930s than to the geopolitics of twenty years ago, when John le Carré's narratives could be constructed around the static mirror games of the Cold War. In 1920, after the peace of Versailles, constitutional liberalism held sway over Europe; only fifteen years later, most of the liberal regimes had collapsed ignominiously. No quota of good intentions could withstand the economic blizzard, and in the wake of collapse came the real horrors. We can remind ourselves of the frailty of things as we check our credit-card balances, nervously scrutinizing indices of withered confidence.

Furst, whose novels began to appear the year before the Berlin Wall was pulled down, has grasped something about our future by immersing himself in Europe's past. His books convey a reminder that nothing in our culture or in our lives is ever safe. George Steer, the war correspondent who revealed the devastation of Guernica, noted that living in the 1930s required the simultaneous acknowledgment of different realities, from which a dreamless sleep offered the only escape:

> I was in three worlds, that of the real world with its moves and countermoves, submissive to minds, propositions, conditions . . . in that of the [foreign minister's office], with his sallow sherry, looking at his pale, thin, overyoung face . . . and in my immediate memory, which was peopled with these shimmering objects and the stupid, tumbled lead . . . and reminded me for all the world of a jackdaw's garden, full of hard, sharp things that reflect light an the wretched dead worms and g and broken insects that serve hin fodder. . . . I sat down in a soft chair went to sleep.

The "deep, deep sleep of Englanc what Orwell noticed, too, upon turning from Spain. "I sometimes that we shall never wake till we jerked out of it by the roar of bom he concluded in *Homage to Catalo* Graham Greene observed that e sandbags on Clapham Common fa to alert Britain's prosperous classe their impending trial by fire. Fu novels switch seamlessly from slee waking and back again, and the best at the precise moments of knowingness and fear—whethe Madrid, near Crakow, or on the *pl* of eastern France—when the bo are about to fall, or when they h just fallen and no one knows wha do next.

There are recurrent *lieux* of d ger in Furst's work. Of prim menace is the dank room v spotted wallpaper near the top flo a second-rate Paris hotel, one th frequented by hookers and comr cial travelers before the marauc from a variety of equally malign o nizations, arrive. Next is the bourg locale that appears safe, or reputa but isn't; one of the most disturb murders takes place in the Jardir Luxembourg by an ornamental p circled with green chairs. And t there is the restaurant, which Furs vors over the casino as a defini summation of moral ambiguity.

Reached by means of a marble s case and decorated in red plu Heininger's brasserie in central P makes an appearance in almost e novel. It affords shelter to the p perous and venal: British agents American socialites are as happy t as collaborationist Belgian coal ba and Germans whose task it is to im a cultural policy on all too wil French intellectuals.

In successive narratives Furst e counts the crises that mark decade's way to hell: the fall of Ma to Franco; the appeasement of H and the invasion of Prague; the N Soviet pact and the destructio Warsaw; the occupation of Paris

capitulation of France; and final-capping off what Auden (some-at understating the matter) called ow and dishonest decade," the in-e, suicidal invasion of Stalin's Rus-by Hitler's forces.

urst does the confused-in-battle ne well, moving from fields to bed buildings to abandoned spas pled by diplomatic refugees. But also is able to interpret what he s "the reality of circumstance" by oring the details of anonymous and otten lives. In *The Polish Officer*, lyric poet Lezhev, contemplating cide in June 1940 when the hrmacht tanks are less than 100 meters away from the City of Light, escribed with a seeming lack of ef-in a few busy lines:

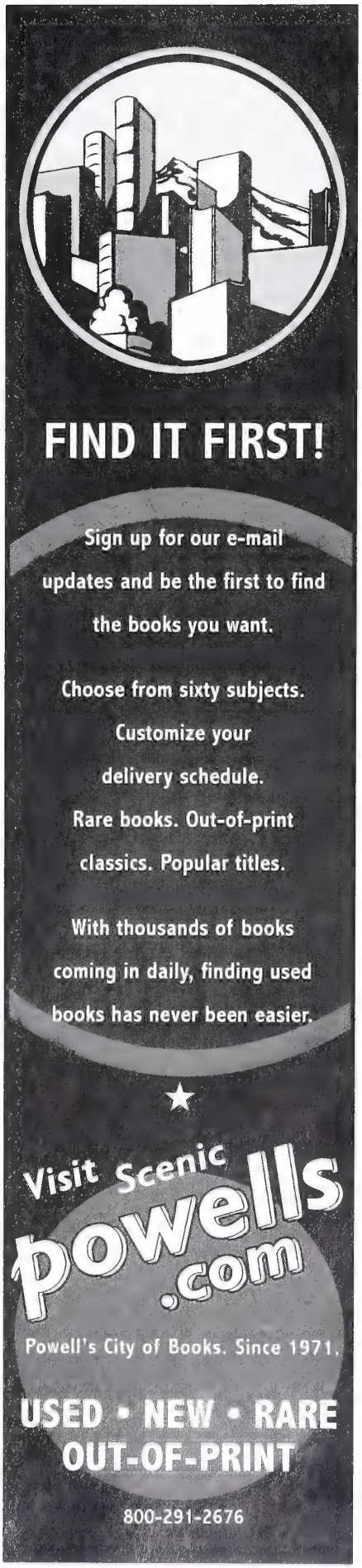
> he *ronds-de-cuir* [French bureaucrats], n the other side of their wire-grille par-itions, did not become friendly over ime—that astonished, then horrified, fi-ally sickened Lezhev. What sort of hu-nan, he wondered, behaved this way? What sort of reptilian heart remained so old to somebody in trouble? The sort hat, evidently, lived in the hollow chest f the little man with the little man's nustache. That lived within the moun-ainous bosom of the woman with the acquer hairdo and scarlet lips.

urst is fascinated by Stalinism, ich he describes as both a system xercising power and, much as Stal-egarded the Napoleonic impulse, a at and terrible adventure of sorts. e hero of *Night Soldiers* is the taci-n Khristo Stoianev, who is picked from his Bulgarian obscurity by a iet secret police (NKVD) opera-, trained in Stalin's Russia, and se-ted into revolutionary Spain. At ne moment in the fratricidal bat-s between the anarchists and the linists, Stoianev falls under suspi-n. Escaping to Paris, he becomes a iter, then (somewhat reluctantly, ce he has acquired a sexy girlfriend) anti-Bolshevik activist in the ser-e of exiled Bulgarians. When war aks out, Stoianev drifts into the bit of French *résistants* and, many er drops and explosions later, fetch-up in 1945 at the mouth of the nube, where he takes charge of his mer NKVD instructor and spirits n to New York. *Night Soldiers* in-des many passages of superlative description, and, particularly in its re-creation of the uneasy Bolshevik mind, it resembles the memoirs that the vic-tims of the purges might have written. But it remains a half success: a thriller without much psychological nuance, though with an overwhelming burden of historical detail. Better is to come.

Furst's second book, *Dark Star*, makes another run through the "dark valley" of the 1930s. Born in a part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire that would later become Romania and ed-ucated in the streets of czarist Odessa, André Szara begins a career as a Jewish Bolshevik revolutionary after a spate of fiction writing. Eventually he is a *Pravda* correspondent and, when cir-cumstances demand (which proves to be often), a Soviet operative. He be-comes the reluctant possessor of a satchel that contains—along with old socks, a copy of Pushkin, and some agricultural literature—a seemingly truthful account of Joseph Stalin's pre-Bolshevik career as an agent of the Okhrana, the czar's secret service. The nuances of fear receive definitive ex-pression in *Dark Star*; plausible, well-en-gineered, stuffed with detail, this is one of the best espionage novels ever writ-ten. But the book is something more, too—an homage to the generation of Jewish Bolsheviks for whom utopian revolution became a means of quitting shtetl culture and also an alternate sys-tem of belief. Szara, for all his disillu-sionment, remains a citizen "of a myth-ical country, a place not here and not there, where national borders expand-ed and contracted." He is a *Luftmensch*, a lost soul as adrift as Le Carré's simi-larly abandoned George Smiley:

> Once upon a time [Szara had] persuad-ed himself that technical facility was its own reward: a sentence singing hymns to the attainment of coal production norms in the Donets Basin was, nonetheless, a sentence, and could be well rendered.... To stay alive, Szara had taught himself discretion before the *ap-parat* had a chance to do the job for him. And if, by chance, an intransigent pen stubbornly produced commissar wolves guarding flocks of worker sheep or Parisian girls in silk underwear, well, then the great characteristic of paper was the ease with which it burned.

We begin to comprehend, however, that Szara is a better writer than he



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• Art interns serve part-time for three to five months and view current exhibits at museums and galleries, take part in the selec-

lers on. His claims have attracted the attention of General Y. I. Bloch, a Polish Jew and a big wheel in military intelligence. Bloch is the man who has planted on Szara the inconvenient back history of Stalin; it is also Bloch who supplies us with an insider's knowledge of the notorious purges, of which he will soon be a victim. Fearful of Bloch and his entanglements, Szara is nonetheless seduced by this damned figure, who appeals to Szara's pre-Bolshevik commitments—his Jewish heritage and his humane intelligence. Under Bloch's dissident tutelage, Szara parlays his knowledge of German wire [illegible] parents to British Palestine for several thousand Euro- [illegible] but Szara never abandons the revolution entirely, and the novel finishes with this ex-Bolshevik arriving in neutral Switzerland and feeding information to Moscow about the imminent invasion by Hitler's forces: "A decent, normal human being would turn away in sickness from either one of these monsters. But not Szara, not now. The luxury of damnation was not his."

Written and never quite found in the [illegible] The World at Night and Left Bank, Furst's two novels set in collaborationist France. Jean Casson is a film producer, maker of the sort of frothy romantic movie associated with Marcel Carné, and—[illegible] because this is France—a [illegible]. He also bears a strong physical resemblance to the late [illegible] Mitterrand, [illegible] whose charm, though amply documented and [illegible] always been mysterious to outsiders.) [illegible] range of the war—*se débrouiller*, in the time's idiom. But it is apparent that he cannot do so, even if he merely plies his trade. For him, the moment has come for existentialist engagement. Approached successively by the Germans, the British, and the local resis- [illegible] ge's and save himself.

Many rate these Paris books very [illegible]

rably describes the Fall of France f[illegible] the perspective of a mobile cinem[illegible] graphic unit, but after that, Cass[illegible] story is unbelievable most of the w[illegible] Would any well-connected Pari[illegible] really have been so ignorant about [illegible] thuggish nature of the French C[illegible] munist party? Probably not. I'm [illegible] not sure that sex was quite as *con[illegible]able* in wartime Paris, even among [illegible] sensual co-conspirators, or that g[illegible] silk underwear was so freely availa[illegible] on the black market.

The Polish Officer, however, b[illegible] liantly narrates in counterpoint [illegible] resistance of Warsaw and the inst[illegible] collapse of Paris, culminating wit[illegible] scene in which the French army pa[illegible] up its own archives instead of bu[illegible] ing them as the Poles did. Furst is as [illegible] terested in the shame of French [illegible] feat as he is consumed by image[illegible] French civilization, and his desc[illegible] tion of a French intelligence offi[illegible] provides for both:

> Kerchaval was in his late forties, w[illegible] dry skin, cracked underside to his [illegible] and smooth, glossy hair combed [illegible] . . . The exterior was flawless: cou[illegible] was considered, polished and hard [illegible] assured. If Kerchaval lied, he lied [illegible] gracefully, for reasons of state—[illegible] lies—and if you listened carefully [illegible] would hear a faint and deeply sub[illegible] [illegible] conception was simply a part of life, as [illegible] very old cultures had learned, sad [illegible] and wiser, to acknowledge.

Now that prominent French pol[illegible] cians have conspicuously express[illegible] their regrets for what was done un[illegible] the Vichy regime, it has become fa[illegible] tonable to point out that the rec[illegible] of collaborationist France was no wo[illegible] than that of other occupied countri[illegible] Despite government collusion, a hig[illegible] er proportion of France's Jewish po[illegible] ulation survived than of Holland[illegible] Furst does touch on the notorious ru[illegible] [illegible] by French policemen, so that th[illegible] could be handed over to German[illegible] murdered); and he shoehorns into [illegible] [illegible] mailed by a fellow office worker. [illegible] tween a brothel and a museum."

ell once described it. Furst elides hatreds experienced by French- and -women for each other, and ittle to say about *délation*: the habit nding one's personal enemies to uthorities for "behavior," a lack of ort for the Vichy government or German oppressor, that was "un- ch." It may be that Furst's nostal- admiration for French civiliza- —the syndrome is a familiar one, cting many "Anglo-Saxons" ich is how the French still refer to British and Americans)—has made npossible for him to re-create the or of those days.

was in Berlin during the war against Iraq, staying on the Kurfurstendam, when I noticed a plaque outthe hotel. This was where the Aus- n writer Joseph Roth, seated in a extinct café, completed *The Radetarch*, a novel that tells the story ree generations of the Von Trotmily as they try to serve the crumg Austro-Hungarian Empire. As it pens, I had just finished a passage n *The Polish Officer* that describes the officer watches Paris die while ding Roth's book.

Roth died of drink in 1939, after verting to Catholicism and abanning his youthful leftism in favor of lt devoted to the exiled Hapsburg asty. His poorly attended funeral is cribed in Furst's *Kingdom of Shadows*, which an aristocratic Hungarian spy inkles "a handful of dirt" on top of pinewood coffin. With his evoca- n of distant, forgotten places, and *Luftmensch* peregrinations from etl to metropolis and back again, th might have been a Furst charac-

Writing novels in cafés, Roth ran oss Europe in the style of a high- w paramedic, tracking its advancing esses and supplying the most painful nedies. Even before the arrival of e Nazis, he saw the hatred "tended e a sort of Eternal Flame," at which lfish" nations—and here he meant e apparently civilized countries: Germany, France, even Britain—warmed emselves, isolated from the danger til it was too late. Impoverished, cut from his devoted German-speaking dience, Roth continued to submit rk, usually unpaid, to the émigré blications Furst describes so well. "Let me say it loud and clear: The European mind is capitulating," Roth wrote in 1933. "It is capitulating out of weakness, out of sloth, out of apathy, out of lack of imagination."

I expect that Furst, who writes less as a prophet than as an entertainer, wouldn't want his own oeuvre set beside Roth's. But this doesn't mean that the Furstian, tolerant view of Europe before the flood has no relevance these days. No American pronouncement since John F. Kennedy's "Ich bin ein Berliner" caused as much impact among Europeans as Donald Rumsfeld's allusions to Old Europe. Europeans like to feel that they inhabit a revived continent free of past horrors, and Germans in particular—having behaved so impeccably for so long—can surely claim to inhabit a New Europe. They were shocked when the secretary of defense implied that this was not so—and they were furious at his suggestion that the old taint of capitulation to evil hadn't been effaced.

Amoral, tolerant of any number of vices, and slipshod when it came to the defense of what really mattered, Old Europe cannot be mourned. It contained certain defenders of civilization as well as copious sleaze artists and hangers-on; charm and loucheness proved to be inadequate in the face of organized thuggery. Its death was ultimately caused by lack of conviction. But the notion that moral thoughts necessarily lead to good deeds with benign effects is an absurd one. So is the idea of a world in which everyone is sure of what he or she believes, and proves capable of acting accordingly. At least some of Old Europe's characteristics deserve to survive into this century more or less intact. One could start with good brasserie food or classy underwear; I would certainly put in a wish for politicians capable of minimal recourse to syntax and journalists a little more selective in their encouragement of hatreds. But, above all, I hope for the survival of an Old European hostility to the current posture of moral clarity, whether its adherents are Christian or Islamic fundamentalists, neofascists, politicians, or hacks on the make. In the meantime, I offer a simple antidote to the new barbarisms of our time: read and reread the novels of Alan Furst. ■

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HARPER'S MAGAZINE

THE CRITIC AS ARTIST

James Wood's first novel

By Wyatt Mason

The Book Against God, by James Wood. Farrar, Straus and Giroux. 2003. 272 [illegible]

The Broken Estate: Essays on Literature and Belief, by James Wood. Modern Li[illegible]

[illegible] novels are often received as [illegible] for once, is beside the point; there is instead a giddy sense of gratitude for the effort. Conspicuous flaws are tolerated, errors of construction and conception are, if not overlooked, seen as peripheral to the necessity of embracing what the new writer does well. Francine Prose exhibited characteristic sympathy for a first novel's bright failures when, in a review last year, she wrote: "Such scenes are so [illegible] nally, just so much fun—that you hardly care when big chunks of the book start to crumble in the last 50 pages or so."

Yet a climate of sympathy and forgiveness is not to be expected [illegible] God—a first novel, yes, but one



Wood's rapid advance is easily ex[illegible] years. The judgments it contains are distinguished by their originality and precision, the depth of reading that informs them, and the metaphorical rich-

offered a job (which he continues to hold) as an editor at *The New Republic*. He writes frequent reviews for that magazine, *The New Yorker*, and *The London Review of Books*. Four years ago, he published a collection of critical essays, entitled *The Broken Estate*.

ness of their language. He is passio[illegible] in defense of novelistic seriousness as such, has been unforgiving of c[illegible] placency, unsparing of triviality, unrelenting in his assault on the [illegible] formed or the overwrought.

Similar claims of rigor may be m[illegible] for the work of any number of lite[illegible] critics. Severity to the point of ct[illegible] ty is not untypical of the discipl[illegible] Why, then, is Wood written abou[illegible] *The New York Times Magazine* ("[illegible] smart and very grouchy"), responde[illegible] in essay form by the novelists he[illegible] views ("James Wood appeared in [illegible] paper last Saturday aiming a he[illegible] well-timed kick at what he called '[illegible] terical realism,'" wrote Zadie Sm[illegible] "a painfully accurate term for the [illegible] of overblown, manic prose to be fo[illegible] in novels like my own"), and rep[illegible] edly tagged as The Best Literary C[illegible] ic of his Generation?

That some commentators h[illegible] called him "fearless" may offer a [illegible] Wood has proven himself [illegible] daunted by marquee nam[illegible] whether members of the [illegible] guard (Milan Kundera, Ph[illegible] Roth), brightly hyped new [illegible] ent (Jeanette Winterson, Za[illegible] Smith), or Booker and Puli[illegible] Prize winners (Yann Martel, [illegible] frey Eugenides). Now and ag[illegible] Wood will do a piece on a d[illegible] exotic import—a Hrabal, [illegible] Bernanos, or a Svevo. But th[illegible] are snacks amid his steady [illegible] of contemporary big game, b[illegible] the lions or their cubs. Of P[illegible] chon: "Readers of Pynchon [illegible] ten mistake bright lights for [illegible] idence of habitation." DeLi[illegible] "If Tolstoy fought superstit[illegible] with the daylight of realis[illegible] DeLillo merely fights superstit[illegible] with a new superstition." Col[illegible] Whitehead: "Whitehead's pr[illegible] seems decidedly a contempor[illegible] instance, a prose of the virt[illegible] imprecise, swaggering wher[illegible] should be controlled, fruitle[illegible] dense, grossly abundant." And, [illegible] course, Zadie Smith: "As realism, i[illegible] incredible: as satire, it is cartooni[illegible] as cartoon, it is too realistic.... It is [illegible] shiny externality, all caricature."

For Wood, the terrain of these w[illegible] ers, however varied, is seeded with

erlying blight: the complacency of prose. Whether manifested in ny externality" or "swagger," the satisfied surfaces of these writers' ef—different grades of smoothness—e Wood:

his style of writing is not to be faulted ecause it lacks reality—the usual charge gainst botched realism—but because seems evasive of reality while bor-owing from realism itself. It is not a ock-up, but a cover-up.

that externality, that cover-up, od has judged Updike particularly ty. In his 1996 novel, *In the Beau-f the Lilies*, Updike includes an ac-nt of a loss of belief undergone by everend Clarence Wilmot. "The ller finds belief hard, too," writes od. Why? Because of what Wood s as the fatally polished surface of like's prose. As the reverend stands his study, staring at the spines of ological texts for which he no ger has any use, he deems them "ig-ant but not pathetic in the way of attempts of the century just now arted to cope with God's inexorable ession." Wood observes:

Does this sound like the Reverend Wilmot's language, or Updike's? It is supposed to be a kind of inner mono-logue on Clarence's part. But it sounds as if Updike is reviewing Clarence's loss of faith for *The New Yorker*, and writing the review at his desk on a fine calm morning in Massachusetts.

dike's language proves "alienating ust the moment we should be drawn " Rather than reaching into char-er, we are "drawn back to Updike nself, to the author's verbal talents." Updike's miss, Wood has argued, is dicative of a larger problem (and it is rth noting that one of the qualities parating Wood from his peers is his bition, not to say his ability, to dis-n a credible pattern behind the flaws delights in finding). Whether rough simple incapacity or by com-ex design, the depiction of interior-, of character, has become less and s a feature of the modern novel:

Some of the more impressive novelistic minds of our age do not think that language and the representation of consciousness are the novelist's quarries any more. Information has become the new character . . .

And, elsewhere, in the same vein:

Zadie Smith is merely of her time when she says, in an interview, that it is not the writer's job "to tell us how somebody felt about something, it's to tell us how the world works."

"How somebody felt about something" is precisely what Wood *wants* from a novel; reaching into character is what he expects. Consciousness is the ultimate freedom, and its honest representation in fiction is what draws us into sympathy with the created, not with its creator. This is the hallmark of the work of those authors—Austen, Bellow, Joyce, and Woolf highest among them—for whom Wood has the greatest regard. But on this shelf of excellence there is, if one can reach it, always more room. In that spirit, Wood has written, "A space may now open . . . for the kind of novel that shows us that human consciousness is the truest Stendhalian mirror, reflecting helplessly the newly dark lights of the age."

Wood's novel, *The Book Against God*, begins with a disclosure: "I denied my father three times, twice before he died, once afterwards." The confessional voice roots us immediately in loamy New Testament soil. And the language makes us lean in, as it were, to hear this confession: Peter too denied His Father three times. To echo, deliberately, Christianity's first pope prepares us for momentous disclosures, betrayals of biblical proportions, or, at the very least, a clear measure of grandiosity. Wood's narrator is a youngish Englishman named Thomas Bunting. On two occasions, once to avoid work and once to evade taxes, Bunting wrote letters claiming that his father had died, in a calculated effort to solicit his correspondent's sympathy. Hardly biblical stuff: just tasteless, creepy behavior. When, later in the first chapter, Bunting relates the third of his denials, he can no longer keep a straight face: denials become "denials." Bunting's backpedaling into quotation is a quiet admission that he is both aware of his tendency for grandiosity and unable to avoid it: his pathological prose cannot resist fitting a pretty mask to an ugly lie. His retraction puts us on notice that we should hold tightly to this book as we read, watchful for subtle slips.

Bunting's self-portrait is the dark heart of *The Book Against God*. When the novel begins, he is living alone in a rented room over a karate studio from which "yelps of triumph and pain can be heard." At thirty, he has set himself a task: the literary coming-to-terms with where his life went awry. To that end, he is writing the document we have in our hands, an analysis, of a kind, of himself. But like similar attempts by his forebears—confession narratives by Humbert and Kinbote; Molloy and the Underground Man—the book is prisoner to Bunting's own distorted perspective. He is like a man who tries to tell if he has a fever by feeling his own forehead. And, for several hundred pages, we are hostage to that febrile consciousness.

Chief among Bunting's problems are the complications that arise from his peculiar weakness. He lies to his parents, his wife, his best friend; to his parents' friends and his friends' parents. He lies to himself. He lies to us.

The habit of dishonesty, he explains, is a sort of counterweight; it developed along with his doubts about God:

That was where the lying began, you see. My instinct was to hide myself, to hide my thoughts about God. A lie was necessary to protect the truth. . . . But really, once you started, there were so many truths to protect that there were hardly enough lies to cover them.

Despite this and other professions of dishonesty, Bunting's writing glitters with precisely rendered truths. An entrance to an old house features "four stone steps which are depressed in the middle like saddles." Bunting's pianist wife, Jane, when he first sees her, is "heavily involved in one of those large, parachute-like concert dresses made of puffy blue raw silk, the kind that only female musicians wear." A man's voice "sounded bearded, somehow." Bunting looks "at the electric fire, at the tangerine grin of its single coiled bar." Portraits of people deftly sketch Dickensian connections between physiognomy and quiddity:

I especially dislike Colin. His ears are large and on fire with a tiny network of

veins, which also cover his nose and [illegible] suggest a life of drink and wasteful pleasure. In [Colin's] case they suggest a lifetime of studying minute connections and branches of knowledge; the veins are like little paths of rewarded endeavour; it is as if a map of diligence covers his face.

Between convincing portraits of minor characters and the skillful description of telling minutiae, there are moments in which the writing moves conspicuously from revelatory to grotesquely false. Typical is Bunting's attempt to address his wife's frustration with all his lies:

> People like Jane cannot distinguish between small lies and large lies. . . . Jane treats every lie as if it were asparagus, which, whether I eat one spear or ten, makes my urine smell with exactly the same pungency.

The allusion stinks: it is crass, the stuff of bad sitcoms. It would be easy to dismiss it out of hand as Wood's fault, to tire of the bad writing, and to turn away. But the badness of the image is conspicuous: Bunting is retreating to the surface. We are left with the impression of his metaphor rather than of Jane's complaint, perfectly justified, that her husband can't tell her the truth about anything, which is just as Bunting wants it. Wood is quietly implicating his narrator in blindness to his own vulgarity. Bunting's language is made to be as inadequate as his arguments.

The plot of the novel thus unfolds on two levels: what we are given, and what we must gather. One thing Bunting is unambiguously providing us with is the chief justification for his miserable existence. In lieu of finishing his Ph.D., he has been exploring "a private project which I call the 'Book Against God' (I think of it now as the BAG)":

> In it I copy out opposite religious and antireligious quotations, and develop arguments of my own about theological and philosophical matters. It has swelled to four large notebooks. It has really become my life's work, as far as I am concerned.

Any wise editor, in search of economy of expression, would clip Bunting's last sentence down to its essence: "It has become my life's work." The lingering presence of the explanatory "really" and "as far as I am concerned" are telltale: they signal a man who isn't so sure, at all, that this BAG is going to offer any more consolation than the last failed abbreviation, his Ph.D., did. Like his namesake, Thomas, Bunting is consumed by doubts. He looks despondently outward for direction:

> There was a quality of desperation in the way I consumed books . . . beginning each in the hope that this was the one which would tell me how to live, how to think; as soon as I realized that it would not, my reading of it began to slow, precisely as if my heartbeat were slowing from its initial race. More often than not, I put it aside.

Even the transit of eyes across a page is too much for Bunting: he is all inertia. As it happens, his best friend, Max, an "intellectually deluxe columnist at *The Times*," defined the nature of that inertia in his very first column for the paper. It was ostensibly a political article on England, with references to miners and Thatcherism:

> He argued that English history had always oscillated between acts of anger and ideas of melancholy; and that sometimes these opposite tendencies acted against each other at the same time or in the same person. And this is how we British like it, he said. It means that nothing gets done.

Bunting is similarly poised, motionless between anger and melancholy. Halfway through Bunting's account, Wood has him admit that he neglected to mention a significant result of that inertia to his wife. Bunting has stopped working on his Ph.D. in favor of his BAG:

> I wish now that I had attended to that strange look of pure panic that consumed Jane's face when I told her about the BAG. Pure panic! In that fear lay everything that was to come. I suppose she believed briefly that I had been given powers of prophecy; she could see that the BAG was not going to go away. And my dear Jane, I don't believe me when I said that I had not been working on it. Obviously, she couldn't have known about the "four notebooks," but she probably had a good idea of what I had been up to.

Bunting's glib "I suppose she felt she had suddenly been given powers of prophecy" distances him from the emotion of the event, reminding us of the numerous other distancings scattered throughout the novel and inform[illegible] (for the reader) the "fury" Jane felt, reason she "cannot distinguish betw[illegible] small lies and large lies." But in heart of this admission lurks a gra[illegible] lie. "Obviously, she couldn't h[illegible] known about the 'four notebooks,' she probably had a good idea of wh[illegible] had been up to." When the BAG introduced, Bunting said it had swe[illegible] to four large notebooks. As denial came "denial," four notebooks h[illegible] become "four notebooks." Like B[illegible] ing's wife, we have a pretty good of what he's up to. Even the BAG been a bluff: there is no BAG. It empty as Bunting, as empty as his n[illegible] insinuates: for "bunting" is the c[illegible] of which flags are made, or the w[illegible] used to describe the swell in a sail with wind. He tells his wife that, w[illegible] trying to navigate adverse situati[illegible] "you have to be the controller of wind, that's what's crucial."

Despite this ambition to cont[illegible] Bunting is directionless, an empty at least until the final pages of book. Left with nothing—no ho[illegible] no wife, no best friend, no Ph.D[illegible] Bunting writes "the Book," the b[illegible] we have been reading. The none[illegible] tent *Book Against God* finally exis[illegible]

The Book Against God is a sm[illegible] quiet novel, a piece of mi[illegible] for solo voice. That voice is [illegible] ten unpleasant, all too human, rarely likable, and Wood's success [illegible] the degree to which he redeems th[illegible] very qualities. The redemption is [illegible] thetic as well as moral: Bunting's reliability is reliable, and credible, cause Wood is consistent, careful, restrained. Those moments of mi[illegible] rection, willful or inadvertent, c[illegible] tribute to our sense of his impairme[illegible] This suggests a considerable arti[illegible] victory, since the danger inheren[illegible] such a narrative strategy—unreli[illegible] narration—is that the proceedings collapse under the weight of artif[illegible] making the protagonist a mere pats[illegible] strawman in the writer's scorch game. Take this example from Na[illegible] kov's *Pale Fire*, with Charles Kinb[illegible] sociopath, at the helm:

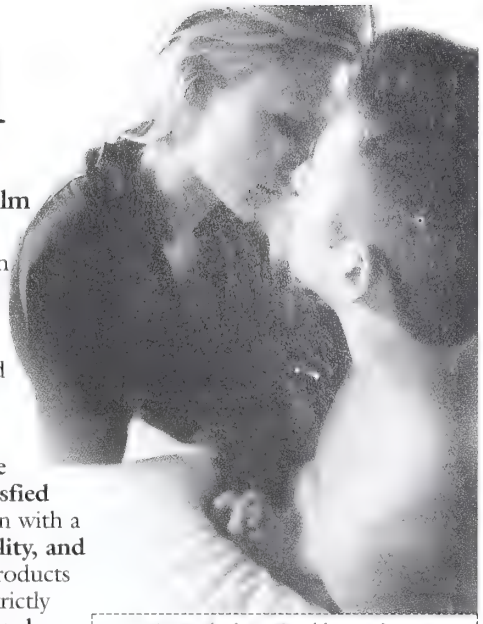
> I came home from a very enjoyable [illegible] successful meeting of students and te[illegible] ers (at which I had exuberantly thro[illegible] off my coat and shown several wi[illegible]

ıpils a few of the amusing holds em-
oyed by Zemblan wrestlers) and found
my coat pocket a brutal anonymous
ote saying: "You have hal . . . . . s real
ıd, chum," meaning evidently "hallu-
nations," although a malevolent crit-
might infer from the insufficient num-
er of dashes that little Mr. Anon,
espite teaching Freshman English,
ıuld hardly spell.

ven the reader who has not read
Fire becomes infected by the germs
ubt that issue from the paragraph.
he time we reach his condescend-
claim that Mr. Anon "could hard-
ell," we have connected, as it were,
dots: the tight wrestling hold, the
suggestive spaces in the incom-
e word that could not more clear-
ell "halitosis" if they were set in
ts. This is extraordinarily gameful
ing, as Nabokov manages to keep
e independent ideas in the air: Kin-
's sense of self (Olympian); our
e of Kinbote (delusional); and our
ion of Nabokov (awed). But how
sympathy be possible if we are kept
ch a distance? How can we get in-
Kinbote if we feel merely superior
im, or inferior to Nabokov? We
relentlessly drawn back to an au-
's verbal talents, rather than deep-
nto the character.

nd this distance, this barrier to
ing that self-consciousness can im-
, is precisely what Wood has railed
inst in his criticism (he calls Up-
e "a fine pupil of Nabokov"). The
icular success of *The Book Against*
l is its convincing performance of
risks of such distance, of surface.
ıting, busy with exteriors (whether
abject lies he has told everyone
he tainted truths he is telling us),
alienated himself from all those
o care about him. His prose help-
ly reflects (to adapt Wood's
ase), and mimetically imposes, that
nviable distance onto the reader.
is is a risky strategy for any author,
cause such discomfort in readers
o might be tempted, like Bunting's
nds and family, to turn away. And
ticularly risky for the author of a
t novel who has yet to earn our
t. But this is not a novel that wants
be loved, and a reader who sup-
es Bunting's failings to be the au-
r's would not be taking the book on
own demanding interior terms.

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NOTES FOR "SAVE ONE FOR ME":

The Across entries link to spell out names of dances: WALTZ, MAMBO, TANGO, ONE-STEP, CHA-CHA, SAMBA, CHARLESTON.

Puzzle editing by Dan Asimov.

Anagrams are indicated with an asterisk (*).

ACROSS: A. (am)ass(es); B. ton-e; C. (b)ride; D. etch*; E. I'm-Am; F. (b)reach; G. (fe)Arles(s); H. Bo(I)se; I. angora*; J. hones-t(he); K. avowal, homophone; L. E(ye)-paulet*; M. tzar(D)om; N. What!-not; O. Ac(h-a)eans*; P. ambassador*.

DOWN: 1. (N)arrow(S); 2. vain, homophone; 3. odds, pun; 4. *; 5. hidden; 6. L-ump; 7. to-(a-S)-tier; 8. hidden; 9. a-l(bin)o; 10. RO(o)M; 11. d-R.I.P.; 12. *; 13. two mngs.; 14. two mngs.; 15. a-n(u)n; 16. O-ct.-O; 17. Am-P; 18. ga(U.)ze; 19. *; 20. *; 21. shor(tag)e; 22. *; 23. *; 24. *; 25. *; 26. in(rob, rev.)n; 27. c(andy)-l-ash; 28. a(M)ber*; 29, hidden; 30. hidden; 31. r(emoving)-ant; 32. tos(s), rev.

ing such demands of readers. As a critic, he has made his reputation defending the importance of interior authorial intentions: "A novel always brings its own criteria for judgment with it." A critic's job, as such, is to evaluate those criteria for consistency and fidelity. If critics are to have any use beyond expressing subjective preference, they must be able to reveal what we readers might not be able, initially, to see ourselves. If readers of fiction should reasonably expect a novelist to be able to induce sympathy for his creations, readers of criticism should reasonably expect a critic to be able to produce a sympathetic understanding of a novelist's ambitions. In a recent radio interview, Wood said as much:

> I've always wanted to be a novelist. The greatest compliment that is ever paid to me as a critic ... is when writers come up to me and say, "I think the reason I like your criticism is that you see things as a writer does, from the inside. You really look at the language, you're speaking to me as a writer." Now, of course I'm flattered by that, but I'm flattered by that because from the very earliest times—I started doing this straight out of university—I always saw this thing I was doing—writing about fiction—as a way of ... stealing the goods: studying what I could do to make something fictional out of my reading.

The Book Against God shows signs of that study: as his criticism has been pounding away against the overupholstered hystericism of much contemporary fiction, lamenting the absence of the novel of character, it is unsurprising that he has produced a novel that is compensatorily austere, a novel of character. But if we have been well served by that apprenticeship in the form of Wood's novel, it is surprising, and regrettable, how poorly served we have been by Wood's criticism.

Let us recall his most consistent critical point, one he has been making in various forms since Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* came out nearly three years ago. "Information has become the new character." For the sake of variety, here it is again, from one more of Wood's DeLillo reviews, this past April:

> *Cosmopolis*, so eager to tell us about our age, to bring back the news, delivers a kind of information, and delivers it in such a way that finally it threatens the existence of the novel form. For in what way does this novel tell us something about the world that only the novel form could tell us?

Let us concede the point, if only for argument's sake. Let us also acknowledge Wood's observation that DeLillo "has begun to deliver nameable kin." That in Jonathan Franzen's writing, "What is retained from DeLillo is the tentacular ambition, the effort to pin down an entire writhing culture." Let us further accept that Wood is right in his observation of either influence or fellow-feeling in the work of Thomas Pynchon, David Foster Wallace, Salman Rushdie, Colson Whitehead, Zadie Smith, Dave Eggers, and still others—all writers whom Wood has gone after, all fish in his nets of "hysterical realism" or novel of "information." Let us certainly agree that one of the important roles of the critic is to argue, when required, that this is shinola, and that over there is shit. Wood has every right—and a responsibility—to distinguish between the two. But let us ask this: why does he keep reviewing this shit?

It is a question that has been coming up lately with great regularity. Manhattan literary gossip has it that Wood has only been clearing the field in preparation for his novelistic landing. This is absurd, of course, as most of the writers mentioned above are manifestly accomplished and, essentially, review-proof: they either have generations of readers in their pockets, are prizewinners selling by the barrel, or are the rising stars whose publishers' target audiences will not be affected a whit by a bad review in a weekly magazine with a relatively modest number of readers, most of whom subscribe for the politics. It is also absurd to suppose that Wood isn't reviewing from his heart, with all his heart. I suspect he reviews these books because he believes they need to be addressed in all their badness.

But why are they being addressed again and again? They do seem to be the antithesis of Wood's own novelistic ambitions: loud where he is quiet, manic where he is minimal, baggy where he is lean, information-obsessed where he doesn't give a damn—theirs are multicharacter multigenerati sagas, where his is written from w in the blind spot of a single chara It is a curious opposition. At the least, one can say this: a knowled Wood's criticism makes *The B Against God* the novel you would h imagined Wood would write. Wood's choices of what he revi from contemporary fiction are prec what one would imagine he woul view, were he trying to justify the elistic choices he is trying to mak

"In my case," Wood said in the terview about the process of wri his novel, "there was a great dea waiting, a great deal, as I saw it in own terms, of apprenticeship." T apprenticeship, though, has had a Reading Wood on DeLillo, one w not suppose that author capable of humanity and empathy to be foun the version of Lee Harvey Osw mother, in *Libra*, a book Wood not mention in his various dissecti Nor would one suppose *The Co tions* is so successful a book on cisely the matter of character, bec of how much space Wood devote discussion of the whole social n bugaboo. For when he does praise aspect of Franzen's book—"Franz at his finest when ... he is exami consciousness and finding, willy-n that consciousness is the true S dhalian mirror"—he makes it se unnecessarily, as though what Fra does well he does despite himself. would one suppose that John Upd author of forty books, is an au worth reading at all:

> It seems to be easier for John Up to stifle a yawn than to refrain from ing a book. It is generally thought gardly or envious to complain ab writer's abundance (a book a y roughly, in Updike's case). Most elists, it is said, would pant to ex such a fault. Or the case is made t is otiose to complain about the med books when there are so many fine the odd truancy in a record of suc spired application is inevitable, the terfall has its chilly underside an on. For every *Witches of Eastwick* a *bit* will be pulled from the hat.

It *is* niggardly, and envious, and ot just like the last line's attempt to attention away from those quali

Continued on pa

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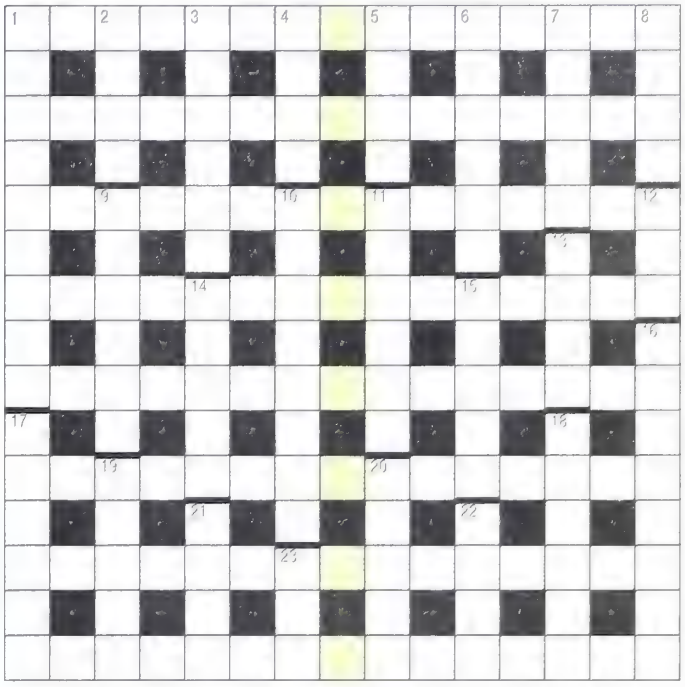
Finding the Right Word

By Richard E. Maltby Jr.
(with acknowledgments to Dmitri Borgmann)

A common eight-letter word—to be determined by logic—is to be entered in the shaded squares that run down the middle of the diagram. Removing the first letter of that word produces seven letters that can be anagrammed into two different words—which are to be entered to the right and left of the first letter, in the first Across row. Similarly, removing the second letter produces a group of letters that can be anagrammed into two words to be entered to the right and left, in the second row. Continue this process with the remaining six letters, and the diagram can be completed.

The seven-letter anagrammed Across words are clued in random order. Determine their placement by use of the Down answers, and the original eight-letter word can be deduced.

Down answers are to be entered normally. 3D is an uncommon word. As always, mental repunctuation of a clue is the key to its solution. The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 91.



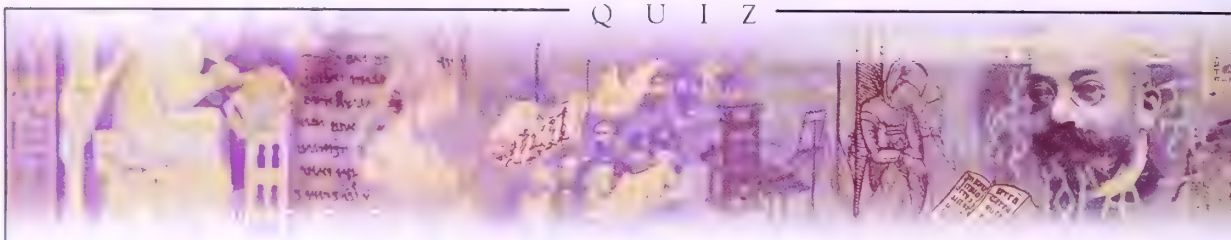
ACROSS

A. Taking out time—make beautiful music together
B. Dives in Georgia, hospital areas on both sides
C. Referring to Sinatra's daughter's eyes, in part
D. More affected by male solo? That is right
E. The Rock escaped *The Thing*—in powerful company!—...
F. ...before slipping into a bit of tie-dyed ragging
G. Meaner one returns, starting small row
H. Cocktail: having one gets you tighter
I. Curious street to travel over
J. A tigress doesn't end horrible spats
K. Leading right away with "Can't Take My Eyes Off of You" performance
L. Food in catering establishments
M. One not thankful for calling hotel first-class
N. Taking time off to have another bite?
O. Grills faceless rulers of TV
P. Fish comes out with stones

DOWN

1. Taking ill, offering to drop piano (9)
2. Fight over late call on base (4)
3. Spirit is keeping something wrong in sight (6)
4. Vice President's insertion (4)
5. All Hollywood actors take on a story like *Roots* (4)
6. Garbling "I do"—it's for people who don't think (6)
7. Get information from a strange angle (5)
8. Chance to end up a star? (4)
9. Very rich rising American city (in Indiana) (6)
10. Add new duties to old duties—think again! (8)
11. Try again to reorganize the type-setter (6)
12. Depression brings up idle talk (3)
13. Running after one left out front—one caged with big locks! (4)
14. Rear a violinist (5)
15. Courts matriarchal element (5)
16. Break age rules—they can be minor! (8)
17. Accent a kind of movie villain (6)
18. Run on capturing one hijacker (6)
19. A ring's facing, an item getting raised diamonds on top (5)
20. Entrapment is almost mean (5)
21. I'm up and about, wearing a skirt (4)
22. Mixture of orange, tangerine, and grapefruit caught in bug light (4)
23. Pelt, for example, on Goth's head (3)

Contest Rules: Send completed diagram with name and address to "Finding the Right Word," *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Entries must be received by July 14. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive one-year subscriptions to *Harper's Magazine*. Winners' names will be printed in the September issue. Winners of the May puzzle, "Daffinitions," are Steven Dorfman, West Hollywood, California; Henry Gawlowicz, Venice, Florida; and Margery E. Laird, New York City.



BABBLING ON

1. The first European grammar book observed that "language has always been the companion of empire," and was dedicated to Spain's Queen Isabella in what epochal year?

2. After the Bible, the second book printed by Johannes Gutenberg was a speculative grammar of what ancient writing system?

3. The recital of religious texts in what language could save a condemned prisoner from death in medieval Europe?

4. The first communication to employ electricity—"What hath God wrought?"—was sent by whom?

5. In at least one county of what U.S. city do public school students speak 92 languages at home?

6. The will of what Irish writer included a provision for a competition to create an alphabet "sufficient to represent all the sounds of spoken English recognizeable by a single symbol each?"

7. What writing system was inspired by sonography, a nighttime communication system used by the French military in the nineteenth century?

8. What country's writing system was invente a fifteenth-century king?

9. In what invented language were U.S. Army troops required to converse while playing th Aggressor Force in war games between 194 and 1978?

10. Which U.S. president signed an executive requiring federal regulations to be written i plain language, and which president later revoked it?

11. What country's paper money is imprinted w thirteen languages?

12. In 1994, Indian state television's introducti of hourly news bulletins in what language prompted Muslim/Hindu riots that killed twenty-five?

13. What event constitutes "the language of th unheard," according to Martin Luther King

14. What twentieth-century British-born Amer poet wrote, "When [language] is corrupted, people lose faith in what they hear and this leads to violence"?

Contest Rules: Send numbered answers with name and address to "Quiz," Harper's Magazine, 666 Broadway, New York, NY 10012. If you already Harper's, *please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Entries must be received by July 14. The sender of the first correct set of answers opened at* a one-year subscription to Harper's Magazine. *The winner's name will be printed in the September issue. The answers to last month's quiz, "I Do*

Research by André Picher. Illustration by R

GUERRILLA HISTORY



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Paul J. Dosal

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August

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THE LONGEST ROAD IN THE WORLD
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Today, with quality at the core of our values, we're building the best cars and trucks in our history. GM is now challenging the automotive world in fuel efficiency, advanced emissions controls, styling and design, and manufacturing productivity.

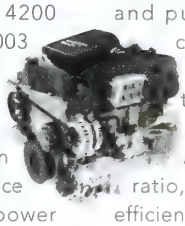
It didn't start yesterday. And it doesn't happen overnight. But last year we launched over twenty new models on the way to posting our second straight year of market share gains. And a whole lot of you rediscovered that an American car can be a great car.

The road to redemption has no finish line. But it does have a corner.

And it's fair to say we've turned it.

HOW SIX CYLINDERS DELIVER THE POWER OF A V8

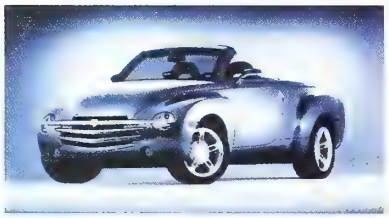
The 4.2-liter GM Vortec 4200 Inline 6, found in every 2003 mid-size SUV, delivers the horsepower of a V8 with only six cylinders. We used an all-aluminum composition and simplified design to reduce weight. We packed both power and punch with 4 valves per cylinder, dual overhead cams and variable valve timing – features rarely found in competitive V8s. And with a 10:1 compression ratio, its cylinders fire with the efficiency of a racecar.



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- Industry leading emissions controls, using the least amount of precious metals.
- More return customers than any other car manufacturer in the world.[1]
- The top two automotive assembly plants in North/South America in the J.D. Power and Associates Initial Quality Study.[SM 2]
- 149 automotive awards in 2002.



Coming this summer: The rule-breaking, game-changing Chevy SSR.*



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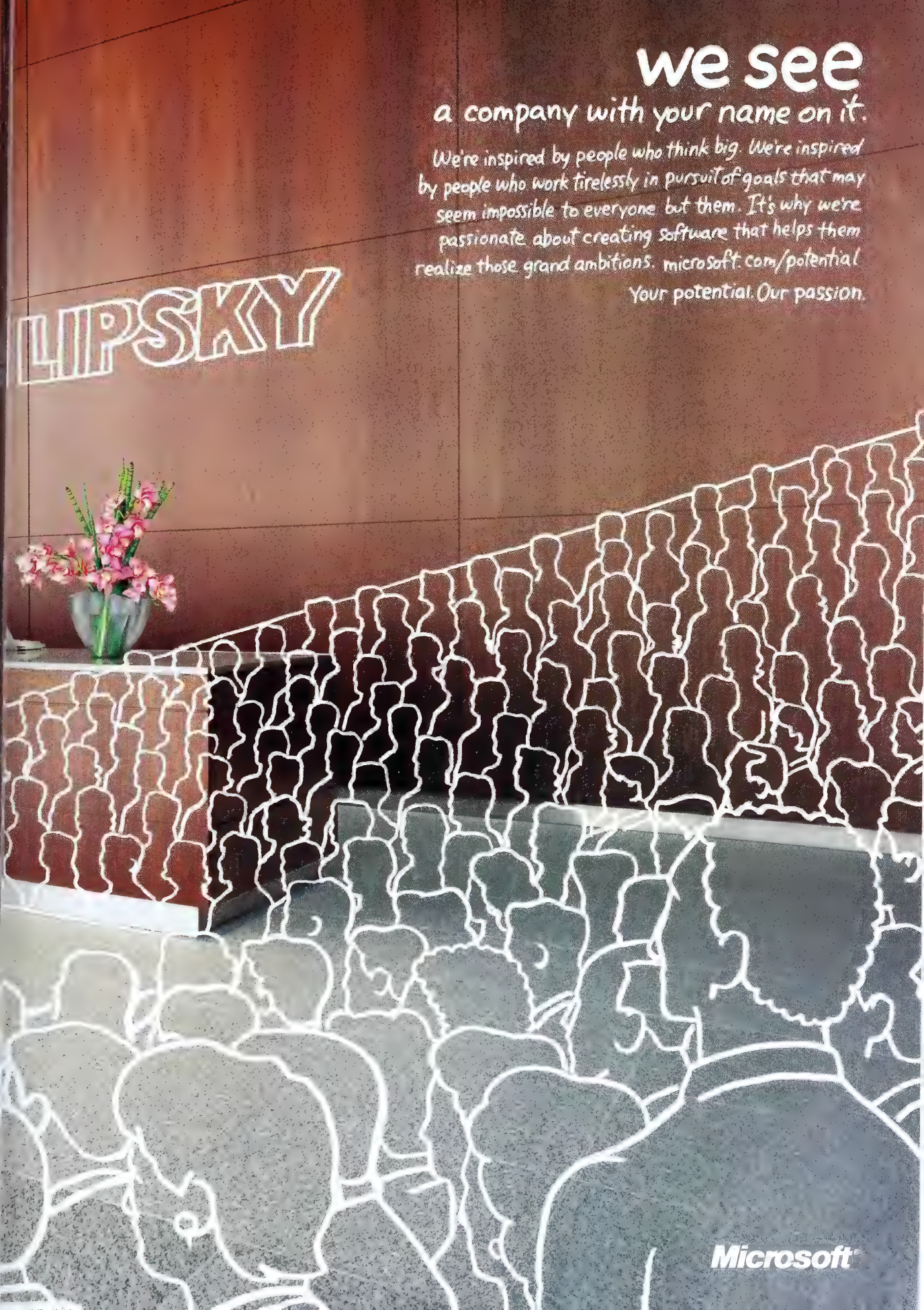
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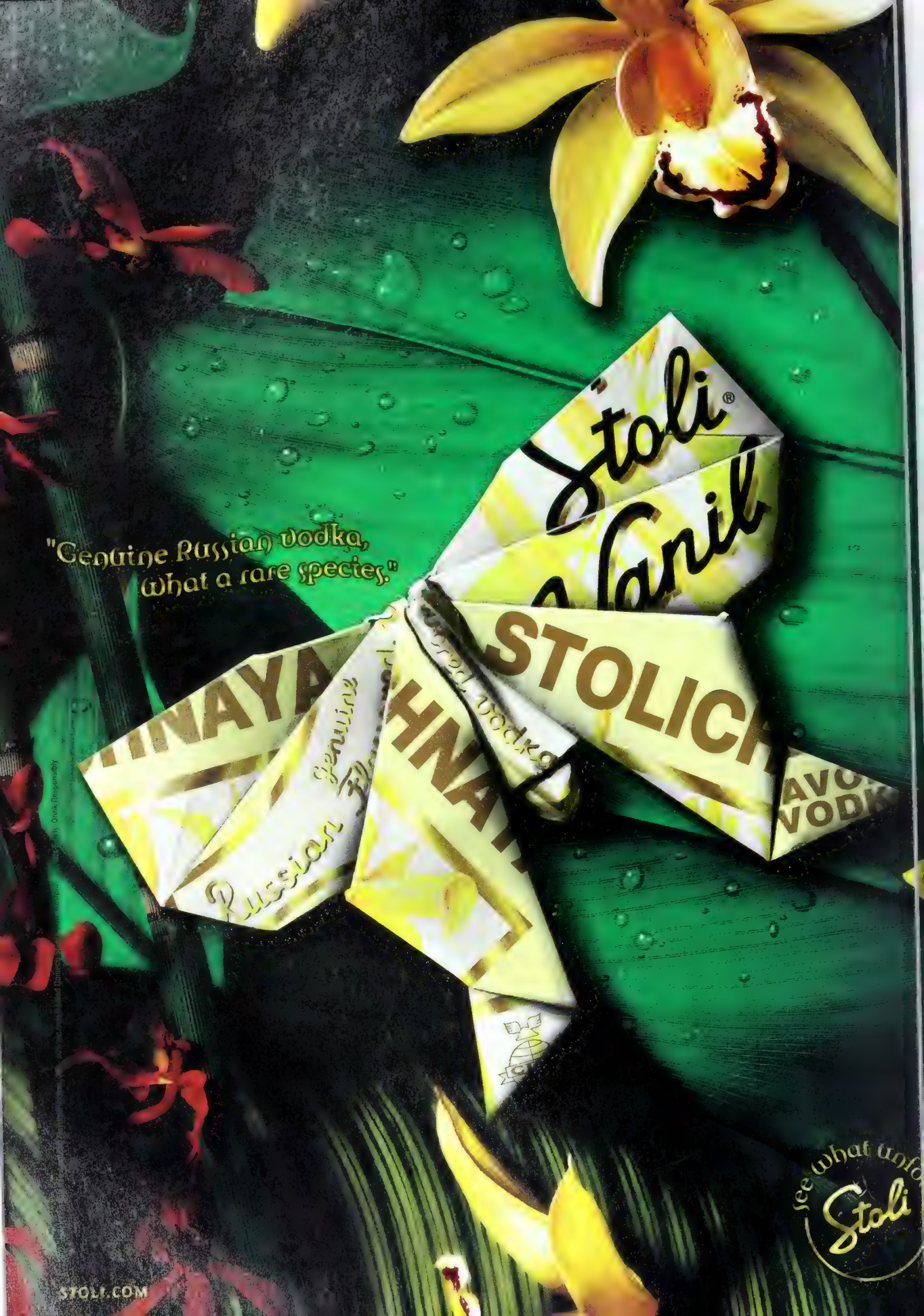
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[1]According to R.L. Polk & Co., statistics for Overall Manufacturer Loyalty in 2002 model year, GM ranked highest by having the greatest percentage of households return to purchase or lease another GM vehicle. [2]The General Motors Corporation Oshawa #1, Ontario plant was ranked highest and the Lansing, Grand River, MI plant was ranked second highest in North/South America among plants producing vehicles for the U.S. market in J.D. Power and Associates 2003 Initial Quality Study.[SM] Study based on a total of 52,105 U.S. consumer responses indicating owner reported problems during the first 90 days of ownership. www.jdpower.com. *Limited availability. See dealer for details.


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LETTERS

The New Scientific Method

In "One-Act Farce" [Annotation, June], Bryant Urstadt alleges that the Competitive Enterprise Institute's petition under the federal Data Quality Act to cease dissemination of the National Assessment on Climate Change was based on the idea that we "found" a "friendly scientist . . . to dispute an inconvenient finding." This is a serious accusation that does not fit with the scientific evidence.

The National Assessment is now widely agreed to be based on shoddy science. Rather than us finding him, the academic you refer to, Patrick Michaels of the University of Virginia, was actually part of the Assessment's peer-review process. He demonstrated conclusively that the computer models central to the Assessment's case did a worse job of predicting temperature record for the past 100 years than did "a table of random numbers." Tom Karl, co-chair of the Assessment team, took the results so seriously that he commissioned an independent evaluation of Professor Michaels's tests. This evaluation was more inclusive, using four different averages of U.S. annual temperature, and it verified that both models produced no better results than randomness. This is clearly not a sound basis for reaching public-policy decisions, and it is precisely the sort of thing the Data Quality Act was designed to stop.

Nor is Professor Michaels alone in his criticisms. Our petition mentio the objections of four other respec scientists and another four peer viewers working for the national oratories, who testified that the p review process itself was inadequ for such an important document.

These are matters of considered entific judgment. The CEI, for its p is acting to preserve the integrity the scientific process.

Iain Murray
Washington, D.C.

Bryant Urstadt responds:

My apologies to the Competit Enterprise Institute for not being p fectly clear. I did not mean to im that the CEI had to hunt for Patri Michaels, as though he had been t ing in obscurity. No dogged intellect work was even remotely necessary. Michaels has been disputing glo warming in plain sight for years, quently in concert with The Gre ing Earth Society, which, accordin its website, takes the "exciting" posit that "carbon dioxide emissions fr fossil fuel combustion are beneficia life on earth." As I mentioned in annotation, this view dovetails w the interests of its paymasters: elec cooperatives, municipal electric ut ties, and their fuel suppliers.

The CEI advocates the position t citizens are "best helped not by g ernment regulation but by being lowed to make their own choices i free marketplace." This point of v is remarkably coincident with the terests of many companies that wo prefer not to be regulated, and t have funded the CEI, including American Petroleum Institute, Amo

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d, Texaco, and General Motors. Finally, it is odd for the CEI to cite omas Karl in its efforts to suppress discussion of global warming. His timony before the Committee on ergy and Commerce demonstrated measured *support* for the results of National Assessment on Climate ange. And on the website of the tional Climatic Data Center, which directs, Karl endorses the view that bal warming does indeed exist. "Hun activity has been increasing the ncentration of greenhouse gases in atmosphere," he writes. "There is scientific debate on this point." He es on to substantiate generally acted worries about receding glaciers, lting ice caps, increased rain, and a neral rise in the global temperature.

ne Nature of History

Jared Diamond ["The Last Americans," June] is an insightful analyst of e sweep of human history, particuly in *Guns, Germs and Steel*. And I nnot quarrel with his vivid tale of ayan decline, but in every instance at he attempts to tie the Mayan fate ours, he ignores or elides the facts. His politician is a straw man woven sit opposite the environmentalist. o United States politician speaks out Nepal, Bangladesh, or Burundi as e worst "trouble spots."

Diamond asserts in purely qualitave terms that the United States is ercrowded and neglects the availle research. Commuting delays in is country are caused not by high pulation density but by urban sprawl. ne life of a fat American driving to rk for an hour in his two-ton sportility vehicle from his 3,000-square-ot home does not include excess den-y, unless you consider his own mass. Scaremongering about immigration vents a problem where none exists id contributes to the general intolance with which we welcome our w neighbors. The United States is a untry of one-time immigrants, and ere is proportionally less immigraon today than in the early twentieth century. There were roughly 90 illion people in the United States 1910 and about 9 million people migrated during the previous decade. the 1990s about 10 million immi-

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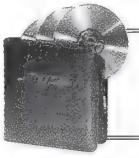
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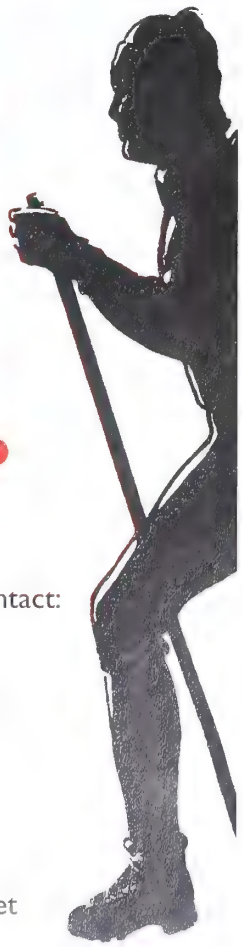
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Hike the Alps.

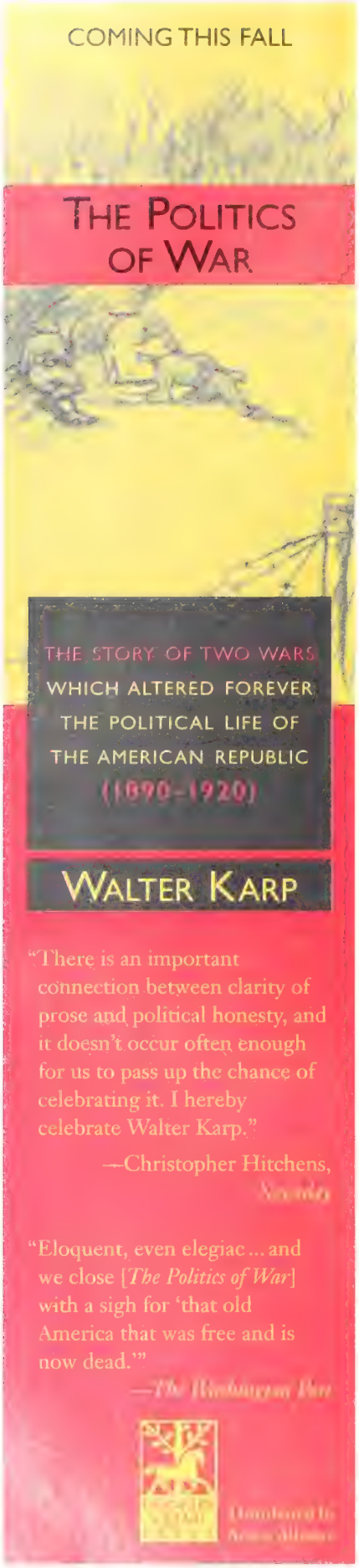
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grated to a country of 280 million. This is not an "unstoppable wave."

It is important that we learn from the Maya, but we cannot make facile comparisons between several million Stone Age agriculturalists from a millennium ago and the 10 billion people who will have to solve the problems of this century.

Ethan Fremen
Pullman, Wash.

The failure of the Maya to sustain their elaborate theocracy may relate to their elite's ritual of head binding. Practiced from infancy, this produced a sloping forehead, a conical-shaped skull, and bulging eyes, as documented in Mayan mural paintings, sculpture, ceramics, and jade carvings from A.D. 700 to 800. A counterpart exists in cranial synostosis, a syndrome well known to pediatric neurosurgeons. Normally the skull bones float until at least two years of age, but sometimes the bones fuse prematurely so that the growing infant brain is put under pressure. The eyes bulge and the brain squeezes downward, damaging the hippocampal region that is critical for memory input. Similarly, the ritualistic head deformation among the Maya would have caused impairment of memory and an inability to maintain a society sophisticated in its mathematics, astronomy, architecture, and art.

William Feindel
Montreal

The Nature of Gould

What made reading Stephen Jay Gould such a guilty pleasure ["The Man Who Knew Too Much," David Quammen, Reviews, June] was his shameless reinterpretation of other people's research in ways that furthered his own theories. What grand theories they were, designed to turn much of evolutionary thought upside down. In his 1989 bestseller, *Wonderful Life: The Burgess Shale and the Nature of History*, for example, Gould used the work of Simon Conway Morris, H. B. Whittington, and others on an exquisitely preserved assemblage of 530-million-year-old fossils from British Columbia to advance his sensational thesis that animal life was more diverse early on and became less so with the passa of time. He averred that some of bizarre-seeming critters represent new phyla that briefly appeared i "Cambrian explosion" of "experim tal designs" and were pruned away mostly chance factors. Could cha the whole historical-interpreti process, biological and other, for inability to recognize the truly diff ent and to take the role of chance a accident into account. The research were appalled, replying that, for ample, many of the oddest-seemi Burgess Shale beasts were perfectly thodox segmented worms. Their repl were written in the modest thi person voice of a practicing scient while Gould used his literary venues continue blasting them as examples a blind spot that makes it difficult understand anything historical. It Gould's tendentiousness that made writing useful and so much wicked fu

John Davis
Jackson, Miss.

The Difficult Reader

Charles Bernstein ["The Difficu Poem," June, Readings] holds up Bi Collins as a poet whose work is r difficult because it is accessible to t average reader. But Bernstein's equ ocation on definitions of "difficult" character-building versus inco prehensible—is not only sloppy lo but also evidence that Bernstein m never have bothered to read Coll attentively and may have no idea h hard Collins works to produce bo clarity and complexity.

Writing "difficult" poems that "j turn out that way" is, after all, mu easier than writing poems that expr something (perhaps something di cult), and express it well, with atte tion to the beauty of sound, and phr ing, and form. It is not impossible imagine that some writers of "difficu poetry, perhaps Bernstein himself, w hard at their poems, but it is impos ble to imagine how a reader mig know this, apart from being told. The are JavaScripts that can write li Bernstein, but I have not yet encou tered, at least not outside of science f tion, any that write like Collins.

John Paul Davis
Yellow Springs, Ohio

NOTEBOOK

Yankee Doodle Dandy

By Lewis H. Lapham

cKinley understood quite well that mericans might accept, albeit uneasily, accidental empire; an empire by design ey would not have borne, not even in e giddy, war-feverish days of 1898. ke the buncombe artist who cranked e handle that operated the "Wizard" of z, so McKinley now cranked the han- e of "destiny," set in motion the "march events," and manipulated the "hand" the "Almighty," which was no more an an empty glove.

—Walter Karp

During the eight months prior to ıe invasion of Iraq, the American ews media were content to believe ıe government's fairy tale about its asons for sending the tanks eastward ıto Eden. The Bush Administration's uncombe artists could tell any story ıey pleased about Western civilization eing held for ransom by Saddam Hus- in's weapons of mass destruction, nd even when the plotlines were ıown to depend upon suborned tes- mony and counterfeit intelligence, ıe media vouched for the wisdom of)z. Why not? What was to be gained y casting doubts? The fairy tale sold ewspapers, boosted television ratings, urried favor at the White House and ıe FCC, drummed up invitations from ıe Pentagon to attend the military ostume party in the Persian Gulf.

Three months after the capture of Baghdad the fabulous weapons were till nowhere to be found, and the overnment ventriloquists in Wash- ngton—not as fortunate as President William McKinley in their choice of splendid and self-serving little war—vere experiencing technical difficulties with the empty glove. Unable to find in it anything that resembled the hand of God, they classified impertinent questions as proofs of disloyalty or ingratitude—not fair to the troops (brave Americans one and all), insensitive to the plight of the Iraqi people (formerly enslaved, now free to elect any imam who promised not to slit their throats), the arsenal of doom never the only reason for the advance into the valley of the Euphrates (merely one of many reasons, the others all very geopolitical and complex but failing to meet the necessary quotas of fear and loathing), the world well rid of Saddam Hussein no matter what the pretext for his departure. In the near term and at least for the time being, the excuses were sufficient to their purpose. A few Democratic politicians demanded extensive public hearings, but, given the Republican majorities in Congress, the prospect was unlikely. Newt Gingrich, former Speaker of the House and lately a prominent front man for the product of American empire, found comfort in an opinion poll showing 60 percent of the American electorate accepting the lie about Iraq's alliance with Al Qaeda, and therefore an accessory to the crime of 9/11. "On this one," he said, "the president is 99% safe."

Nor were the news media inclined to upgrade the president's cynicism and dishonesty into a story worthy of a ranking with the seduction of Monica Lewinsky. *Time* magazine devoted a worried headline to the "Weapons of Mass Disappearance," and a scattering of critics in the literary press characterized preemptive blitzkrieg as a betrayal of America's best interests and dearest principles; in the journals of large circulation only Paul Krugman in the *New York Times* raised a similar point in language unsweetened with apology. Taking note of our government's gift for "systematically and brazenly" distorting the facts "to an extent never before seen in U.S. history," Krugman went on to say, "suppose that this administration did con us into war. And suppose that it is not held accountable for its deceptions.... In that case, our political system has become utterly, and perhaps irrevocably, corrupted."

I don't argue with Krugman's judgment of the dissembling mountebanks, among them our secretaries of state and defense, busy cranking the handles of "destiny" and setting in motion "the march of events," but I'm reluctant to concede the phrases "perhaps irrevocably" and "never before seen in U.S. history." Krugman's suspicions are well placed but a hundred years behind the news. The government in Washington seldom lacks for a quorum of cheats and liars; the con games take similar and traditional forms, and as an appreciation of the one currently in progress, I know of none better than the late Walter Karp's *Politics of War*.

First published in 1979, the book describes the emergence of the United States as a world power between the years 1890 and 1920—our contrivance of the Spanish-American War and our gratuitous entrance into World War I—and by filling in

the Jay Gould era in which "mendacious oligarchy" organized the country's politics in a manner convenient to its own indolence and greed, Karp offers a clearer understanding of our current political circumstance than can be found in any two or twenty of the volumes published over the last ten years by the herd of Washington journalists (milk fed, free of hoof-and-mouth disease) grazing on the White House lawn. The leading characters in Karp's narrative belong to another century, dressed in costumes no longer sold in stores, but because he was both a gifted writer and a careful historian the story is alive and well and still present on the page. His passion was politics, and his precepts were simple and few. He believed that in America it is the people who have rights, not the government, and he made a clear distinction between the American republic and the American nation—"deadly rivals for the love and loyalty of the American people." Always mistrustful of what he called the "official version" of things, Karp professed his allegiance to the republic, which he understood as a body of law fitted to a common interest and a human scale, shaped by the spirit of liberty in which the country was conceived. The nation he regarded as a poor dim thing, assembled as a corporate entity, sustained by an "artificial patriotism," and given the semblance of meaning only when puffed up with the parade music of a foreign war.

In the inevitable and implacable conflict between the two ideas of America, Karp saw the "great drama" of the country's political history, and the sequence of events accounted for in *The Politics of War* provides him with a demonstration of his thesis and an occasion for both his eloquence and his sardonic wit. He revises the conventional portraits of Wilson as a principled idealist, of McKinley as a hapless incompetent, of American policy as a message of Christian goodwill, of the American press as the champion of truth, and to read his deconstruction of Wilson's glib and pious oratory—the "dictates of humanity," "peace without victory," etc.—is to hear the similarly unctuous sound in President George W. Bush's declarations of war against all the world's "evildoers" in the name of God and "all mankind." Portraying the character of the lying Washington pantaloons, aligned in the 1890s with the Republican money power, among them Nelson Aldrich of Rhode Island ("who frankly viewed any kind of politics save the politics of corrupt privilege as sentimental rot"), Karp might as well be sketching the bandmasters of the Bush Administration, who make no secret of their contempt for the American republic and mint the hard coin of the public trust into the debased currency of their private ambition.

The Politics of War brings to bear the clarity of hindsight on the chicanery of the present, and by so doing answers questions never asked by the *Wall Street Journal* or dreamed of in the philosophy of CNN. Just as Operation Iraqi Freedom was not about the rescue of the Iraqi people, so also the Spanish-American War was not about "the sacred cause of Cuban independence," and our entry into World War I not about making the world "safe for democracy." Presidents Wilson and McKinley sought to punish foreign crimes against humanity (the ones committed by villains in Brussels and Havana) in order to make America safe for the domestic crimes against humanity committed by fine, upstanding, corporate gentlemen in Boston and Chicago. If by 1890 the Industrial Revolution had made America rich, so also it had alerted the electorate to the unequal division of the spoils. People had begun to notice the loaded dice in the hand of the railroad and banking monopolies, the tax burden shifted from capital to labor. A severe depression in the winter of 1893–94 brought with it widespread unemployment, vicious strikes in the Pennsylvania steel mills and West Virginia coal mines, hobo armies on the march in the Ohio Valley and the Appalachian Mountains. The demand for social and political reform prompted the angry stirring of a Populist movement across the prairies of the Middle West, and as a cure for the distemper of an aroused citizenry—"something," in the words of an alarmed U.S. senator, to knock the "pus" out of this "anarchistic, socialistic and populi
boil"—the McKinley Administrat
came up with war in Cuba, the c
quest of the Philippines, the annexa
of Puerto Rico, and an imperialist
eign policy deemed "essential to
greatness of every splendid peop
necessary "to the strength and digr
of any nation." Only by infecting
republic with the delusion of impe
grandeur could the nation (which
ists only in relation to other natio
smother the republican spirit and
place the love of liberty with the l
of the flag—every true American a
triot, all political quarrels to be s
pended in the interest
"the national security."

By the time that Presid
Theodore Roosevelt moved his c
alry horses into the White Ho
stables in 1901, the last remnants
populist unrest had drifted into
sunset with the wreckage of
Spanish fleet, and for the next
years the agents and apostles of
American nation gloried in a
umph of wealth and cynicism p
sumed sufficient to silence any loc
mouthed or ill-bred talk abo
ordinary citizens deserving a say i
government nominally democra
The presumption soon collapsed
der the weight of its complaisan
and stupidity. Incapable of manag
an economy that it could only p
upon, "the money power" and
hired politicians consigned t
arrangement of the country's fin
cial affairs to a consortium of sw
dling bankers and bribed legislatu
and by 1906 the continuing proofs
the oligarchy's disdain for such a
thing as the common good trans
ed the resentments once lodged
the rural counties of Populist disc
tent into the muckraking politics
the Progressive movement. Agai
an urban and more sophisticated
position, the friends of the prot
tive tariff and Yankee Doodle Dar
had need of more strenuous count
measures, and Karp devotes t
greater part of his book to the "b
tomless" deceit of Woodrow Wils
who engineered America's entry i
World War I in order that he mi
play the part of a great statesm
settling upon the tumult of natio

ce deserving of comparison to an of God. Without an army in Eu- the president couldn't strike as dsome a pose as the one arranged President Bush on the deck of U.S.S. *Abraham Lincoln*, and if setting up of the photo op re- red the deaths of 100,000 Ameri- soldiers in the mud of France, sacrifice could be written off to nerica's privilege "to spend her od and her might for the princi- s that gave her birth." The falsity Wilson's pose as a man of elevated nciple and noble character moves p to savage mockery, and a single tence can be taken as indicative both the sense of his argument l the strength of his prose:

> The decisive trait of Wilson's political character was vainglory: a hunger for glory so exclusively self-regarding, so indifferent to the concerns of others, that it would lead him to betray in turn the national movement for reform, the great body of the American people, the fundamental liberties of the American Republic, and in the end the hopes of a war-torn world.

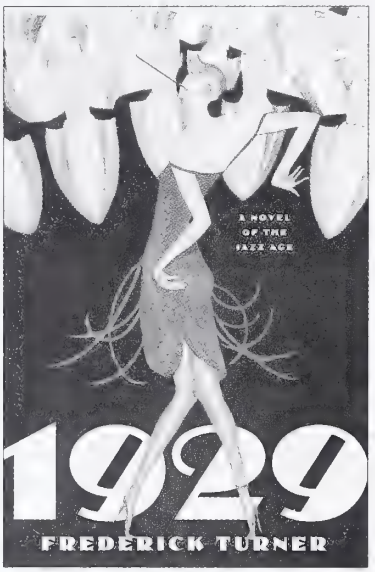
On almost every page of *The Poli- of War* an attentive reader can d the lines of connection and re- nblance between time present d time past—the fortuitous sink- g of the *Maine* in February 1898 d of the *Lusitania* in May 1915 oviding the promoters of Ameri- n empire with the same sort of ca- s belli as was presented to the sh Administration by the destruc- n of the World Trade towers in ptember 2001; Spain's fifth-rate lonial power in Cuba depicted by e McKinley Administration as ne most wicked despotism there is day on this earth"; both Wilson d McKinley making campaign omises equivalent to Bush's com- ssionate conservatism and just as omptly rescinding them once they d been elected to office; Teddy oosevelt at Fourth of July picnics nouncing "ultra-pacifists," "pol- oons," and "mollycoddles" in the anner of Rush Limbaugh excoriat- g Susan Sontag and Harvard Uni- rsity; the many similarities in the stribution of alarmist propagan- —Germany in the summer of 915 said to be capable of landing, in a matter of sixteen days, 387,000 troops on the coast of New Jersey, Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction in the autumn of 2002 said by British intelligence to be ready for use within a matter of forty-five minutes; both the McKinley and the Wilson administrations served by a warmongering press ascribing atrocities to Spanish viceroys (Cuban peasants fed to sharks) and to German generals (Belgian nuns roasted over burning coals) as promptly on cue as Fox News charging Saddam Hussein with the burial of Iraqi infants in mass graves; the Congress in June of 1917, in an atmosphere as clouded by militant paranoia as the mind of Attorney General John Ashcroft, passing an Espionage Act under which any and all criticism of the government acquired the distinction of a felony.

Walter Karp died in 1989, at the age of fifty-five of wounds inflicted by clumsy doctors in a careless hospital, but had he lived long enough to marvel at the wonderful wisdom of Oz now being slopped into the pails on the White House lawn, I expect that he would have welcomed the chance to embellish the likenesses among three American presidents, each of them seen in the warm glow of their radiant hypocrisy, doing their eager and patriotic best to place the country on the marble footings of self-righteous oligarchy. He was a writer who could count among his antecedents dissenting spirits as passionate and as troublesome as those of Ambrose Bierce and Mark Twain, and if somewhere not too far offstage I can still hear his antic improvisations on the theme of "elective despotism," I also remember that he was fond of citing Thomas Jefferson's dictum that "we are never permitted to despair of the commonwealth." Karp saw the American nation as a sickness in the body of the American republic and therefore subject to cure; he pursued the study of history as a means of protecting the future from the past, and by way of shoring up his hope for better days to come he relied on the memory of worse days providentially gone. ■

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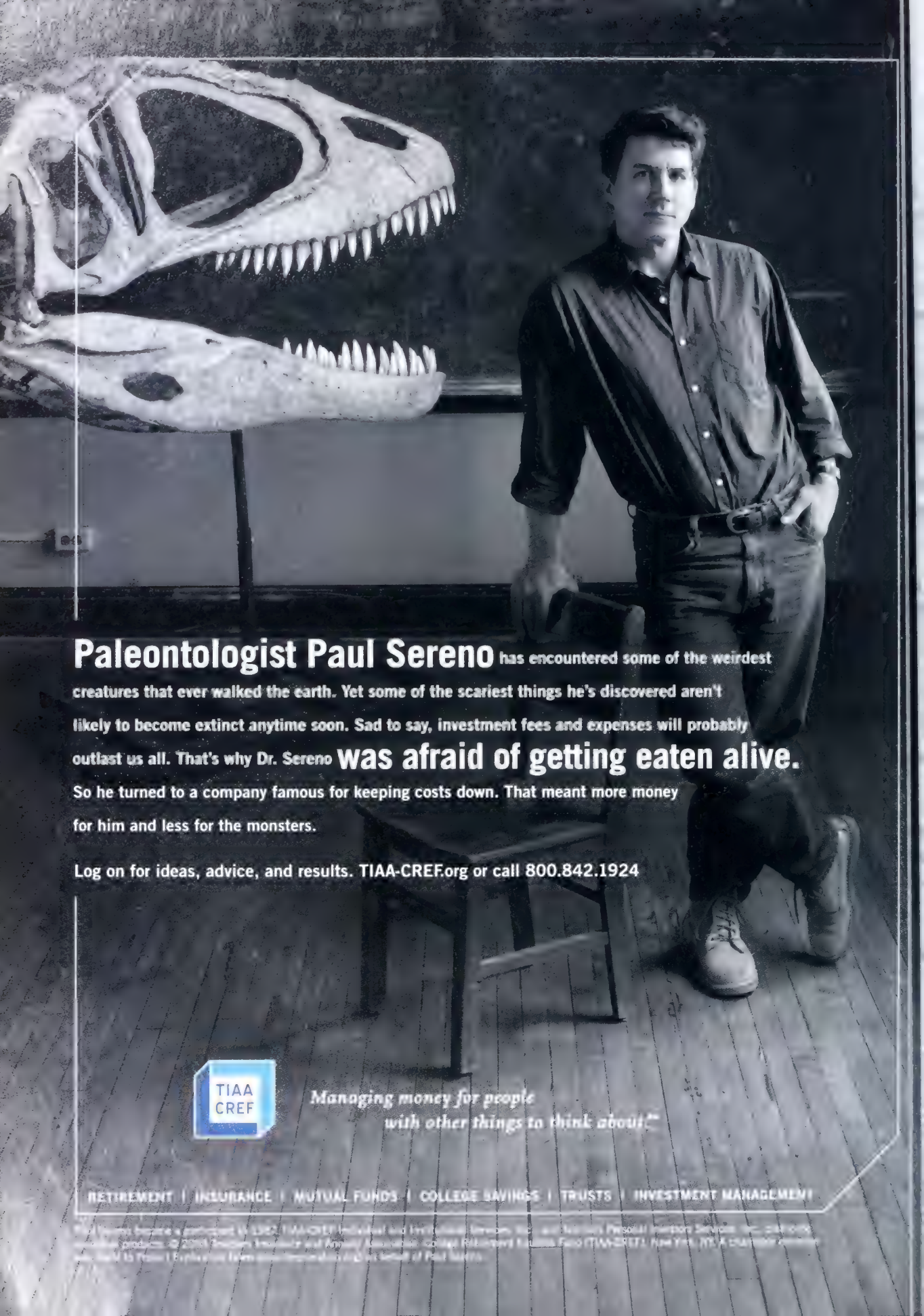
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HARPER'S INDEX

atio of Iran's military budget to the amount spent by the Pentagon since last fall for "increased worldwide posture" : 1:1

nount the Defense Department has lost track of, according to a 2000 report by its inspector general : $1,100,000,000,000

Ratio of this amount to the rest of the world's military budgets combined : 2:1

Approximate number of accounting systems in use at the Defense Department : 2,300

Percentage change since 2001 in the median annual compensation of CEOs of major U.S. defense contractors : +79

ange since March 2001 in the number of working-age Americans who are neither working nor looking for work : +3,600,000

Average salary of a state legislator last year : $30,300

Average amount spent lobbying one : $130,000

Number of years that the new increase in the federal child tax credit is scheduled to last : 1

lumber of students who have earned Emory University's joint M.B.A./divinity degree since it was first offered in 1990 : 3

stimated percentage change since 2002 in applications requested for a "homeland security" camp in Pennsylvania : +100

Number of candy-bar wrappers that Cadbury's new anti-obesity campaign offers to exchange for a basketball : 90

Minimum hours of basketball required for an 85-pound child to burn off the calories from that many candy bars : 100

erage number of micrograms by which replicas of the international reference-kilogram cylinder now exceed it in mass : 50

Number of years since Mars was as close to Earth as it will be on August 27 : 50,000

Number of years San Francisco has given itself to realize the goal of recycling all of its trash : 17

nk of California governor Gray Davis's approval rating in May among the lowest in the 55-year history of the state poll : 1

lumber of U.S. commercial sites besides Disneyland and Disney World that have been granted no-fly-zone protection : 0

Number of industry-funded trips that FCC officials have taken since 1995 : 2,514

Rank of Las Vegas among the top destinations of such trips : 1

Number of consecutive 7s in the serial number of a $20 bill sold on eBay in April : 5

Price paid for the bill : $18.50

Percentage of Americans who say they have "always had credit card debt" : 11

rcentage change since last year in the number of U.S. Christian adults who tithe at least 10 percent of their income : –62

Rank of Detroit among major U.S. cities whose residents give the largest portion of their income to charity : 1

Percentage of South Carolinians prosecuted under the state's "anti-lynching" law since 1998 who are black : 63

mount a judge ordered the Anti-Defamation League to pay in April for calling a Colorado couple anti-Semitic : $10,500,000

umber of magicians who won damages from Brazil's largest TV network in May after their tricks were revealed on the air : 22

ercentage by which the amount of drugs stolen by Guatemalan police last year exceeded the amount officially seized : 100

Number of books by Henry Kissinger found in Iraqi deputy prime minister Tariq Aziz's mansion in April : 2

Number by *New York Times* reporter Judith Miller : 1

Number of countries to which the U.S. sent troops between 1900 and 1993 for the purpose of establishing democracy : 14

Number that were democracies ten years after the withdrawal of U.S. forces : 4

Ratio of Kosovo residents to Western peacekeepers there in 1999 : 40:1

Ratio of Afghanistan residents to Western peacekeepers there now : 5,000:1

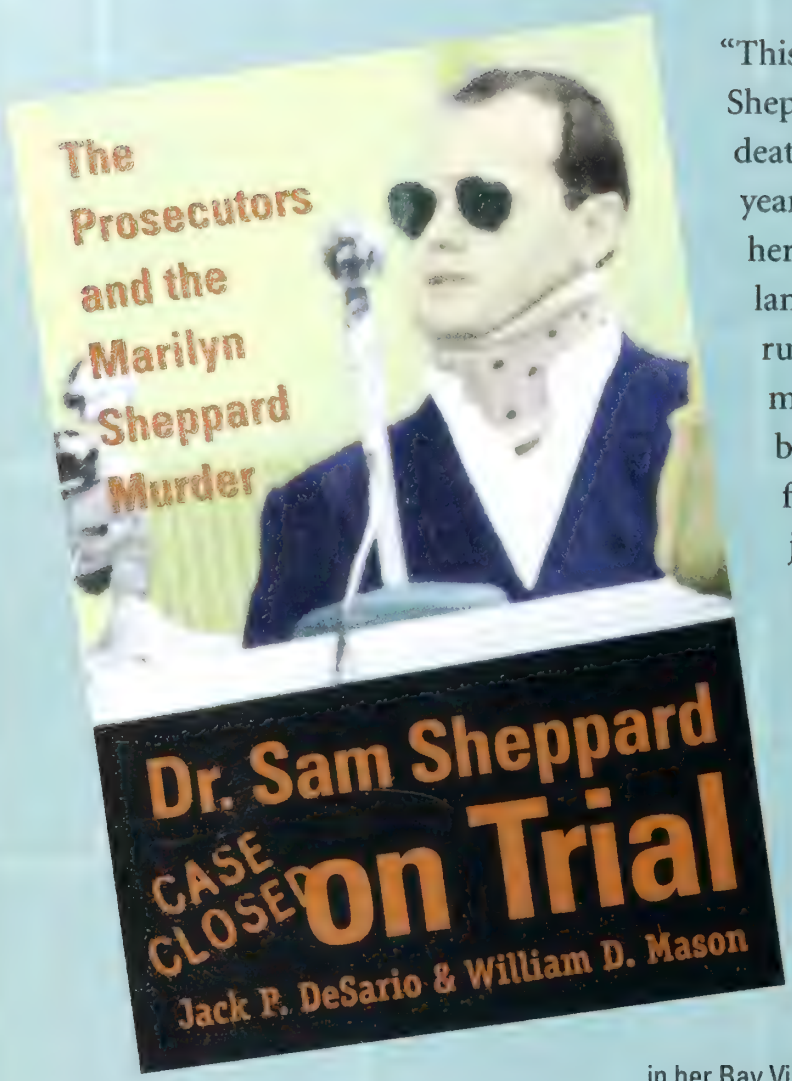
Ratio of the estimated number of people killed worldwide by war last year to the number killed by traffic : 1:4

Number of states where it is legal to drive while drinking : 3

Percentage of pedestrian fatalities on U.S. roadways last year in which the driver was drunk : 18

Percentage in which the pedestrian was : 37

Figures are the latest available as of June 2003. Sources are listed on page 90.
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"This much is certain: Marilyn Sheppard was brutally beaten to death. Sam Sheppard served ten years in the Ohio Penitentiary for her murder, only to be freed by a landmark Supreme Court ruling. And, 35 years after the murder, Sam Reese Sheppard began a crusade to clear his father's name and bring to justice the man *he* believed killed his mother. *Dr. Sam Sheppard on Trial* puts forward the final verdict of this case."

FRED MCGUNAGLE
Court TV's Crime Library

Marilyn Sheppard, four months' pregnant and mother of a 7-year-old son, was bludgeoned to death in her Bay Village, Ohio, home in the early morning of July 4, 1954. The cause of death was twenty-seven blows to the head with a heavy instrument. Who took her life so brutally has been the subject of much controversy and debate for nearly a half-century.

Dr. Sam Sheppard on Trial presents a comprehensive and final analysis of this controversial case. Jack P. DeSario and co-author William D. Mason, who defended the state in the civil suit, provide here the facts, evidence, expert testimony (both old and new), and sworn statements of the principals in this case, which concluded in 2000.

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READINGS

[Essay]

THE NEW CENSORSHIP

From The Middle Mind: Why Americans Don't Think for Themselves, *by Curtis White, to be published this month by HarperSanFrancisco.*

Americans are not much in the habit of poking at the dominant realities of our lives. We're delicate. We're used to deferring, though we like to think of ourselves as rebels. What parents, teachers, presidents, and Dan Rather say is usually good enough for us. Even if it is demonstrably false, we submit out of habit and fright over what *not* submitting might require of us. We sacrifice our lives out of a feeling that there is some sort of comfort in deferring.

This is a failure, a failure born from a poverty of the imagination. This poverty manifests itself most obviously in our entertainment, our willingness to pay to have our intelligence insulted. But it is in the political narratives of the United States created by our political leaders and their comrades in the media that the implications of the poverty of the imagination are starkest and most deadly.

When we think about the appalling transparency of the narratives created by Ronald Reagan and Presidents Bush the First and Second, or when we consider these leaders' preposterous melodramas about the Nicaraguan Contras, Noriega as Hitler, Saddam Hussein as Satan, or Iran, Iraq, and North Korea as an Axis of Evil, it's hard to take them seriously as fictions, let alone as objective propositions about the world.

The most familiar and recent creations of our political imagination are the characterizations of the crisis of "September 11" and the "War Against Terror." These narratives present nothing beyond a truth that is persuasive because it is also trite. America has been attacked; we're "at war with terrorism"; but "America will strike back," because we're a "beacon of freedom to the rest of the world," because "innocent people lost their lives," because "America has lost its innocence," because there are "evildoers" afoot. We'll "smoke them out of their holes," because our cause is just and we are united. After two years, there is still substantial credence given to these propositions, and there is little sign of a "credibility gap" of the type we experienced during the war in Vietnam.

The idea that CNN is right and 90 percent of the populace continues to believe this palaver is perhaps more frightening than the threat of receiving a suspicious piece of mail postmarked New Jersey. The odds of receiving anthrax in the mail (or a pipe bomb from an undergraduate art major from Wisconsin, one of America's own pure products gone crazy) are statistically minute, but the yahoos with Old Glory rippling from the roofs of their suburban assault vehicles are everywhere, bearing who knows what malice for those lacking proper patriotic fervor. Much worse and more dangerous than this, of course, are organizations like the American

Council of Trustees and Alumni, which was founded by Lynne Cheney and Joseph Lieberman. For this group, any movement away from the grossly patriotic is a "failing." They would save American culture by removing from it any thought that isn't utterly conformist with the opinion of "the public at large."

We are now, in alternation, either the United Crisis States of America or the United Security States of America. Crisis and Security call to each other, one upping the other's ante, spiraling, the crises growing graver, the security more extreme.

[Evidence]

DIRECTOR'S CUTS

From a list of videotape titles in the United States Secret Service library obtained by Michael Ravnitzky, a journalist for American Lawyer Media. The public may borrow any of the tapes from the agency by filing a Freedom of Information Act request.

Assassinations and Attempts Worldwide
Attack on Chilean President Pinochet
Bogota Colombia Bleaching Process
Chemical Accident Incident Operation
Colosio Assassination
Deadliest Force
Egg Throwing—Kennedy Detail
Explosions—Stock Footage
Fundamentals of Marksmanship
Gandhi, Rajiv, Assassination of
Incidents with Various Protectees
IRA Booby Traps
JFK Shooting
Julie Cross Shooting
Kennedy Assassination in Dallas
Kidnap Executive Style
Kuwait Bombing
Liberian Government Overthrows
Marcos Assassination Attempt
Mondale Mishap
Mubarak, Hosni—Assassination Attempt
President Bush Japan Incident
Rangoon Bombing
Reagan Incident, Las Vegas
The Stalking of Ronald Reagan
RFK Assassination
Shooting of Kidnapper by Victim's Father
Tapes of Wrath—Gag Reel
Various Assassination Attempts
Violent Way to Go
White House Plane Crash
Whole World Is Watching

But there is also poverty in the left-wing critique of the events related to 9-11. The left-wing critique seeks to create a historical and geopolitical context for understanding the "tensions in the region." Thus, the roots of Al Qaeda are in nineteenth-century colonialism and Cold War meddling in Islamic countries (read: oil-producing countries) by a U.S. foreign-policy premised on the idea that we have "national interests" in the region upon which depends what President Bush has called our "blessed lifestyle." Hence, it is a "foreign-policy priority" to "stabilize" certain Middle Eastern client states, whether putatively democratic or plainly autocratic. Our real antagonist here, as Noam Chomsky argues in his little book *9-11*, is the reservoir of bitterness and anger over U.S. policies in the region.

Needless to say, there is a lot more credibility in this latter vision of the world. It's the "America as imperial power" point of view developed over many decades of analysis by Noam Chomsky, *The Nation*, and the South End Press. More accurate though this version of things may be, its truth-power is also dependent on its familiarity. It's not as if the left has ever been immune to what Stuart Hall called the need for the "narrative construction of reality." It's just that the left's construction is not a naked expression of economic self-interest. But to say that the United States is an imperialist country and leave it at that denies our present reality much-needed gradations of hue. Our situation may be dark, but it isn't simply the familiar black of a nineteenth-century empire-builder.

Chalmers Johnson's book *Blowback* offers a third option (situated between the Bush Administration party line and the left's critique) and qualified hope for a broad alternative to current political assumptions. Johnson's book is a detailed account of what he too calls American imperialism. His descriptions of how our actions have created global resentment, and "blowback" consequences for ourselves because of that resentment, rival Chomsky's most detailed accounts of our foreign military and economic interventions. But Johnson is also a mainstream intellectual, and he is always careful to confine his analyses within the context of the assumption that the United States is a "peace-loving" country and a true democracy that has been betrayed by its own leaders, by its economic elite, and by a military apparatus gone rogue.



photograph of a former automotive plant, by Joshua Lutz; his work will be on display next spring at the Gitterman Gallery, in New York City.

According to Johnson, the American public has "plausible deniability." We didn't know. We were out of the loop. The question, of course, as the popular press likes to put it, is "What did we know, and when?"

But the idea that there is any sense in which the American public could be said not to know is finally not credible. Are we dupes of propaganda? Is the truth censored? To a degree the answer to both of those questions is yes. It's not as if the network-news folks are eager to help us put together a diagnosis of our imperial objectives and methods. But the weightier answer is that we operate under a New Censorship, which functions by making everything known and naked to a paralyzing degree. Is there anyone who doesn't understand that the Sudanese pharmaceutical lab that Clinton blew up with eighty cruise missiles was producing . . . pharmaceuticals? Is there anyone who doesn't understand that this was an act of state terrorism and a violation of every principle of international law? We will pillory and impeach a president for getting a blow job while "in office" (a scenario most honest fifty-something males will envy wistfully), but an utterly irresponsible act of militarism with foreseeable consequences for the patients who were not able to receive the drugs the factory produced—well, this is something that needs to be pondered. Clinton was, after all, looking after national interests, was he not? Should Clinton have been impeached? Yes. But not for anything having to do with a certain cherubic brunette, a vision out of the paintings of Peter Paul Rubens. Clinton emerged unscathed from this crime against the people of Sudan because of a) racism (the un-

[Notes]

THE MOOSEPAPER OF RECORD

The following email was sent to employees of the New York Times Company in April.

From: "NYTIMES MAIL"
To: "NY TIMES INTERNET"
Subject: Moose Caboose

To the Staff,

Now that we've gotten your attention, here's the derivation of The New York Times Company's Moose.

Guests arrive at an elegant dinner party to which many prominent socialites have been invited. All is going well until the guests are asked to move into the dining room for dinner. As they enter the dining room, the guests can't help but see that a moose is already seated at the table and apparently joining them for dinner. Naturally, the guests are anxious to know why the moose is there. However, being a well-reserved and mannered group they are reluctant to ask for fear of insulting the party's host by indicating that something at the party is amiss.

Accordingly, the guests completely ignore the presence of the moose at the table. Everyone knows that the moose is there, but no one has the courage to raise the question of its presence.

We have been using this apocryphal moose anecdote as a way of assuring ourselves that at The New York Times Company, we never want to ignore "the moose at the table." When significant business issues arise, they should be identified and addressed. These issues should not be avoided because they are "too sensitive" or "too impolitic" to be raised. Treating one another with civility and respect should never mean keeping silent in the face of important business issues.

One of the reasons that our Company's journalism is so well regarded is because it is candid, honest and reported "without fear or favor." If we are to do our best work throughout the Company, our business conversations with each other should be equally candid, honest and unafraid. Let's not ignore the moose when he's sitting at our table.

Thanks.

CARRMML
Cindy, Arthur, Russ, Robinson (Janet), Michael, Martin and Len

spoken assumption being that it's okay to bomb little brown people—it happens so often, they ought to be used to it by now; it's rather like the weather for them), b) the unacknowledged understanding that American military activities really do support our privileges stateside, such as those privileges are, and c) the stupefying effects of the New Censorship.

The New Censorship does not work by keeping things secret. Are our leaders liars and criminals? Is the government run by wealthy corporations and political elites? Are we all being slowly poisoned? The answer is yes to all of the above, and there's hardly a soul on these shores who doesn't know it. The reign of George II practically revels in this perverse transparency. Oil policy created in backrooms with lobbyists from Enron and ExxonMobil. Naked pandering to the electricity industry in rolling back clean-air mandates. Accounting firms such as Arthur Andersen buying even "watchdog" liberal senators such as Christopher Dodd. Elections rigged with brother Jeb's connivance in Florida. All of these details are utterly public, reported in newspapers, television newscasts, and books, yet it's perfectly safe for this stuff to be known. The genius of the New Censorship is that it works through the obscenity of absolute openness. Iraq-gate wasn't a secret. The real secret is that it wasn't a secret, and certainly wasn't a scandal. It was business as usual. The betrayal of public trust is a daily story manipulated by the media within the narrative confines of "scandal," when in fact it's all a part of the daily routine and everyone knows it. The media makes pornography of the collective guilt of our politicians and business leaders. They make a yummy fetish of betrayed trust. We then consume it, mostly passively, because it is indistinguishable from our "entertainment" and because we suspect in some dim way that, bad as it surely is, it is working in our interests in the long run. What genius to have a system that allows you to behave badly, be exposed for it, and then have the sin recouped by the system as a sellable commodity! I mean, you have to admire the sheer, recuperative balls of it!

All this being the case, what consequences can we expect from the work of Chalmers Johnson or Noam Chomsky? None. Their writings are taken up as part of the spectrum (a modestly disturbing part of that spectrum, to be sure) of info-pornographics. The truth-function of Chomsky's work is neutralized because there are people who will participate in actions leading to death and worse all over the world and then tell you about it. In detail. In great detail. The truth is that everything is known, the revela-



George W., *a charcoal drawing with newspaper collage by Melanie Baker, will be on display next September at The Scene Gallery, in New York City. Baker took newspaper clippings from the "Threats and Responses" section of the* New York Times.

tion grotesquely vivid. Turn Salvadoran death-squad commanders into millionaires for killing peasants? We do that. It's called the Fort Benning School of the Americas. There's a budget line for it every year. Every year you pay for it. It's a crime without consequences. By any traditional standard, the United States is a corrupt society, because it refuses to be responsible before ethical facts that it knows perfectly well. This is corruption: after years of disgraceful shilly-shally, in the spring of 2002 the administration of George II acknowledged that there is a scientific basis to global warming but that there is nothing to be done about it (or nothing to be done that wouldn't piss off Detroit, ExxonMobil, and so-called soccer moms, who are now, according to Republicans, the wild card in national energy politics). So we'll just have to adapt. Truth without consequences is a good working definition of corruption. Only the bizarre "unconsciousness" provided by the New Censorship, where everything awful is pink and in your face, allows this corruption a shred of cover.

Let's return to the possibilities offered by the pronouncements of the Bush Administration and the Chomskian left. In the shock of the days after the World Trade Center disaster, I felt at times that both the patriotic and the left-wing analyses were sufficient, and sometimes my alarm was such that both seemed persuasive at the same time. We were attacked, after all. Any state, even an imperialist state with no plausible claim to innocence (for when was there ever an innocent state?), has the right and the obligation to defend its citizens. That's why it's good to live in scary Leviathan, as Thomas Hobbes conceived it. Leviathan protects you from other Leviathans. It's a "necessary evil" argument.

The problem with this argument is that Osama bin Laden's position is beyond politics, beyond Leviathan. Al Qaeda is not represented by any state that could articulate its point of view. Al Qaeda is utterly deterritorialized. It may have temporary hosts, but it doesn't have a home. In this sense, Bush's insistence that there can be no negotiation with terrorism is both redundant and irrelevant. Bin Laden's first premise is that his efforts are post-political and thus outside of any framework for negotiation. What makes this situation doubly ironic is the fact that the United States and its primary trading partners (Canada and Mexico), in lockstep with the purposes of the newly formed European Union, are also engaged in making nation-states irrelevant and antique. Terrorism's deterritorialization is a negative reflection of our own economic and political tendencies. And yet politicians and the media (especially Hollywood) continue to appeal to a sentimental patriotism in order to purchase the consent for our military excursions. The United States may be part of a postmodern global reality without economic or political borders, but its citizens continue to respond to old-fashioned patriotic appeals.

Equally revealing, if also horrifying, is the manner in which terrorism has seized upon our

own technology as its weapon of choice. Our airliners are bombs. Our buildings are bombs. Our nuclear reactors are certainly dirty bombs, *in potentia*, as we've long known. Our bureaucracies (like the postal system) are bombs. And [illegible] bomb we drop, they believe, ultimately furthers their interests. Even the anthrax they employ was developed by our scientists in our own biological weapons programs. In short, terrorism has seized upon the "accidents" (plane crashes, nuclear meltdowns, misplaced or stolen anthrax, plutonium, nuclear secrets) that have always slumbered within technological rationality. How [illegible] should have been made clear on November 12, 2001, when an American Airlines jet headed for the Dominican Republic crashed in Queens. But of course the American media couldn't see it this way without jeopardizing the confidence game it administers. An absolute distinction had to be maintained between terrorist acts of war and a mechanical accident. Although the media found it reasonable that Americans should shy away from jets if the reason was that terrorists might be plunging them into buildings, the idea that we should shy away from jets because they have always had a tendency to plunge to the ground in a statistically predictable manner has not been depicted by the media as at all reasonable. On the contrary, such accidents have been managed in the media through expressions of faith in the calculations of actuarial science and cost-benefit analyses, and by faith in the raw ideology of technical progress.

This faith must be maintained in the face of the fact that 42,000 citizens of the United States die annually in traffic accidents, never mind the hundreds of thousands who are injured. According to the U.S. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, between 1985 and 1999, 3,236,000 people were killed or injured in traffic accidents in the United States. Every ten years we wipe out the population of four cities the size of the one in which I live, Bloomington-Normal, Illinois. Dead. And we leave a population the equivalent of a major metropolitan area (close to three million) as walking wounded, carting around the pain of pins in their ankles, knees like pudding, and ruptured vertebrae. Where is the memorial to those deaths and wounds? How many millions of human beings lost on the roadside over the last century? These numbers dwarf the losses in wars like Vietnam and Korea, and yet they are the result of a "rationalizing" of our communities and our lives.

How are these deaths represented by the media and the government? Accidents. Statistics. The only clues to the reality of our situation are the chilling little primitive shrines set up by grieving families with white crosses and plastic flowers at the local Dead Man's Curve, where drunken teenagers immemorial have gone to die. And yet every day we join the march of commuters caught in the same sad and strange necessity of "rush hour," and knowingly we roll the dice. If we were to construct a national memorial to these automated deaths, I would suggest a mural depicting the opening scene from Jean-Luc Godard's *Weekend*. First, the irrelevant beauty of the French countryside, then the endless highway backed up for miles with motionless but belligerently honking cars, next the bizarre humans caught in the traffic, screaming or playing cards, and finally, at its end, the pathetic and anticlimactic bodies strewn by the bloody roadside.

The cure for this epidemic is simple: design communities so that people are not obliged to get in cars and drive in maniacal conditions on freeways in order to live. And yet a call for a solution that denies there is a social good in "commuting" as a national lifestyle would be depicted by media pundits as irrational, just as any "travel anxiety" generated by Queens 11-12 is irrational. The crash in Queens was an "unfortunate coincidence" and is lamented largely because it is yet another psychological impediment to the much-desired recovery of the economy. So what can you do to help your country? Bury your silly fears. Fly somewhere. Better yet, fly somewhere and go shopping. And that frisking at the gate? Enjoy!

[Consideration]

THIS POTTED MEAT, THIS ENGLAND

From a May 6 debate in the British House of Lords.

LORD HARRISON ASKED HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT: Whether, in the light of the Department of Trade and Industry's twenty-third annual report of the home and leisure accident surveillance system entitled Working for a Safer World, they will encourage the food and packaging industries to redesign food containers and cans, for example those containing corned beef.

LORD SAINSBURY OF TURVILLE: My Lords, statistics show that the number of accidents from corned-beef cans has been declining and they are not a major cause of accidents now.

LORD HARRISON: My Lords, I thank my noble friend for that Answer, but does he understand that many of us still believe corned-beef tins and, indeed, other varieties of pull-top cans to be inherently unsafe?

LORD SAINSBURY OF TURVILLE: My Lords, I am delighted that the noble Lord has asked me a Question about corned-beef cans. I have been answering questions about them all my life, and I regard them as one of my real areas of expertise.

There is a real problem about corned-beef cans. They have a trapezoidal shape and a key kind of ring. The DTI has done much work on this issue in giving further instructions and also special coatings for the cans which enable the corned beef to be extracted more easily. There has in fact been a remarkable drop in accidents with corned-beef cans. They have fallen from 8,720 per year out of 26,000 accidents caused by all tins to 3,091 out of 19,000. I should point out that the really dramatic decrease came after 1997.

BARONESS SHARPLES: My Lords, can the noble Lord say whether ring-pull cans are safer than ordinary cans which are opened with a tin-opener? Which is safest?

LORD RAZZALL: My Lords, will the Minister allow me to rescue him from his worldwide expertise on the topic of corned beef and ask a slightly wider question? Does he agree that, taking the nub of the question of the noble Lord, Lord Harrison—working for a safer world—a reduction in the use of products which have an impact on the environment would be highly desirable? What steps are the Government taking to ensure that clear, verified information is available to consumers on the environmental impact of such products?

LORD SAINSBURY OF TURVILLE: My Lords, that goes wider than my knowledge of corned beef; it strays into a completely different department and area—the impact on the environment. This report is very specifically about recording accidents which take place in accident and emergency departments of hospitals. The impact on the environment is a totally different question.

BARONESS OPPENHEIM-BARNES: My Lords, does the Minister agree that most home accidents are avoidable, arising out of carelessness, and that therefore paying attention is one of the best cures?

LORD SAINSBURY OF TURVILLE: My Lords, I totally agree. The statistics on accidents are extremely fascinating; they prove that the British public can use practically anything in this world to hurt themselves with. It is understandable that there are an estimated

[Mission]

TENDER IS DENERT

From a May 2003 statement by Antoine Denert, the mayor of Kruibeke, Belgium, explaining the reasoning behind his newly founded Department of Tenderness. Translated from the Flemish by Joseph Vanhoenacker.

In the past I have often been asked what my political ambitions were. I responded, as everybody involved in politics should respond, that I would very much like to become a minister. People would always ask me, "Which department?"

I would tell them I have never doubted that if I were to become a minister I would be the Minister of Defense.

"Incomprehensible," they would reply, "for someone with your character who always talks about sweet people and soft values and extreme tolerance."

"Correct," I would say, "but that's just why I want that responsibility, in order to bend that department into a Department of Tenderness." This may all sound quite trite, but I take it very seriously. Instead of a one-year military service of a boarding-school type, it would be useful to call up young men after their studies for a short period or on weekends and give them some civic awareness. But also a system for conflict resolution. To convince them that there are no enemies, that other humans have also been little people, that every person is dear and tender. Instead of threatening and using violence, we should try to resolve conflicts by tricking adversity and using Tenderness as a weapon.

Since I probably will never have a chance to promote this on a national scale, I have as mayor taken up the task of creating a mandate to promote Tenderness.

"What do you propose to do with that?" you ask.

Well, besides the constant use of the form of address "Dear People," we must also frequently kiss, cuddle, and caress. In every exchange we must point people to the element of Tenderness. For instance, the mobility plan of our town talks about Tenderness in traffic.

Even in police work there is room for Tenderness. Just think, in the treatment of victims, work in the neighborhoods, even during repressive action, there is room for Tenderness. Yes, from the morning until the evening and during the night one can practice Tenderness.





Spectrum of Discourse: The Cynic *and* Spectrum of Discourse: The Ranter, *by Laurie Hogin, were on display last December at Koplin D Rio Gallery, in Los Angeles.*

fifty-five accidents a year from putty, while toothpaste accounts for seventy-three. However, it is rather bizarre that 823 accidents are estimated to be the result of letters and envelopes. It is difficult to understand how they can be the cause of such serious plight. I agree with the noble Baroness that it would be helpful if people paid careful attention.

BARONESS STRANGE: My Lords, does the Minister agree that sardine tins and anchovy tins are also very difficult to open with their tin-openers?

LORD SAINSBURY OF TURVILLE: My Lords, I think I will just agree with the noble Baroness on that question.

LORD MITCHELL ASKED HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT: What are their plans to reduce the growth in spam (unsolicited emails).

LORD SAINSBURY OF TURVILLE: My Lords, I hope noble Lords will appreciate how I move seamlessly from corned beef to spam.

We aim to implement by the end of October this year the privacy and electronic communications directive. Consultation on the draft regulations started on 27th March and closes on 19th June.

LORD MITCHELL: My Lords, I thank my noble friend the Minister for that Answer. Unsolicited emails, known as "spam," now account for half of all emails in this country. Will the Minister expand on his Answer? Do the Government intend to follow the example of the United States Senate in introducing legislation specifically prohibiting unsolicited emails?

LORD SAINSBURY OF TURVILLE: My Lords, we believe this to be a serious issue. We take the matter seriously. If measures are to be effective, it is vitally important that the international dimension is taken account of.

LORD RENTON: My Lords, will the Minister explain how it is that an inedible tinned food that lasted forever and was supplied to those on active service can become an unsolicited email, bearing in mind that some of us wish to be protected from having an email?

LORD SAINSBURY OF TURVILLE: My Lords, I am afraid that I have not been able to find out why the term "spam" is used, but that is the meaning it now has. It is a matter that should be taken very seriously because it not only clutters up computers but involves a great deal of very unpleasant advertising to do with easy credit, pornography, and miracle diets. That is offensive to people, and we should try to reduce it.

LORD FAULKNER OF WORCESTER: My Lords, I can help the Minister with the origin of the word. It comes from aficionados of Monty

Python, and the famous song, "Spam, spam, spam, spam." It has been picked up by the Internet community and is used as a description of rubbish on the Internet.

LADY SALTOUN OF ABERNETHY: My Lords, do the Government have any plans to restrict unsolicited faxes? My fax paper is always being wasted by people who send me faxes I do not want. I do not know whether they could be called "corned beef" or something, but I have had enough of them.

LORD SAINSBURY OF TURVILLE: My Lords, faxes are already covered, in exactly the same way, by the existing telecoms data-protection directive.

LORD MACKIE OF BENSHIE: My Lords, can the Minister think of a name for the enormous amount of unsolicited ordinary mail we receive?

LORD SAINSBURY OF TURVILLE: My Lords, when I have a moment I shall bend my mind to that question.

[Applications]

DON'T WORRY, IT'S A RENTAL

From rental-request forms submitted to rent-a-negro.com, a website created by damali ayo, a conceptual artist based in Portland, Oregon. The site "allows you to promote your connection with a creative, articulate, friendly, attractive, and pleasing African American person," who "can make diversifying your life a pleasure." She has received approximately 500 requests for her services.

Tell us about yourself and why you are choosing this service: Um, I'm having a graduation party this coming Sunday. And I don't have any black friends. I want black friends, but Idaho is so backward and out of the loop. I do have a hip-hop show on my college radio station, so I'm trying. So anyway, I was wondering if I could rent a negro for my graduation party. Thanks.
Event type: Private/Personal Gathering
of people at event: 50
Description: Just a graduation party. There will be a keg. And music. Just a good time. The rental would be just to give the party atmosphere.
Have you used black people before? yes
Did you pay? i did not pay
Do you have previous experience with black people? How many? yes, 2
Your experiences with black people have been mostly: positive
Describe: There was this black guy that worked at my pool one summer. He was cool, cleaning the leaves and stuff out. And then there was this black woman that went to my church for a few months. She seemed nice enough. She made these chocolate cupcakes one time for the Bible Study group. That was kind of her.

Tell us about yourself: i am very outgoing and love people, but i can't seem to get along with my black roommate here in college. we live in the same 4 bedroom apt. there weren't enough people to fill our apt. so they put her in the apt. with us. i realize that i have never really had to associate with black people, but now i am being forced to. but i just want to see if i can rent a person to be a friend of mine from high school and maybe she will think that she relates to me more and that i can relate to her. and too, maybe i can really learn something in the process about black people.
Event type: Drop-in Appearance
of people at event: 2
Description: Just come by the apartment and eat lunch and watch TV, so that she can see me with them.
Have you used black people before? no
Experience with black people? no

Tell us about yourself: I wanted to bring an African American with me to this event because so many of my friends think I'm racist. I might tell a joke or two, but I'm really a good person.
Event type: Corporate/Business Meeting
Description: It's a fund-raiser for a community organization.
Experience with black people? How many? yes, 10
Experiences have been: positive
Describe: I've worked with a few and talked to some at functions.

Tell us about yourself: System analyst/designer; interested in minority-use case scenarios for major new LBS product
Event type: Corporate/Business Meeting
of people at event: 6
Description: Have you considered regularly leveraging the minority value-added aspects of corporate marketing studies? This focus group may contain other token minorities.
Other services: High Question Volume
Have you used black people before? yes
Did you pay? i did not pay
Experience with black people? How many? yes, 100s
Experiences have been: mixed

Tell us about yourself: This is purely informational. I've never known a black person in my life and I'm soooo curious!
Event type: Individual
of people at event: 1
Location: New York, N.Y.

Experience with black people? no

Tell us about yourself: I have a lot of Black [illegible] but [illegible] I pay people [illegible]

Event type: Individual

[illegible]

FAUX SHIZZLE

From a police report filed by Officer M. Seefeld in the Uptown Precinct

On 28 Nov. at around 10:13 A.M., I was on patrol on Irondale Pl. when a nanny radio alerted all patrols that a bank robbery was in progress at the Midtown Bank on Evermore Bridge Rd. The 911 broadcaster stated that the [illegible] male with big lips and a big nose wearing a black jacket with [illegible] and grey pants. As the broadcast was being issued, I observed a black male [illegible] wearing a black jacket with [illegible] on it, carrying what appeared to be a plastic bag. I activated my siren and the male immediately dropped his head and kept walking toward me. I stopped my police car to cut in front of him, exited my vehicle, and told him to stop walking. He asked me, "What's wrong?" I asked him, "What [illegible]?" He immediately started talking softly and walking toward me. I drew my pistol and ordered him to stop. I told him to set the [illegible] down and when he did I could see a [illegible] of money [illegible] the bag. He had big lips and a bigger nose [illegible] to be real. When the suspect [illegible] his hands [illegible] and [illegible] on the ground. I [illegible] the suspect's head on the ground and [illegible] cuffed him. When asked why he [illegible] I took his hat off and observed that he was a [illegible] with [illegible] extensions. After [illegible] information, where it was learned that he had super [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

CAN HONEY REPLACE DRUGS?

In 1989, an editorial in the respected British publication, the *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine* stated:

> The therapeutic potential of uncontaminated, pure honey is grossly underutilized. It is widely available in most communities and although the mechanism of action of its properties remains obscure and needs further investigation, the time has come for conventional medicine to lift the blinds off this traditional remedy and give it its due recognition. (Vol. 82, pp. 384-385).

In the 14 years since this editorial appeared, there has been an outpouring of work on honey—not anecdotes, but solid scientific studies—that document the medicinal value of honey.

The medicinal benefits of honey are due to honey's antibacterial properties and to its moisture retaining properties.

Honey has been shown effective against a wide range of bacteria, including Helicobacter pylori (the main cause of stomach ulcers, and implicated in a number of other maladies) and Staphylococcus aureus, aka Staph (drug resistant strains of this pernicious bacterium are causing problems in hospitals across the country).

Honey has been shown to provide relief for, or to cure, a number of different disorders, including, but not limited to the following:

Diarrhea, ulcers, infections, irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), gastrointestinal problems, and staphylococcus (staph) infections.

Infectious diseases caused by bacteria that are sensitive to Honey include the following:

Anthrax, diphtheria, urinary tract infections, ear infections, meningitis, respiratory infections, sinusitis, pneumonia, tuberculosis, infected animal bites, typhoid, dysentery, abscesses, boils, carbuncles, impetigo, tooth decay, puerperal fever, rheumatic fever, sore throat and cholera.

A number of different types of wounds have been successfully treated with Honey, including:

abrasions, amputations, abscesses, bed sores, burns, burst abdominal wounds following cesarean delivery, cancrum, cervical ulcers, chilblains, cracked nipples, cuts, diabetic foot ulcers and other diabetic ulcers, a fistula, foot ulcers in lepers, infected wounds arising from trauma, large septic wounds, leg ulcers, malignant ulcers, sickle cell ulcers, skin ulcers, surgical wounds, wounds to the abdominal wall and perineum, varicose ulcers.

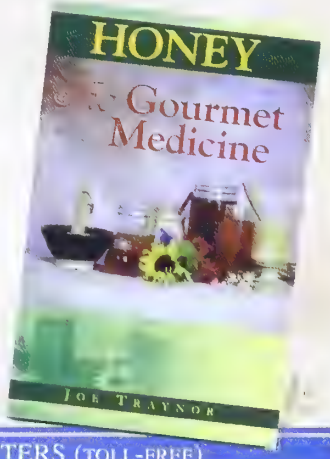
The drug industry spends billions on advertising and promotion—$7 billion on sales representatives alone (*The New Republic*, December 16, 2002), billions more on print and TV ads. In contrast, the total sales of honey in the U.S. are miniscule—well under a billion dollars. The drug industry has a powerful lobby in Washington D.C., the honey industry has none. The "side effects" portion of drug information often runs into thousands of words; there are no side effects for honey. The advertising budget for honey is next to nothing. The positive results of clinical studies on honey are truly amazing—if drug companies had results like this you'd be bombarded with the data. Now, a new book details the amazing, proven benefits of honey.

HONEY
The Gourmet Medicine
by Joe Traynor

"...an eye opener...especially pertinent in this time of multidrug-resistant bacteria."
—Daniel Blodgett, M.D.

"...very informative and well-written. I highly recommend this book for everyone, especially medical professionals."
—Christopher M. Kim, M.D.

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CARD NO. EXP. DATE

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY STATE ZIP

Other services: Polite conversation
Experience with black people? How many? yes, few
Describe: I'm having a hard time putting my thoughts in writing.
How did you hear about us? An email was forwarded to me by a non-Negro friend.

Tell us about yourself: I am interested in procuring your services for a black-tie corporate function. May I see both head and body shots of the available resources. This person must be able to converse with the wives of financiers as well as the financiers themselves. High-ranking government officials will be present. This person must conduct herself in a very professional manner as well as be very informed of current events. I must ask that this person say nothing critical or defamatory regarding the Bush Administration.

I am certain you get a lot of pranksters but I assure you that my intentions are sincere. Along with the photos, please include a quote in the form of an invoice for this type of event. Do not apply sales tax. Here is our exemption number: #----------

Upon acceptance of the invoice, I will satisfy the account with a corporate AMEX. Please have the resource report directly to me two hours prior. I will furnish contact information once I have accepted your quote.

[Activity]
HAPPY BIRTHDAY, RONNIE!



From the "Missile Defense Agency Coloring Book," which was distributed to children during celebrations for Public Service Recognition Week, held on the National Mall last May. The coloring book, published by the United States Department of Defense, came with a pack of "cool crayons," which were made in China.

[Notes]
FAUSTIAN ALGEBRA

These excerpts from Feuillets d'Hypnos, *the wartime notebook of the poet René Char, were published in* Grand Street *71. Char fought with the French army and with the French Resistance during World War II; he died in 1988. Translated by Mark Hutchinson. The notebook was published in French by Gallimard in 1946.*

Revolution and counterrevolution are putting on their masks, preparing themselves for combat once again.

Short-lived candor! After the combat of eagles comes the combat of octopi. The genius of man, who thinks he has discovered truths that are all-encompassing, turns truths that kill into truths that *authorize* one to kill. The show put on by these backward-looking visionaries, fighting at the front of an armor-plated and exhausted universe! While the collective neuroses grow ever more pronounced in the eye of myth and symbol, psychic man tortures life, without feeling, it would seem, the slightest remorse. The hideous flower, the *hand-drawn* flower, revolves its black petals in the mad flesh of the sun. Where is the source? Where the remedy?

This war will drag on beyond any platonic

armistice. Political concepts will go on being sewn, after a show of argument on both sides, amid the upheavals and under cover of a hypocrisy sure of its rights. Don't smile. Put aside skepticism and resignation and prepare your mortal soul to confront, within these walls, demons that have the cold-blooded genius of microbes.

So unreceptive has our sleep become that even the briefest of dreams cannot come galloping through to refresh it. The prospect of dying is drowned out by an inundation of the Absolute so all-engulfing that merely to think of it is to lose any desire for life, which we call upon, which we implore. Once again, we must love one another well, must breathe more deeply than the executioner's lungs.

Horrible day! I witnessed, some hundred yards away, the execution of B. I had only to squeeze the trigger of my submachine gun and he could have been saved! We were on high ground overlooking Céreste, the bushes bursting with weapons, and at least equal in number to the SS. They didn't know we were there. To the eyes all around me, begging me for the signal to open fire, I replied with a shake of the head.... The June sun sent a polar chill through my bones.

He seemed unaware of his executioners as he fell, and so light that the slightest breath of wind would have lifted him from the ground.

I didn't give the signal because the village had *at all costs* to be spared. What is a village? A village like any other? Perhaps *he* knew, at that final instant?

The quality of those in the Resistance is not, alas, everywhere the same. For every Joseph Fontaine, who has the rectitude and tenor of a plowman's furrow, for every Françoise Cuzin, or Roger Chaudon converting the granary at Oraison into a castle perilous, how many elusive charlatans there are, more concerned with enjoying themselves than with producing. You can be sure that, come the Liberation, these cockerels of the void will be ringing in our ears.

I see a man ruined by political perversion, confusing action and atonement, and naming conquest his own annihilation.

I aimed at the lieutenant and Bloodspat the colonel. The flowering gorse concealed us behind its flamboyant yellow vapor. Jean and Robert threw the grenades. The little enemy column immediately beat a retreat. With the exception of the machine gunner, but he didn't have time to become dangerous: his belly exploded. We used the two cars to make our getaway. The colonel's briefcase was full of interest.

I see hope—the riverbed in which tomorrow's waters will run—drying up in the gestures of those all around me. The faces I love are wasting away in the nets of waiting, which eats into them like acid. How little help we receive, how little encouragement! The sea and its shores are an obvious step forward but have been sealed off by the enemy. They are at the back of everyone's mind, the mold for a substance composed, in equal measure, of the rumor of despair and the certainty of resurrection.

The moment the instinct for survival gives way to the instinct for possession, reasonable human beings lose all sense of their probable life span and day-to-day equilibrium. They grow hostile to small chills in the atmosphere and acquiesce without further ado to whatever evil and deceit might require of them. Under a maleficent hailstorm their miserable condition simply crumbles away.

I think of that army of deserters, hungry for dictatorship, whom those who survive the Faustian algebra of these times will perhaps see back in power in this mindless country.

[Displacement]

IT'S ALWAYS LETHAL

From an email exchange between a retired New York City police officer and U.S. military officials. The emails were sent between March 14 and April 2 and posted on the website of the Information Clearing House (www.informationclearinghouse.info).

From: ***@aol.com
To: pao@centcom.mil
Subject: Simple Request
Dear Public Affairs Officer:

If possible can this be relayed to a Navy, Air Force or Army or Marine unit in the Gulf Region. A simple request from a Vietnam Veteran and Retired New York City Police Department Sergeant who lost his son on 911 at the WTC. Simply to have his son's name put on one of the munitions (bomb, missile, artillery shell) that will be used on the war on terrorism including Iraq. His son's name was Jason Sek-



"Remake of Shadows Covers Epidemic Plastic" from the "Sacred Shadows Series," by Dmitra Lazaridou, was on display last June at the Grimaldis Gallery, in Baltimore.

zer, the father is Wilton A. Sekzer. Thank you.

From: Franzoni, LCDR Stephen J.
To: ***@kuwait.army.mil,
***@cusnc.navy.mil

Sirs,
Normally we do not take personal requests, but I think this one is worth doing.

From: Nyhart Maj Jeffrey
To: Johnson Maj Thomas V
Your call. Son died on 9/11—wants to know if we could put name on bomb. May be worth a picture and email. Let me know if you can do it.

From: Johnson Maj Thomas V
To: Boehm Maj Joseph R
Joe, fairly easy, don't you think? Could get one of my guys to snap the picture. Please advise when you have a moment. Thanks.

From: Boehm Maj Joseph R
To: Johnson Maj Thomas V
Attached from yesterday. Hope this is satisfactory. Sorry for the delay but business is booming. The weapons don't stay still long enough to write on them. For the record: The weapon this tribute was written on is a 2,000 pound, Joint Direct Attack Munition GPS-guided bomb. It's big, it's ugly, and it's always lethal, just like we love them. It was dropped on the night of 1 April 03 against targets located east of Baghdad. A United States Marine Corps F/A-18D based in Kuwait flew the mission. The mission and the weapon were 100% successful. Let me know if there is any more I can do. It's my honor and pleasure.

[Lyrics]

THE SOUND OF SILENCERS

From "Il Canto di Malavita: La Musica della Mafia," a recording of traditional Mafia songs from the Calabria region in Italy released by the record label Play It Again Sam.

TARANTELLA GUAPPA

How elegantly they dance, these sons
And as they step from here to there
Their dance will take away their fear
Softly, softly you fire your shots
For destined to kill they are
Destined to kill they are

My knife it knows its art so well
Traitor, I'll slash your face and watch you die
Traitor, I'll slash your face and watch you die
Catching the cefalu-fish took me a week
I lay in wait for him all day
I lay in wait for him all night
I lay in wait for him all evening
We move back and forth
We reap what we sow
And women fall for men like us

How elegantly they dance, these sons
And as they step from here to there
Their dance will take away their fear
My Nannaredda came to make the bed
Her skin as white as milk
Her skin as white as milk

I CUNFIRENTI (THE TRAITORS)

You are not a man, you are nothing
A carcass bloated by shame
You have betrayed the hearts of many
You are a spy and you are a traitor
Life is the price to pay for whoever makes
mistakes like you
And you have lost the right to life
You have worn the silk but showed no respect
We need your blood to wash it clean

How bad the demise of a traitor
Who sings while he hides
They think that no one will find them out
Law and order protecting them
People like that deserve our hate
We won't let them out of our sight
Their final resting place in concrete walls
The end of these traitors
How many young lives they have ruined!
Crown witnesses for a dish of pasta!
They didn't care what they did
But there are more alive than are dead
A man must never consider himself
Like a dog that is tame
Honorable men take first place
Always respected by everyone
With the pure hearts of outlaws
How many young lives they have ruined!

[Experiment]

LANGUILLE!

From a question-and-answer column in The Last Word section of the New Scientist *website.*

Does beheading hurt? And, if so, for how long is the severed head aware of its plight?

A particularly detailed report comes from Dr. Beaurieux, who, under perfect circumstances, experimented with the head of the murderer Languille, guillotined at 5:30 A.M. on 28 June, 1905. From *A History of the Guillotine*, by Alister Kershaw:

"Here, then, is what I was able to note immediately after the decapitation: the eyelids and lips of the guillotined man worked in irregularly rhythmic contractions for about five or six seconds . . . I waited for several seconds. The spasmodic movements ceased. The face relaxed, the lids half closed on the eyeballs, leaving only the white of the conjunctiva visible, exactly as in the dying whom we have occasion to see every day in the exercise of our profession, or as in those just dead. It was then that I called in a strong, sharp voice: 'Languille!' I saw the eyelids slowly lift up, without any spasmodic contractions . . . Next Languille's eyes very definitely fixed themselves on mine and the pupils focused themselves . . . After several seconds, the eyelids closed again, slowly and evenly, and the head took on the same appearance as it had before I called out.

"It was at that point that I called out again and, once more, without any spasm, slowly, the eyelids lifted and undeniably living eyes fixed themselves on mine with perhaps even more penetration than the first time. Then there was a further closing of the eyelids, but now less complete. I attempted the effect of a third call; there was no further movement and the eyes took on the glazed look which they have in the dead.

"I have just recounted to you with rigorous exactness what I was able to observe. The whole thing lasted twenty-five to thirty seconds."

Crown witnesses for a dish of pasta!
They didn't care what they did
But there are more alive than are dead

OMERTA (THE LAW OF SILENCE)

While the sawed-off shotgun sings
The traitor screams and dies
This hard and bitter law
Splits the traitor's heart
No one saw or knew a thing
Whoever turns to God honors the Saints
Guilty or not guilty
Nobody spoke a word
Omertà, Omertà
This is the law of our society
Laws that don't forgive those
Who break their silence

Silence is an order
A just and wise law
Whoever breaks his oath
Knows the price to pay
I have eyes but I see nothing
I am deaf and even dumb
I know the laws of God
And keep them to myself

Blind, deaf, and dumb am I
I am one of the society
That is a clenched fist
And that rules the land

The man who speaks too much
Will never have it easy
But whoever is deaf and blind and mute
Will live in peace for a hundred years

[Poem]

GOLDFINCH

By Andrew McNeillie, from the July 19, 2002, issue of the Times Literary Supplement.

Still in these wild places, where
Scarce a human ever comes, they startle up
On sight, and wheel away, twittering and
Wheezing, smokily, buoyed up, like
Down, to land a meadow and a half away,
And flit among the starry thistleheads.

How you would prefer them to delay,
But in some earlier incarnation, I suspect,
They learned to distrust a species that
Will stoop to anything for gold: as those who
With pliers poised among the dead tweaked
Dental fillings out, as if by second nature.

[Story]

THE MISSING MAN

"The Missing Man of Gables-o'-the-Wood," by J. Robert Lennon, was read on the BBC radio program The Verb *in April. Lennon's latest novel,* Mailman, *will be published by Norton in September.*

When he met the woman of his dreams he promised that he would build her a house. He was a carpenter, he said, and he had always wanted to make a home with his own two hands; now he had a reason to do it. The house would be for her.

They had only recently met, at a dinner arranged by a mutual friend. How to take such a comment? Surely it was far too soon to be making promises. But the man was handsome and kind, and his words were romantic, and she thought she might love him. So she accepted: she said that if he built the house, they would live in it together and be happy there.

In good time, they were married, and moved into a small apartment. The man worked long hours, taking on every project, no matter how trivial, in order to earn enough money to build the house he had promised. Indeed, his wife barely got to see him. "Don't be silly," she said, "I have a job, too, you know. And this apartment is fine for now." But the carpenter would hear none of it—he had promised her a house, and he would build it. The woman, realizing just how important this project was to her husband, apologized, and encouraged him to continue.

Soon the carpenter had earned enough to buy a plot of land on the outskirts of town. He hired an excavation crew to dig a foundation, and a cement company to pour it, and then he erected a shack on the property. "This is where I will live," he told his wife, "while I build our house."

"But I want you with me, in the apartment," she replied. "Surely you needn't sleep here, next to this hole."

"When the house is finished," the carpenter said, "we will always be together."

And so, against her better judgment, the woman again agreed.

Over the next year, the carpenter put all other projects aside and devoted all his time and energy to the house. He hauled lumber from the woods that grew on their land, and erected strong beams, and laid smooth, tight-fitting floors. The

roof he built was watertight, and the doors true in their frames.

Meanwhile, the woman got on with her life, earning a promotion and spending time with her friends. They told her she should leave the carpenter. They thought he was obsessive, manipulative, and self-absorbed. And although these things were at least partially true, the woman loved the carpenter, and resolved to bear with him until the house was finished. She went to the building site to visit him, bringing him food and news of the world, and although he sometimes looked very tired, the force of his love seemed to sustain him. The woman always returned to the apartment reassured that her own love for him was strong.

At last the house was finished, and the carpenter named it Gables-o'-the-Wood. He loaded his wife and their possessions into his pickup truck and drove them down the rutted path to where it stood. It was an early evening in October, and the fading light set the fall leaves aflame and surrounded the house with an aura of warmth and comfort. Candles burned in the windows of the new house, and evening birdsong filled the clearing.

The carpenter led his wife into the house and through its rooms. She had to admit, it was wonderful. The rooms were small but many, each designed with a particular activity in mind: a home office, a library, a game room. A music studio where the carpenter could play his fiddle, and a sewing room where the woman would make clothes for their children. The woman didn't know how to sew, and this was the first she had heard about these children, but she was stirred by the carpenter's vision of their life together, and she told him, quite honestly, that she loved the house. At last, they were able to live like a normal married couple, together every night and in the mornings, before work.

But life was not perfect. The carpenter, spoiled by his year of self-determination, grew increasingly frustrated with his clients' wishes, and soon he had developed a reputation, and his cell phone stopped ringing. Meanwhile, the woman found it difficult to get to work on time: the house was rather remote, the dirt road that led to it frequently too muddy or icy to drive on.

When she complained to the carpenter, he said, "Quit your job. We will live here together, alone in the wood."

"But what will we live on?" she asked him.

"Our love will sustain us," he replied.

"Oh, please," she said.

One afternoon, the woman arrived home from work to find the house empty. She called the carpenter's name, but there was no reply. She was about to go outside to hunt for him when she noticed a note lying on the kitchen table. It read:

> My Darling,
>
> We have grown apart. I beg you to come and find me, the way I found you that night at the dinner party. I have built a secret room into Gables-o'-the-Wood, and have locked myself inside. If your love is true, you will be able to find the room, and release me. I love you, and will see you soon.
>
> Your Husband

The woman found this tactic characteristically pigheaded, and he hadn't exactly *found* her at the dinner party—they had been *introduced* by Marnie and Len. But it was true that they had grown apart, and she did feel somewhat responsible, so she decided to go along and humor the carpenter. She made herself a sandwich, ate it, and then set off through the house to find the secret room.

This task, however, proved more difficult than she had anticipated. The house had been laid out according to no set plan, growing instead at the carpenter's whim, and the carpenter's heart was a mazy and impetuous place. Hallways led off in unexpected directions, and rooms she had never before noticed appeared before her: a room full of empty birdcages, a triangular room, a guest bedroom with a slanted floor. The fact was, she had been too busy at work to fully explore her new home, and now she was lost within it. By nightfall she had at last found her way back to the kitchen but had discovered no sign of any secret room.

She called in sick the next morning and continued her search. She was lonely, and her husband must be hungry. But she found nothing. Every wall was solid, every floorboard firmly fastened. She cried out his name, shouting, "Help me! Help me find you!" But the carpenter did not reply.

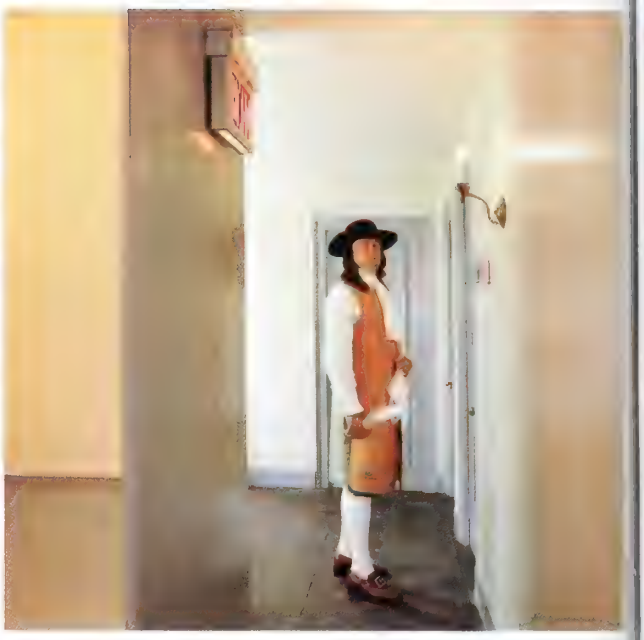
Days passed. Her imaginary illness transformed itself into a real one as she dragged herself around the house, beckoning hoarsely to her husband. At night, she thought she could hear moans of despair emanating from the very walls, and she covered her head with her pillow and sobbed.

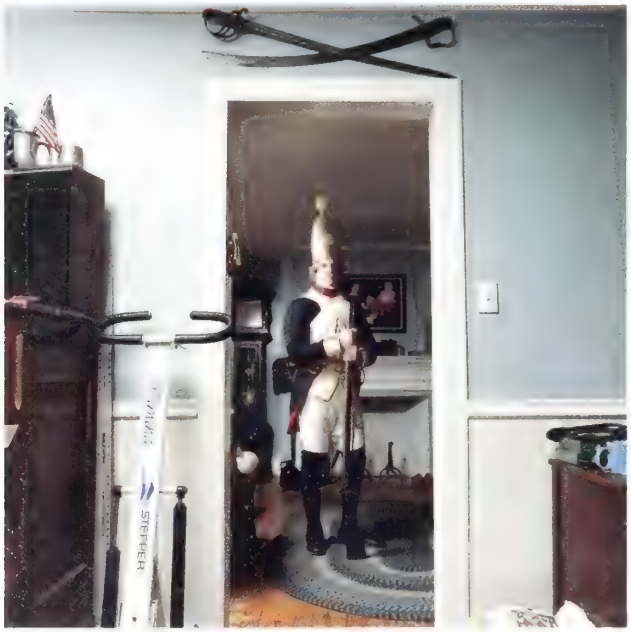
Eventually the woman's co-workers became worried and drove out to Gables-o'-the-Wood to see what was the matter. When they found their friend, malnourished and raving, they checked her into the hospital. In a week or so she had recovered, and got her old job and apartment back.

As for her husband, the carpenter, little is known. He has not been seen or heard from again. People in the nearby town will tell you that there never was a secret room, that the note was nothing but a cruel trick, that the carpenter had simply run off with another woman. All the same, nobody wants to live in Gables-o'-the-Wood, and it stands empty, its cedar shingles mossed and rotting, its windows smashed, its clapboards covered with obscene graffiti.

The house is still for sale. If you want it, you can have it for a song.









"James Gallagher as George Washington," "Bud Burkhart as William Penn," "Todd Gerding as a Hessian Grenadier," and "Ralph Archbold as Ben Franklin," by David Graham. The photographs appear in Graham's recent book Land of the Free: What Makes Americans Different, *published by Aperture.*

THE AMERICAN DISSIDENT

Individualism as a matter of conscience

By Edward Hoagland

Going through airport security, I've sometimes wondered what would happen if thoughts could be screened. Not that mine ever concern harming a plane, but I may have illegal ideas when looking up at the president on the TV. Dissent in its many gradations is disagreeable, doesn't win popularity contests. If you had criticized slavery or child labor or advocated women's suffrage in America in the wrong time or place, you could have been handcuffed, and lucky at that. I've been in towns in Louisiana as a young man where if I had questioned racial segregation I would have had my skull cracked; my Vermont license plates alone resulted in my being told to clear out of the parish before nightfall. The Vietnam War was divisive on a smaller scale, and I protested that lawfully, and safely too. Yet I'm ashamed to look back and realize, at seventy, that I have never been arrested on a matter of conscience. George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Martin Luther King Jr., and lesser folk whom I admire took more risks than me. Countless people have, and I don't believe for a minute that nothing in our era is worth being insurrectional about, or even that the issues are less grave. Wherever I have been, for example, I've seen an absolutely flabbergasting amount of nature in the process of being destroyed. It will be irrevocable, but did I fear handcuffs so much that I've let it all happen without a vociferous reaction? Apparently so. Police arrest anybody they're told to; they don't care what the bone of contention is, and protesters look ridiculous anyhow, with their hollering and cardboard placards, then limply dragged to the paddy wagon. Say it at the ballot box, we tell them, pretending that a visionary minority wouldn't be a minority there as well.

William Tyndale was burned at the stake in 1536 for translating key portions of what became the King James Version of the Bible so that ordinary people would be able to read it in English. Was that too harsh? James, when he acceded to the throne in 1603, thought so, but in the era of Henry VIII neither British nor Continental Catholic opinion would have

Edward Hoagland is a contributing editor of Harper's Magazine. *His nineteenth book,* Hoagland on Nature, *will be published this month by Lyons Press. His last essay for the magazine, "Sex and the River Styx," appeared in the January issue.*

DISSIDENCE SOMETIMES HAS THE EARMARKS OF INTEGRITY. IN ARGUING WITH PREVAILING OPINION, IT MAY BE CALLED UNPATRIOTIC, DISLOYAL, LOONY

demurred, not to mention numerous worthies such as Sir Thomas Mo who were incensed at Tyndale's blasphemous audacity. (More himself, course, was beheaded at around the same time for dissent of a differe sort.) Dissent can be a dicey business. If it's not at least a bit uncomfor able, it's probably not real dissidence. Forty-six years passed before the U. government, in 1988, apologized for interning 80,000 American citizens Japanese descent in scuzzy barbed-wire camps during World War II, b imagine the reception that would have been accorded some hair shirt wh proposed releasing or apologizing to them in his local bar decades befo that? Whistle-blowers were called snitches in my youth; and reformer soreheads who cared more about a bunch of strangers than their own fam lies. People painted with lead, insulated with asbestos, smoked aft coition, and had one for the road before leaving a party. Homosexualit was a crime, and wops, micks, Polacks, were not individuals much thoug about unless you yourself were one, or had married beneath you. As f "colored people," it was nice of you to use that polite term but somewh screwy to object to their treatment. Just for criticizing anti-Semitism (an Jews were white) I was called a Commie in school, and later my fath semi-disinherited me for fear that when he died I'd brea the covenant in our neighborhood, sell his house to a Je and precipitate a crash in his friends' property values.

Public floggings, brandings on the forehead, beheadings, ducking stool imagine the opprobrium that must have been mounted against weak siste who remonstrated against these customs prematurely. Did the bleedin hearts (to phrase it anachronistically) suppose that they had a monopoly o truth and a corner on virtue? Or slavery, being in the Bible—why questio it? Like child labor, what could be more natural? And people nowadays wh advocate the ethical treatment of animals: it must be maladjustments, "han ups," driving their agitation.

"Why are Mexicans called wetbacks?" I would ask.

"Because they swim across the Rio Grande."

"And why are homosexuals queers?"

"Because they're queer, dummy."

"Why are niggers called that?"

"Why, because it's short for Negro, obviously; it's a nickname."

"And Chinamen?"

"Because they're men from China."

"And why don't Negroes eat in the same restaurants as us, even up North

"Because I'm sure they very much prefer their own company if they dro the silverware and chew with their mouths open, or laugh too loud and tal without grammar. It's kinder, it embarrasses them if you watch."

This is old stuff; but recently—when I've written about famine in Africa- frequently, after I'd returned from Sudan, people would ask me why I had gon to witness it. They didn't come right out and inquire in all frankness wheth my psyche harbored a secret ghoulish streak, because that would be discou teous, but it was their implication. In a big, booming gated community lik America, why would you want to know firsthand about such things? Write check to Oxfam, vote for a congressman who actually owns a passport, b why dwell on—surround oneself with—suffering when there's nothing to b done? "Moving on," without being rigid or judgmental about any difficult is the current mantra, like mood-elevating pills and mediative therapy.

Yet dissidence, being the opposite of an emollient, sometimes has th earmarks of integrity. In arguing with prevailing opinion, it may not serv the interests of the arguer: may be called unpatriotic, irreligious, adversa ial, off-the-wall, loony and disloyal, irrational, neurotic, elitist or mush compulsive or lowbrow. Other people enjoy railing at a stationary targe and if you state a belief in something not majoritarian, you become tha Heads were knocked and demonstrators shot in mockable, in-your-fac protests—with suspicious police officers and jeering bystanders—to wi

lective bargaining for labor and a voting-rights act. These campaigners emselves were often unpleasant personally, hard to split the difference th—and I suspect that the convections of the new century will be hot- than the last's. Dissent may then be vertiginous—although you may nk, on the contrary, that the interventions of digitry will regulate not ly financial probity, child-support payments, the rights of the handi- pped, and the like, but everything that honor and a firm handshake ed to deal with. You'll never need to know whether somebody can look you in the eye. A visionary like Joan of Arc, if one emerges, won't need to be interrogated in excruciating detail and condemned, just deprogrammed.

Originally we Americans were a revolutionary people in religion d politics—misfits in Europe or adventurers of a modest kind—and crossed ot of deep water to try someplace new. Voting with our feet was inherently lissent, and our democracy was raucous to start with: coonskin cap versus p hat, hillbilly or flatlander, hayseed, city slicker, bohunk or blue blood. The st generation of newcomers each had to pay its dues before the next went for lace-curtain show, and I remember an aristocratic lady I knew half a cen- ry ago, a Mrs. La Farge, took to calling Cadillacs "Murphy Cars" because many Irish had begun buying them, not simply driving them as chauffeurs. pics" too, and she and others switched to Lincolns for a signature car.

But why ever did rich, landed gentry like Washington and Jefferson—al- ady grandees in the New World—hassle and strike at the powers that be? anklin Delano Roosevelt also was a "traitor to his class," but like John ennedy, another rich liberal president later on, he didn't give away his mon- to the poor, any more than Jefferson or Washington freed s slaves during his lifetime. If they had been that revolu- onary, they wouldn't have been electable. (Incidentally, the lea that a man as humane as Thomas Jefferson would *not* ave slept with a lovely slave like Sally Hemings in a long-term, onsiderate, semi-consensual liaison—that her color or some eshly punctiliousness might have barred him—would aston- h me more than that he did.) Indeed, what was the attrac- on in Christianity, a faith born of persecution and dissi- ence that was anti-wealth, anti-authority, and reborn in rotestant revisionism, then lately again in blue-collar fun- amentalism? But although dissent is a minority position, and ost of us don't want to dispute with a more powerful con- ituency or to challenge an injustice that hasn't injured us, it still an exercise, an impulse, that most of us indulge in, at east during our late years, for reasons of self-respect, and naybe in order to square ourselves with God. We all see out- ages we gloss over—whether the price of glaucoma medicine o old people or the current mistreatment of Arab Ameri- ans. We know that we can still shout outside the White louse (I once had the pleasure of giving a thumbs-down to piro Agnew personally, in his pre-inaugural limo cavalcade s vice president in 1969, and seeing him glower back). But t's risky and consuming in a turbulent period like this, with ven jail in the offing, and requires a pileup of atrocities to over- ide our caution and numbness. The metronome of news flash- s washes out each flush of anger just as we might have begun o articulate it, so that a critical mass of protest is hard to chieve. The controversially elected president, scary attor- ney general, sophistical defense secretary, are beneficiaries of he din of innovation, though on both the right and the left ve are dubious. Things are not going well, and patriotism is he last refuge not only of a scoundrel but of confusion also.

The bubble of power has become so elusive that we don't

THE METRONOME OF NEWS FLASHES WASHES OUT EACH FLUSH OF ANGER, SO THAT A CRITICAL MASS OF PROTEST IS HARD TO ACHIEVE



lustrations by Daniel Zezelj

DISSENT IS A BIT LIKE JESUS BEING RUDE IN THE TEMPLE. ARGUMENTATIVE, CONFRONTATIONAL, IT SELDOM LEADS TO CAREER ADVANCEMENT

know where it is—the Supreme Court, the voting machine, the sound-b writer, the war room, or Dick Cheney? And our electronic novelties don't see to clarify the ways we want to live: instead, throw us off stride. In such a c cophony, how does one dissent? How can we distinguish Tom Paine from crank, and Joan of Arc from a bipolar street-corner haranguer in drag? Do she have to join the U.S. Special Forces, and Tom get himself on 60 *Minut* It's not a silly question. Theodore Kaczynski, the Unabomber, was briefly hea but by a leverage we don't want. A different love of power has muted son of the best speakers, such as Billy Graham. I heard both the Reverend Gr ham and Martin Luther King Jr. during their prime (Graham in the 195(King in the sixties), and what distinguished them from each other was no fervency or stage charisma or mastery of oratorical skills but, rather, Kin range of emotion and points of reference and realism of address, and simp what he said. Graham never uttered any sentiments that might displease a s ting president, not to mention get himself shot. His stem-winders were li a football march, canted to furnish you a buzz so that you'd stop cheating your wife and step out of Madison Square Garden warmed for the win They were not sniggering and cruel, like Jerry Falwell's—whom I also hea in his cynical prime, in the eighties, at his home church in Lynchburg, V ginia, and far afield in Alaska—but passionately midstream, like an adori chaplain to Eisenhower, Nixon, and the upwardly mobile. For King, life w more complex, not fortissimo or full-face sunshine; it had a riddle for an u derside. Falwell, on the other hand, in Anchorage, and pitched more blu collar, sounded either tipsy or jet-lagged as he laughingly told us how manage our nagging wives. He confided that he let *his* have her way with t houseware because outside the confines of home it was a man's world.



Dissent is a bit more like Jesus being rude in the Temp including the chance of a walk down the Via Dolorosa if m rule or a dictator prevails. Argumentative, confrontation it's seldom a path to career advancement. Middle-of-the-roa ers discount such a person as lopsided in his priorities, wasti energy, splurging goodwill, and venting a personality pro lem—as the few thorny mavericks I've known well in fa were likely to do: honesty itself in most societies being perilou close to that, and a burr under the saddle. Terrorism makes e centricity suspect at an airport counter, and in a widening c cle from there. Gone is the hippies' confident sixties contem for tradition, and the seventies' derision toward "breede and their "rug rats," or the eighties' jettisoning of idealism almost any stripe. We fly the flag a lot now, yet what is the s cial compact? We've got gluts of information but are dizzy f lack of a norm. The norms of capitalism, friendship, and re gion: everything is so provisional, situational, optional, su a matter of lifestyle choice that the very word "norm" is lik ly to victimize somebody. Our magnetic field is dislocate gravity itself seems weakened. But weightlessness is not healt

The norms of loyalty, for example—how about that sligl ly older kid who befriended and protected you from bullies school? Do you have the faintest idea of whatever happened him? That early boss who was insightful and kind—is he aliv America is about climbing, which means you leave people b hind, and lawyers can enforce the terms of alimony, wills, a deeds. Loyalty sounds like a sort of standstill proposition an way: like the joke that if you want a friend in Washington, b a dog. Your children are offspring and you may be fortunate twinned with a partner, but who else would you go to the m for? This cleavage is extraordinary historically and anthrop logically, and our tie-strings frail. In the bad old days of ethn prejudice, people didn't shake hands with everybody, but handshake often signified something if they did. It was like t

issionary position" in sex—much ridiculed lately, but we may miss that like handshake fairly soon. I know a real Uriah Heep at my place of work, but would I recognize him for what he is on the Internet? I doubt it; you have to see him hunch as he scuttles on his obsequious errands. Electronically, that wouldn't show.

I'm left, right, and center, myself, because as a naturalist by persuasion, n therefore a political radical but a social conservative, like so many of us, om Thoreau on. Also, having grown up in the Establishment, my father a wyer, I know that the Establishment is not entirely horned. I even wrote itorials on an occasional basis for the *New York Times* for several years in e turn-of-the-seasons slot, between Hal Borland's stint and Verlyn Klinkenorg's taking over. This meant I could attend editorial-board meetings if I ished. They were contentious, and I soon ceased to come because as a stutrer I didn't enjoy the verbal fray, but I did like Max Frankel and Jack senthal, his deputy, who presided over the thrice weekly discussions at opsite ends of the long polished table. They were career allies and neighbors Riverdale, and rode to the office together in a company limousine, but alough burning with visibly tense ambition (Jack succeeded Max as editorl-page editor later, when Max moved up to direct the rest of the paper), they ere kinder, gentler *Times*men than many. There were hectic initiation rituals for me to get through, of course, but I never saw either of them be discourteous to anybody, and Jack was the best line editor I've ever had.

These were not op-ed meetings. This was where official positions were rashed out and unsigned writing assignments made. The regular subjects like bor, business, municipal and state government, Congress, foreign policy, cultural affairs, the judiciary, had specialists, but nobody could just ride his own obbyhorse without winning group consent or at least a median thrust that ck or Max would enforce when the final editorial page went to press; and foe might check its progress in the meantime. The arguments were about here and how strongly the paper ought to land, and could have national inuence. We had no blacks, Hispanics, Asian Americans, or announced gays, nd the slot or emphasis upon "Labor," for example, was somewhat anachroistic, given the cornice of homelessness, health care, and welfare problems oming in position to avalanche, more than strikes or union activity. We ran ssentially no environmentalist editorials. I was there to write local appreciations of nature in spring—little raptures—not fight for its worldwide survival. uch an evolution lay in the future for the *Times*, just as it was left to goodearted white liberals to take a decent position on racial issues. (Jack Rosenal himself, for instance, went over to Newark one night to hear Jesse Jackon speak, before it was widely considered important to have done so.)

We did, in 1979, however, have feminists in the room. This was a newly entrist, suitable meat to chew on, and besides the eminent architectural crit- Ada Louise Huxtable—an intellectually incisive, consummately elegant oman who usually sat next to Max or Jack as if a little above the fray and nowing where they were going to come down, anyway—we had a couple f eager advocates, such as the feisty Soma Golden, a pale, rumpled economics gghead who was gradually shouldering the good, gray fish-wrapper into enightened opinions on women's lib. Allies sat together, and I must confess placed myself with the white-haired or bald-headed guys facing the fornidable Soma and Mary Cantwell, later a memoirist, across the table. I was orward-tilting in politics but more culturally conservative than I should have been, when the women's-rights movement was, as Emerson once said, "honring to the age."

We weren't privy to whatever conversations Max and Jack had with Punch" Sulzberger, their publisher. But Jack kept an aluminum mobile in his ffice—a sculpture depicting two acrobats balancing at opposite ends of a swayng, swinging pole—to remind him of his professional role, as he fielded calls rom aggrieved or ingratiating and manipulative power brokers in the morng, then turned the phone off to work on the next day's editorial page in the

IN THE BAD OLD DAYS OF ETHNIC PREJUDICE, PEOPLE DIDN'T SHAKE HANDS WITH EVERYBODY, BUT A HANDSHAKE OFTEN SIGNIFIED SOMETHING IF THEY DID

DISSENT IS THE SOURDOUGH THAT STARTS BREAD RISING, OR THE RECKLESS PROTEST THAT IGNITES REFORM. BUT IT'S NOT FOR BREADWINNERS

afternoon. He would switch from a light-colored suit to a dark one on the d after Labor Day, no matter how hot that particular Tuesday was. The *Tim* is a keel, not a rudder, and a keel is needed before any rudder. Neverthele a great ship must turn, and we tugged at the stiff helm in diverse but tent tive ways. These well-intentioned workaholics on the tenth floor were life at the organization—experienced journalists who as they aged wanted stay closer to home—documenting, fortifying, and disseminating convention wisdom, which they expressed as stirringly as they could, while altering it l inchward degrees. *Can we say this? How soon will we be able to say this?*—san ing it down. There was no chance of a startling, idealistic midcourse corre tion; our struggles were between individuals safely pre-positioned in mid ri er, and nobody else could have reached the board. Max himself, as Washingt bureau chief, had supposedly been scooped on the Watergate scandal l Woodward and Bernstein of the *Washington Post* because he had been san bagged by Kissinger and was too reluctant to believe bad things about importa people: an ideal background for a job at which whatever you wrote might sour anemic in a decade and bloodless in a generation. The "godfathers" of t *Times* changed, from the horrendous Abe Rosenthal (no relation to Jack to Max when he achieved the top post, to the brilliant good guy and Africa ist Joe Lelyveld, to Howell Raines, and then back to Lelyveld, but an ord nary reporter could be reassigned, or not printed at all until he left of his ow accord without messy firings, if his coverage did not conform to the new paper's views. And similarly we had no dissenters in the boardroom that left. Jack even asked me, when his Harvard twenty-fifth anniversary roll around, what it was appropriate for him to recount about himself in the r union book. I liked him, told him, but was also being radicalized by t wholesale destruction of nature, and stopp doing my brief seasonal paeans to autum summer, and spring by and by.



Dissent is the sourdough that starts bread rising, the reckless protest that ignites reform. But it's not for brea winners. It's a marriage-breaker, embittering the kids; ar there is wastage—peacemakers such as Rabin, Gandhi, ar King killed, and lesser, luckier people vilified, pauperized, wi ulcers and palpitations. The apartheid jurists who shipp Nelson Mandela to Robben Island were surely well-balance successful men, like the French judges who burned Joan Rouen, and later the Roman clerics who martyred the philos pher and astronomer Giordano Bruno. Nowadays, rational o ficials are not aghast that we may destroy half of the worl species of plants and animals within a single human life spa And can you imagine the three enlisted men in the Army h licopter who interrupted the My Lai massacre at gunpoint- after more than 400 Vietnamese civilians had been slaughter by other American soldiers—receiving the Congression Medal of Honor for their heroism, instead of a quarter cent ry of official silence?

It's men who stand with arms akimbo who get such reward and people quickly become nonpersons if any cost must be pa for knowing them. You'll see it happen in grammar school, adolescence, your thirties, forties, fifties. Integrity has its pena ties, and betrayal was the usual fate of the honorable dieha I have known. It's not because there's nobody to trust, b because so often one of the definitions of people with pow is that they will be people you can't trust. "Premature antifa cists" was the label given by the U.S. armed forces in 1942– after the larger war against Nazism began—to the members the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, who had sailed off to Spain 1937 to fight Generalissimo Francisco Franco and been bomb

Luftwaffe Stukas, and so on. When they re-enlisted after Pearl Harbor, they came objects of suspicion and were mostly confined to their bases, after ıving been betrayed on the whole in Spain also.

Emerson—that cynosure of American literature—was barred from speakg at Harvard for thirty years after having delivered his heretical, now celeated "Divinity School Address"; and Thoreau, another alumnus and lecrer living nearby in Concord, was never invited to hold forth at the)llege at all. Their interest in Asian religions went dangerously beyond beg academic, and they championed John Brown and other wild notions, nerson even speaking before the National Women's Rights Convention 1855. "Life is an ecstasy," he wrote in *The Conduct of Life*, which is still a volutionary doctrine because our sense of self-interest tends to trump our ımersion in it. Radiance is hot to handle. We don't want to seem guilty of not being "on the same page" as other people for too long. Then—sliding through the months—we may wonder why we have lived.

I've hardly looked in a mirror for years (don't shave using one) and, like ıany souls, have self-sculpted a simulacrum I carry around. Not my public lentity—that disciplined old doppelgänger who knows how to maintain a ıcade—but the guy I hope I am, who is going to meet his maker in finishıg up. Will I need a sort of splint for my spirit then, like the metal device wore when carpal tunnel syndrome affected one of my hands? I'm more at eace than that, perhaps, and stumble more frequently when walking than ı subtler respects. A mirror would remind me of the bashing I've taken, as ell as some of my cynical trimmings, but it would be a distortion, too, beause aging is cellular, not just a map of resentments, bafflement, or disapointment. Wrinkles simulate sagging hopes without actually signifying ıem, and do little to represent the spine of joy I have felt day by day (at least ı the morning) for most of my life. Many people, who may seem rather bitər in middle age, by seventy are mainly grateful for having lived, willyilly, though quite round-shouldered from having rolled with the punches, nd reticently proud of that. Nor, having absorbed those, do they think life houldn't have blows. As Thomas Mann suggested in his last novel, we ught to live *like* soldiers without *being* soldiers; and how can you have a miltary without boot camp?

To be soldierly yet a partisan means dissent at times because an army kills whomever it's told to kill. Conformity and dissent are not simply a seesaw, ıowever, because a posse comitatus and a lone maverick are not of equal ower. Conventional wisdom is what incarcerated Dickens's father in a lebtor's prison and hung small London pickpockets until the 1860s. It reılarly reconstitutes chain gangs in parts of our own country and allowed oung Mexican children to work unconscionable hours in Texas and Calfornia. The dissenter has got to rouse himself to pay attention—and then ur slumberous consciences—much as the bow-tied Boston lawyer Joseph Welch did in verbally accosting the snarling Senator Joseph McCarthy luring the McCarthy red-scare congressional hearings in 1954, with TV cameras rolling and Welch's clumsy wording affectingly unrehearsed: "Have you ıo sense of decency, sir, at long last? Have you left no sense of decency?"

Cameras have become a precondition for effective acts of conscience. Otherwise Police Chief Bull Connor in Birmingham, Alabama, could have kept on knocking down Negro demonstrators with fire hoses, and the Budhist monks in Saigon would have had no international audience when they incinerated themselves to protest the puppet regime of Ngo Dinh Diem. But broadly speaking, dissenters include the itchy folk who staff food pantries and shelters for the walking wounded in our blistered society. If doubts didn't nag them to action, the blisters would become calluses. Just as laughter can be a form of dissidence, so is seriousness—whereas conformity, like a frat boy, smirks out of one side of its mouth so that nobody will notice. Reverent in the pew, it spits out in the parking lot and pees between the cars.

LAUGHTER CAN BE A FORM OF DISSIDENCE, WHEREAS CONFORMITY SMIRKS OUT OF ONE SIDE OF ITS MOUTH SO THAT NOBODY WILL NOTICE

TO EACH CONFLAGRATION WE DON'T REACT. OBESE, TENDING A LAWN, WE ARE INDIFFERENT. WE WANT TO BELIEVE INSTEAD IN A SORT OF RAPT RHETORIC

We do have this tradition of free speech (monks martyred in Tibet were filmed by the Chinese press), and of a civil response to passive resistance th made it possible for Martin Luther King, and Gandhi in British India, to pra tice a symbolic disobedience without being immured forever in prison, or le for dead by the police. A Gandhi in French Algeria, Soviet Russia, Milos vic's Serbia, or Sharon's Palestine would not have been let off nearly as ligh ly. Although the average citizen does not red-letter our constitutional gua antees (he might punch the bastard instead or fire him for his nutty politic views), lawyers do remember, and many a cop the morning after, and son college graduates and most autodidacts. I certainly have views my neighbo wouldn't agree with—somebody has to or we'd still be living in trees; I'm su posterity will see it my way, don't you agree? A good number of us are clos dissidents and know what's wrong with the world better than more world folk do. We're not Galileo or Giordano Bruno, but anybody winning mo of life's rewards than we are is probably selling out to some extent, don't yo think? Tom Paine died ridiculed by the likes of John Adams and virtually de titute, and Joan in burning agony at Rouen in 1431. One judge was impri oned for having raised objections to her trial, and a friar, Pierre Bosquier, ove heard bemoaning her being burnt alive—after abjectly and publicl recanting—was only sentenced to eight months on bread and water.

Most of us would not have demurred that far; the danger would hav frightened us. We'd have said she had it coming, like John Walker Lindh an other confused, petty idealists of today. Joan was major, not minor, but s ambiguous in her person and inspiration that a blurred but firmer parallel migh lie in our responses nowadays to the titanic tragedies we are beginning to wi ness that, as an obverse, may live as long in history, like the AIDS pandemi the plague of African famines, the worldwide holocaust we are inflicting o other forms of life. To each conflagration we don't react. Obese, and tend ing a lawn or window box, we are indifferent. Television footage woul "bomb" if it showed a lot of skeletal orphans or hundreds of species blink ing out in the tropics. Nor would real carpet bombing go over well if it wer filmed from the ground, not by the aircraft's Nintendo gadgets. Nor woul we want to hear the screams of various Muslims being drawn and quartere with electric shocks at our behest in obliging Third World dictatorships. W want to believe instead in a sort of rapt rhetoric—one nation under God, lil ertine in pursuing happiness but also after goodness. Unfortunately the priv ilege of free speech doesn't promise that you're going to say anything nev such as defining goodness. But nine out of ten of us have a rough idea of ho we conceive it to be. And we know that dissent is innate to both honest and altruism, that there are laws and higher laws. To be upright is not jus keeping a Sabbath or paying one's union dues. (Some of the old agnostic Yi dish poets used to cluster together in New York's housepainters' union. Accruing integrity is a process, not charted, and when the chips are dow you might wind up fighting fascism prematurely, or volunteering like Tho reau, a century ahead of other Americans, to go to jail for a principle.

Next to nobody quite practices their religion, and we know that raw demo racy would be so intemperate it must be bridled. Yet horse's asses do attai high office and then delegate to other horse's asses more power than all bu half a dozen of the politicians who have been freely chosen by the electorat Thus we find ourselves in thrall to chumps like Robert McNamara, who la er apologize for what they've done. Power can ramify exasperatingly in democracy, when few officeholders could be elected if they said precisel what they meant. We assume they're partly rascals on a stage—makeup an make-believe. So our jury system may embody grass-roots democracy bette even though the lawyers can be expensive, because an anonymous twelve do decide the verdict as they wish, without having passed the hat. And in tha context we distrust holdouts, much like individuals who make our stree look bad by not mowing the lawn. But with such exceptions, in a democra cy we tend to harbor a soft spot for the proverbial minority of one who ha unpredictable thoughts. His ego or punctilio can displease us, like the habi

unbending fussiness and carping, the pose of dissent as a monocle. Yet it n also be as invaluable as reading glasses in deciphering falsity. And falsi- is what we wind up not wanting—not by the end.

Aung San Suu Kyi, of Myanmar, asked for an encyclopedia to help see her rough a decade of captivity. And how trivial a recompense is her distant me for so many years of silent, grinding confinement. More germane is bear- g witness for her people. She is the celebrated one among tens of thousands nameless prisoners of conscience worldwide, new sufferers continually placing those killed or released. We know what the jailers are probably like, id the common tattlers and conniving Vichy Frenchmen and -women ho would sell your hideout for a hundred dollars—and the tame press that ould not remark much on it. Brutal, go-along wage slaves are scattered every- here, and slick flacks as well. We recognize the verbal cowardice that oc- asionally enables us to hold on to our own jobs. (I mean, suppose, as a riter, I'd said I have known a good many Jewish-American journalists who splayed a "dual loyalty" toward Israel and America in writing about the Pales- nian conflict. It would have been professional suicide.)

I don't have a lot of faith in the truthfulness of power or the fairness of ublic opinion. But if you skim off the scum who everywhere float into rmkey and mouthpiece jobs, I think that ordinary folk over the long run e suffused with a kind of benign, almost blithe assertiveness that is the en- ne of democracy when it works. For hundreds of years sniveling pickpock- s needed to be hung from a gibbet before the clergy, and the mothers and thers of other school-age boys, took enough notice to raise a tentative, un- asy complaint. The thumbscrew and rack were abolished too (though I oubt there is less torture—just as no doubt a thousandfold as many small oys die much more slowly and painfully of famine now than ere strangled on Tyburn Hill). But reforming the atrocities e inflict upon nature will be more problematic. When a critical mass of damage has been done, it will be as if we had stopped hanging small boys only after there were no more small boys.

Dissent is essential—it coughs up germs and clarifies he spirit—whether or not you are too late. And don't quail at etting excited; why not put in an exclamation point, the way he militants who founded the conservation organization Earth irst! did? That's part of what life is about. Giordano Bruno was urned at the stake with a torture device clamped to his tongue o that he couldn't speak the truth as he saw it to the crowd n the Campo di' Fiori as the faggots were lit, not in order that e wouldn't hurt anybody's feelings there. Yet dissent is a tool f kindness, on the whole. We don't want the mentally retarded executed, illegal immigrants dying of thirst in the desert, sea urtles wiped out for the sake of shrimp cocktails, Predator lrones perfected to the point of being able to assassinate any- ody, based on their DNA. We dissent from cruelty and greed, olipsism and nihilism, from war-lovers and eye-gougers (that s, people who gouge the landscape our eyes feed from).

But you can't dissent in earnest if you have no intimations f what you believe. Then it's simply temperamental. A dou- le negative—not to admire sequoias or cathedrals, but say don't destroy them—will vitiate your claim. Death, for ex- mple, will be as much a mystery to me as to anybody. I don't expect it's either Christ or merely biochemistry (and can't guess what poor creature, in this century, one might like to be reincarnated as). I believe it will be more than death, or bare- bones rest, however. And that puts a fire in my belly to pre- serve the mysteries and decencies and beauty and complexi- ties we have. ■

ORDINARY FOLK OVER THE LONG RUN ARE SUFFUSED WITH A KIND OF BENIGN ASSERTIVENESS THAT IS THE ENGINE OF DEMOCRACY WHEN IT WORKS



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SICK ON THE INSIDE

Correctional HMOs and the coming prison plague

By Wil S. Hylton

When David Hannah walked into a small office on the second floor of the Moberly Correctional Facility in Moberly, Missouri, last fall, carrying his belly like a hundred-pound sack of sand, the staff knew him well enough not to worry about what he might break or steal or soil in their private offices, which were normally not accessible to inmates, so I was able to close the door behind him, and we sat together and talked about what was happening to his body. He was a pale, fifty-seven-year-old white male, serving a sentence of life plus three years for rape, and his gray hair was matted to his head. His face was as worn and gaunt as a much older man's.

Hannah was angry. "Look at it," he said, glaring at his gut. "Do you want to see it?"

I didn't want to see it, but I nodded anyway. I had come precisely *to* see it, to witness Hannah's disfigurement, the fruit of a long series of medical miscalculations. It had begun in the 1980s with two kinds of hepatitis, B and C, a condition that prison doctors had largely ignored for a decade, then treated with a series of botched, questionable procedures that caused David's cells to cease performing osmosis properly, so that over time his natural body fluids began to collect, trapped inside his gut with no way to evacuate, his midsection swelling to accommodate those fluids, expanding to such a size and weight that the mere act of walking around had given David, by December 2000, a pair of hernias, neither of which the prison doctors had bothered to treat. David stood now to show me the belly and the hernias, the condition his body had arrived at through an utter lack of attention. He pulled his flannel shirt to the side of his waist and lifted his gray T-shirt, and, in spite of myself, I winced. His belly was enormous, taut and pasty, seemingly glued to his gaunt frame. At the front of it, a hot-pink hernia, about the size of a grapefruit, seemed barely attached where the belly button should have been, giving David's midsection the overall contour of a giant breast and nipple. Bracing myself, I asked him where the other hernia had emerged. He studied me, obviously not fond of baring his physique. After a moment, he shrugged and unbuttoned his pants.

To describe David's scrotum as swollen and red would be a failure of language. It was about the size of a rugby ball, so raw and irritated, shiny and crimson, that it almost seemed to be covered with blood. David hung his head. "They give me aspirin," he said.

Later, when I heard that David had died of indeterminate causes and that his body had been cremated, I realized that I had probably been the last person outside of the prison staff to see David alive, to see what his body had become from all those years of mistreatment, and I wondered: Can such a secret be kept?

It occurs to me now that prisons are designed for keeping secrets, for holding inside

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not just men but also their lives and the details of those lives. In prison, social isolation is a matter of policy, and inmates are neither expected nor encouraged to have more than a modicum of contact with the outside world. This is not necessarily, or at least not ostensibly, vindictive. In many cases, isolation is the prison's approach to rehabilitation. As Alexis de Tocqueville observed nearly two centuries ago, "Thrown into solitude [the convict] reflects. Placed alone, in view of his crime, he learns to hate it; and if his soul be not yet surfeited with crime, and thus have lost all taste for anything better, it is in solitude, where remorse will come to assail him."

Still, the social isolation of prisoners creates a host of difficulties, not least of which is that of monitoring their treatment, of ensuring that they are assailed only by their own remorse and not by anything else—by, say, other prisoners, or by those who keep the watch. Opacity, after all, runs both ways, and if the prison walls keep convicts in, they work just as effectively to keep observers out.

This problem is only made worse inside the prison infirmary. By its very nature, medicine is a private matter, and a prisoner's medical records are protected by the same confidentiality laws that protect free citizens. This means that a prisoner's medical chart is both locked inside a physical fortress and shielded by a battery of privacy restrictions, all of which leaves the field of prison medicine cloistered and nearly impossible to survey. Compounding this is the fact that prison medicine, and, indeed, the principles of medicine itself, are fundamentally at odds with all other facets of prison life. Even the term "prison medicine" [illegible] Whereas prison is designed to alienate and punish, medi[illegible] is the boundary between care and punishment? At what point do

IF THE SECRECY OF PRISON MEDICINE SEEMS ABSTRACT, WAIT UNTIL THE HEPATITIS EPIDEMIC COMES FLOODING OUT

Until the 1970s, which is to say for the first two centuries of American life, these were not questions that anyone felt compelled to ask, let alone answer. As a matter of law, prison medicine had always been considered a privilege, not a right, and the final authority on treatment was not a doctor or even a court but the local warden. Prisoners whose medical needs were not being met, whose broken noses and diabetes were left untreated, who were stabbed and not sewn, feverish and not medicated, prisoners who had cancer but no treatment, who had prescriptions that wardens refused to fill, whose mental healt[illegible] teetered at the edge of self-destruction—thos[illegible] prisoners had no recourse, nor reason to expe[illegible] it. In the early 1970s, a survey of jails by th[illegible] American Medical Association found that fe[illegible] er than 30 percent had medical facilities ar[illegible] only about one in five had a formal arrangeme[illegible] with any medical provider.

Things began to change in 1971, when [illegible] uprising at the Attica penitentiary in New Yo[illegible] forced the subject of prison conditions into th[illegible] national conversation. Amid a flurry of laws e[illegible] acted in response to Attica, state and federa[illegible] legislators began crafting measures to guarante[illegible] basic health care to prisoners. Although th[illegible] laws have changed over the past thirty year[illegible] little else has. If anything, prison health care [illegible] in further decline now than ever. Most depar[illegible] ments of correction have chosen not to inve[illegible] in medical infrastructure but rather to farm ou[illegible] the business to subcontractors, and these days [illegible] single, private corporation controls the healt[illegible] care of all prisoners in ten states and manages [illegible] portion of inmate health care in another sever[illegible] teen, having underbid competitors everywher[illegible] it exists. Correctional Medical Services is no[illegible] merely the nation's largest provider of priso[illegible] medicine; it is also the nation's cheapes[illegible] provider, a perfect convergence of big busines[illegible] and low budgets. But unlike the traditiona[illegible] HMO, whose risk of a malpractice suit is rea[illegible] and is felt, and is reflected to at least some de[illegible] gree in the quality of medical care, companie[illegible] such as CMS have little or no reason to protec[illegible] themselves. Most juries are reluctant to decid[illegible] in favor of a convict, and those juries that d[illegible] favor the convict are often reluctant to awar[illegible] money. Cost-benefit analysis takes on special[illegible] human overtones behind bars.

Perhaps even more significantly, private com[illegible] panies such as CMS feel no responsibility, an[illegible] have no legal obligation, to account to the pub[illegible] lic for what goes on inside their facilities. So[illegible] while CMS receives about $550 million of tax[illegible] payer money each year, the company choose[illegible] not to provide any accounting of how that mon[illegible] ey is spent or even how much of it is spent—an[illegible] how much unspent, to be pocketed as profit[illegible] And although lawsuits over the years have re[illegible] vealed discredited health-care professionals work[illegible] ing in CMS facilities, the company refuses t[illegible] reveal the names of its doctors and nurses fo[illegible] verification or to provide any account of hov[illegible] many have been disciplined or had their licens[illegible] es revoked in other states. With CMS responsi[illegible] ble for so many patients nationwide, it is fair t[illegible] say that the practice of medicine in prison ha[illegible] reached an unprecedented level of inscrutabili[illegible] ty—indeed, secrecy—and if this fact seems ab[illegible] stract or unlikely to affect regular folks in the gen[illegible]

al population, well, just wait until the hepatitis epidemic comes flooding out of the gates.

For those of you who have never been personally acquainted with the hepatitis virus, allow me to describe it briefly. In the spring of 1995, I downed the wrong glass of frozen margarita somewhere in the Chihuahua desert and unleashed the disease on my insides. Unaware, I took a bus back to Juárez a few days later, walked across the border, drove home to Albuquerque, and, when the travel itch returned a few weeks later, set out for Glacier National Park, where I intended to spend thirty days in the backcountry, mountaineering. By the time I arrived in Montana, however, the virus had begun to set in, and I found myself overwhelmed by fatigue. Deciding to get some rest before starting out, I found an empty cabin near the boundary of the park, crawled down to the basement, settled into a bed, and, with one last glance at my backpack by the door, passed out. When I woke up several days later, I was lying on my back in a medical facility 120 miles away with an IV in my arm and a sign on the door that said, "Warning: Take Enteric Precautions Before Entering." Asking around, I learned that I had been delivered to the medical center by a friend who worked in the park. My liver-enzyme levels, upon check-in, had been gauged at more than a hundred times the normal level. The first time I looked in the mirror, I saw that my jaundiced skin was roughly the same color and texture as a dried tangerine. I spent several days lying in place, flitting in and out of consciousness, playing host to an array of curious physician's assistants, nurses, and certified nursing assistants, some of whom ran tests on my urine and blood while the rest mostly stood around marveling at how odd I looked. That was the beginning. For the next six months, I was forced to live at my parents' house, where my daily priorities became eating healthy food, sleeping at least half of each day, and wishing that my perpetual headache would relent. This was the face of hepatitis A, the least virulent strain of the virus.

The difference between the type of hepatitis I contracted and, say, hepatitis C, which is the most severe strain, is mostly a matter of intensity. My hepatitis eventually went away; hepatitis C, in most cases, does not. It keeps on attacking your liver for the rest of your natural life. That means people with acute hepatitis C can essentially forget about all the wonderful things that livers do, such as fighting infections, filtering toxins, and storing energy. To make matters worse, people with hepatitis C are contagious for the rest of their lives. Even twenty years after their initial infection, even if the virus is in remission and they feel pretty good, they still constitute a walking weapon and had better be careful where they bleed. It is worth noting, then, that somewhere between 20 and 40 percent of American prisoners are, at this very moment, infected with hepatitis C, and therefore quite contagious. It is



also worth noting that most of them will eventually be released back into the general population, where the infection rate is, for now, only about 2 percent. The Association of State and Territorial Health Officials noted in a 2000 report that "an estimated 1.4 million HCV-infected persons pass through the correctional system each year." And although the virus is most pervasive in prison because of the high incidence of injected drugs there, it can be transmitted just as easily on the outside through sex, blood transfusion, or even a nasty fistfight.

With a scourge like this roiling on the inside, threatening to boil over to the outside, you might expect prisons to adopt some kind of screening policy for inmates and to institute a treatment offensive for the afflicted. Unfortunately, no such national program exists. Although the cost of a hepatitis test is only a couple hundred dollars, very few facilities volunteer to provide them, and there has been no federal legislation to require the measure. "It's a missed opportunity,"

Illustrations by Daniel Bejar



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TODAY TOMORROW

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says Dr. Cindy Weinbaum of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "The number of prisoners with hepatitis C is incredibly high. It's unbelievable."

The fact that most prison doctors have not seized this opportunity doesn't reflect any inherent challenge to their doing so. On the contrary, a couple of states have developed simple and effective hepatitis programs that test all prisoners upon intake, making the disease relatively easy to track and monitor. One of those states is Texas, and there, not surprisingly, prison health care is managed not by a private company like CMS but by two universities, the University of Texas and Texas Tech University. Dr. David Smith, who is the chancellor of Texas Tech and who led the battle to make hepatitis screening mandatory in Texas, assured me that the hepatitis program he created is not very special at all, or anyway that it shouldn't be. "It's just the smart thing to do," he said. "We have almost 30 percent of our prison population in Texas infected with hepatitis. That's not so different from the numbers you see in the Dark Ages with the plague."

When I visited a handful of CMS facilities last fall, I found a very different attitude. Under CMS care, 214,000 inmates are expected to petition for any hepatitis tests they want, and even if those petitions are granted, and the tests given, and the results positive, the chances of getting any kind of treatment are only slightly better than of getting a presidential pardon. This became most obvious to me when I heard the story of Larry Frazee.

I met Larry at the Western Missouri Correctional Center in Cameron, about four hours west of St. Louis. He was a gaunt little man with a circular face surrounded by brownish gray hair, and his thin mustache seemed to weigh on his lips when he spoke. He walked with a silent shuffle, and from the black bruises under his eyes you could see that he hadn't slept well in months, if not years. When I began reading through his medical record, it was easy to see why. Larry had first been diagnosed with hepatitis in the early 1990s, when a prison plasma center rejected him as a donor. The diagnosis had been confirmed by a prison infirmary in June 1994, but even so, between then and the end of 1997, he had managed to wrangle only a half dozen doctor's visits. It wasn't until January 2000, a full five and a half years after his diagnosis, that CMS doctors began formally monitoring his condition. Even then, treatment was not forthcoming. As Larry discovered, CMS doctors required him to meet a long checklist of conditions, known as a "protocol pathway," before he could receive any treatment for his disease. Some of those items required off-site consultations. One of the things he needed, if he wanted treatment, was a liver biopsy. But when Larry went to the prison infirmary to ask for one, he learned that he had to have a psychological evaluation first, then enroll in a drug-abuse awareness class and sign a slew of forms releasing CMS from liability for anything that might happen during the biopsy. So Larry did those things one by one, and he signed the papers, and he went to see the biopsy specialist, who promptly sent him back to his cell because he didn't know his virus genotype. Larry couldn't find anything in the protocol pathway that required him to know his genotype, but to be a good sport he put in a request at the infirmary for a genotype test. A few weeks later, he got the test, but the laboratory somehow screwed up his results, so he had to file for a second test and wait for a second appointment and a second set of results. Before, in February of last year, he finally returned to see the biopsy specialist, who sent him away again, this time saying that Larry shouldn't bother getting treatment anyway, because it can be somewhat dangerous. Larry argued that it was his decision to make, and that he wanted the treatment, or at least the biopsy that he was entitled to, and maybe afterward, when he had the biopsy results and could take an informed look at them, he would be willing to discuss the risks of treatment, but the doctor just shook his head. The decision was final, he said. No biopsy. He sent Larry back to his cell, where Larry has been ever since, without a biopsy, without any treatment, feeling sick and tired and a bit like he failed himself.

But what Larry didn't realize, and what he's only now beginning to grasp, is that he never had much of a chance in the first place. As a matter of formal company policy, CMS discourages treatment for hepatitis, and the protocol pathway is just a way of making it harder for prisoners to demand it. Although a CMS spokesman insisted that CMS doctors are private contractors and that "it is the individual physician's responsibility to make sure care is given to patients," an internal memo from CMS regional medical director Gary Campbell to his fellow directors in February 1999 reveals just how much authority the doctors really have at CMS. "I am not encouraging anyone to undergo therapy," the medical director wrote. "However, if you have someone that is insistent, then this pathway is to be followed." Campbell added, "Unless I have given you specific approval to do Hep C testing, do not do so unless the patient has obvious moderate to severe liver disease or has exposure as described by the exposure policy of the DOC. Remember, all Hep C testing has to be approved by me."

And so, for the 214,000 prisoners whose health supervised by CMS, the hepatitis epidemic ntinues to grow, untested and untreated, virally unencumbered by the forces of modern edicine, while people like Larry Frazee remain ght where the company wants them: stalled ong the protocol pathway. Whether or not this legal remains to be decided. In January of this ar, the University of Michigan law program ed suit against CMS for failure to address the epatitis problem in that state. If their case is ccessful, similar lawsuits may follow in other ates. Until then, however, the policy stands: o testing, no treatment.

"CMS is an HMO with a captive audience," ys David Santacroce, the professor who is speareading the Michigan lawsuit. "The fewer paents they treat, the more money they make."

"This is deliberate indifference," adds Michael teinberg, legal director of the Michigan ACLU. There is a standard for testing and treatment of ep C that the Centers for Disease Control came ut with, and CMS simply is not heeding it. It's ot just hepatitis, either. You talk about the tip f the iceberg! There is a systemic problem of ot providing good health care to prisoners. Heptitis is the tip of it, but there's a long list of issues below the surface that we haven't even begun to address."

Some of those issues *have* been addressed in ther courtrooms, however, in other states, by ther groups, and taken as a whole, the litany of nalpractice crimes committed by CMS doctors egins to read like a horror novel. Take the inate in Alabama who died of dehydration and tarvation in a CMS infirmary after receiving are that one medical director described as "nonxistent" and "a gross departure from medical ommunity standards." Or the inmate in the ame state who died when CMS staffers injected im with the wrong medicine. Or the CMS doctor in New Mexico who testified that he was required by the company to prevent off-site referals. Or the district judge in Idaho who found hat an inmate's care in the state prison "more closely resemble[s] physical torture than incarceration." Or the inmate in Nevada who died because a CMS doctor canceled her prescription for insulin. Or the federal judge in Michigan who described CMS follow-up care as "bureaucratic purgatory." Or a U.S. Justice Department inquiry in Virginia, which found that CMS medical records "failed to meet any known professional standard." Or the district court monitor in Georgia who found that CMS ran a "medical gulag" in the state prisons, giving one prisoner ibuprofen for his lung cancer and making another wait ten months to see a doctor for a broken arm.

Yet, perhaps because juries so rarely award money to convicts, there is essentially no incentive for lawyers to bring these crimes together into a comprehensive, class-action lawsuit. Without the lure of a large settlement, most trial attorneys are unwilling to fork out millions of dollars in research and lost wages to fund such a massive endeavor. As a result, the central figure in the movement against CMS is not a major national law firm or even a renegade lawyer, but an aging, confrontational activist named Karen Russo.

I met with Karen, who runs a prisoner-advocacy group called the Wrongful Death Institute, one evening last winter at her home in the suburbs of Kansas City, and she invited me inside to sit at the small wooden table in her dining room, where we ate meat loaf and potatoes while her three dogs scurried around and her teenage kids and their friends traipsed up and down the stairs. Karen was undaunted by the chaos around her. When she had finished eating, she smoothed her dark brown hair behind her ears, sat back in her chair, and, as if she were in an office or behind a podium, she cleared her throat, blinked her heavily painted eyes, and launched into a tirade against CMS, her voice ringing through the house fervently, sometimes furiously.

"WE HAVE NUNS WHO GO IN AND BRING DOCUMENTS OUT. IT'S A WAR FOR INFORMATION, AND CMS KNOWS IT"

"They don't want anyone to know what's going on in these facilities," she said. "Getting medical records and company documents is like going up against Fort Knox. We have to resort to all sorts of methods. We have a network of prisoners across the country who have ways of getting paperwork out to us, a couple of pages at a time. We have nuns who go in and bring documents out with them. We have nurses, doctors, whistleblowers. It's a war for information, and CMS knows it. They're just waiting to take me out. They *hate* me. Every Monday at noon I do a radio show on a local station, and it's like a fireside chat. The CMS headquarters is just over in St. Louis, so they have people listening. Everybody wants to know, 'Who's she going to get today?' And it could be anyone. I could go after a nurse, I could go after a doctor, I could go after the corrections staff. And I've gone after all of them. I'm putting together a file on every one of them. I call out their names on the air. 'Nurse so and so, I want you to know that I'm onto you.' And the prisoners are listening, too. This thing is growing like wildfire. A couple of years ago I was getting maybe two or three letters a week; now it's anywhere from twenty to thirty letters a day, from all over the country. Of course, some of those are from CMS decoys. That's what they're doing

now — they get offenders to write me letters that say, 'I'm not sick, but I heard about what you're doing and I was just wondering how you got started,' and so on. You know, just dripping with it. They want to know what I've got. But I'm not naive: I can see right through that; I can smell it.



They're scared, and they should be. We've got them. I know what they're doing."

Karen's invective seemed over the top, but she was the genuine article: a nearly obsessive crusader who had long ago discarded any semblance of a normal life in favor of late-night phone calls with sick inmates and interminable afternoons poring over their medical records. The dust on her antique piano had become so thick and sticky that it made my eyes itch after only a few bars, and the ceiling in her bathroom was crumbling to the floor. Yet Karen's memory was immaculate; she had converted herself into a database of detail, packed with accounts of prisoners met, their medical histories, life stories, and extraneous personal minutiae. To reinforce this glut of information, the back rooms of her house were stuffed with thousands of papers, most of which she could locate and produce within a few frenzied moments. When pressed, she could also furnish names and numbers for a whole range of sources, including guards and activists and prisoners' family members (though she was more reluctant t reveal others, such as the nuns and nurses sh claims to consult). In her utter submersion int the topic, Karen had even developed a persona bond with one of the prisoners, a man name Raymond Young, who was locked up nearby o drug charges and whose persistent back problem and hernias kept him in a wheelchair, but wh gave off an almost eerie radiance on the day met him, with a great, black, bald head that shon like an eclipsed sun and a grin full of golden teet inscribed with the numbers 3, 3, and 1/3. ("Thi ty-three and a third," he said in a gravelly whi per. "I'm a traveler. A lone traveler.")

On the night I visited Karen, however, sh took me to meet a different friend, Leland Hur ley, who had only recently been released fro the prison where Raymond is housed. When saw Leland's apartment, it was hard for me t imagine that he was any more comfortable tha he had been on the inside. His building, an ir distinct brick high-rise, was in the kind of neigh borhood that most middle-class people choos not to know about. There were crack dealers sel ing openly and loudly on the corner and drunk fighting in the street. The Plexiglas front doo were smeared with random grub and old graffit and the spun-polymer carpeting of the lobb seemed almost melted across the floor. Up th clattering elevator a few floors, down the nar row, echoing hallway, Leland's door opene into a single shabby room where he sat in a whee chair watching a fuzzy television set that was o top of a little table above a small collection right-footed shoes. Leland's left leg was missing

"Come on in," he mumbled to us, pointing t ward a couple of chairs and wheeling himse around beside them. I sat down, and we mad small talk for a minute, then Leland cut to the st ry. "Basically, what happened was, I was livin on the bay," he said. "That's the common area. wasn't meant to be a living quarters, but the room were all full, so they had to put about thirty or fort cots in the bay, and I lived on one of them. I wa there for about a year. The whole time, they nev er turned out the lights. But anyway, I was gettin up for breakfast one morning and I reached ove and put my sock on, and I felt a sting. So I pulle the sock back off and a spider run out of it. Wel I stomped it. I knew it was a brown recluse, pre ty good size, so I scooped it up on a piece of pa per to bring to the infirmary."

Leland shook his head at the memory an ran a bony hand over his short white hair. "Bu see, you can't just walk into the infirmary You've got to fill out a whole deal called Medical Service Request, and then they'll ca you whenever they get to you. By the time got up there, it was a couple hours later. Th bite was swelled up to the size of a quarter.

owed it to the nurse, and she put a salve on and sent me back. I mean, you could just ok at it and see that it was going to get in-cted. It was swollen, throbbing, hurting like azy. So a couple days later, I put in to go ck, and she soaked my foot in a solution. It t to where she was doing that every three or ur days. I would put up an MSR and she'd ak it and wrap it up again. I could tell it asn't getting better, but I wasn't allowed to ok at it or anything. I could get a conduct vi-ation if I took the bandage off. Every time she wrapped it, though, it looked worse. It was a g black welt on top of my foot, with a red hole the middle. After a while, you could see my ne through the hole. It kept opening up ore. At one point they had a doctor to lance and drain out the pus. It looked like it might t better after that, but it didn't. It just swelled more. Eventually, my whole foot got black. was just a big black scab. That's when they arted giving me antibiotics, but it was already o late. I couldn't even walk. Finally, the nurse ok off the bandage one time and just run out the room. She was really upset. I don't know hat she told the doctor, but it wasn't a matter a day before they was taking me to the hospi-l. The doctor said, 'I'm gonna have to take it ff.' There was nothing I could say at that oint. He told me, 'If you refuse, it'll kill you.' o I said, 'Okay, take it off.'"

At fifty-eight, Leland couldn't have weighed ore than 120 pounds, with knobby shoulders nd elbows and a thin wisp of a neck. He bbed his knees while he spoke, hunched over his wheelchair, weak and almost emaciated. oward the end of the interview, Karen, who ad been struggling to remain silent, broke in ask if he was okay. "You look like you're los-g weight," she said.

He shrugged. "Well," he said. "You know, I an't get to the store by myself."

To someone on the outside, what happened to eland's leg might sound, at the most funda-ental, instinctive level, like a blatant case of alpractice. The notion of losing a leg to a spi-er bite has no place in the modern sensibility, nd the suggestion that a person wait several eeks to receive antibiotics for an infection is al-ost unthinkable (though Leland's medical ecords confirm it). But like so many other things n prison, the term "malpractice" is inscrutable. On the outside, if a doctor does not conform to ertain standards of care, then he is guilty of neg-igence, plain and simple, and finding a trial at-orney to sue him is no challenge. By contrast, in rison, mere negligence is not necessarily enough or a lawsuit. Most prison malpractice cases are led under the Eighth Amendment, which guar-ntees protection from cruel and unusual pun-ishment. Unfortunately, in order to convict a prison doctor under these terms, the inmate must prove not only that the doctor provided sub-standard care but also that he did so intention-ally. This rather elusive criterion is called "de-liberate indifference," and under its protective banner a prison doctor is free to be as negligent and irresponsible and incompetent as he wants, just as long as he is not intentionally causing pa-tients to suffer. Needless to say, this makes the practice of prison medicine significantly harder to regulate, and the care of patients harder to ensure. What could be more difficult to prove—or more secret—than a man's un-stated intentions?

While I was visiting Karen and Leland in Kansas City, I placed a call to CMS headquarters in St. Louis, hoping to interview someone there. I did not have high expectations. I had already called several times from my home in New Mex-ico (another CMS state) trying to arrange inter-views with hospital administrators and doctors and nurses, but I had mostly been ignored. On those occasions when my calls were returned, the CMS spokesperson had, in an exasperated tone, made it clear that virtually every member of his medical staff was far too busy to spend time with reporters, and that furthermore this would remain the case indefinitely, no matter how flexible my schedule was, no matter when I offered to visit. The timing, he explained, was simply awful, and it was not likely to get any better, ever.

Still, I held out some hope. Calling from with-in the state, I figured, would seem more real and immediate to them; and besides, I was no longer planning to ask for interviews with medical staff, or even company higher-ups, but to settle for a sit-down with the spokesper-son, which seemed like a modest request, to say the least. I had even begun looking forward to that interview, won-dering how the spokesperson might respond to the accusations I was hearing. I could imagine that some of his points might be reasonable. Certainly, prison medicine must be difficult to ad-minister, and I assumed that the spokesperson would be eager to point out just how difficult, and to illuminate the challenges of working with convicts, of sorting through faked illnesses and phony requests for medicine, ornery personalities and violent outbursts.

LIKE SO MANY THINGS IN PRISON, "MALPRACTICE" IS INSCRUTABLE. NEGLIGENCE IS NOT NECESSARILY ENOUGH FOR A LAWSUIT

But when Ken Fields, the spokesperson, called me back, and I mentioned my desire to visit, he didn't sound nearly as eager as I had hoped.

"What do you want to talk about?" he asked. "How were your interviews with inmates?"

I explained that most of them were angry at CMS, which was why I wanted to get his point of view. "I think we're going to have to handle this on the phone," he said. I suggested that it would be preferable to meet in person, since I had met the inmates in person and didn't want them to have an advantage, but he replied, "We've had bad experiences with the media." I assured him that I knew this, yet I felt that, as a member of the company's communications team, he needed to communicate the company's message, but he insisted, "I can't do it this week. I'm too busy." I offered to return the following week, but he repeated that he preferred to speak on the phone. So I repeated my preference to meet in person, and he repeated that he was too busy. Then I repeated my offer to return, and he repeated his preference to speak on the phone. So it went, until finally, perhaps just to stop the routine, he barked, "Well, I don't want you to come back here. Why don't you just stop by tomorrow?" I agreed and we hung up, but a couple of hours later, I found a message on my voice mail from Fields, saying that he had decided not to meet with me in person.

WHAT I HEARD FROM CMS NURSES WAS, IN MANY WAYS, MORE UPSETTING THAN WHAT I HAD HEARD FROM INMATES

"It's a situation where we have been misquoted at times in the past," he said, "and we're gonna respond to your questions in writing. So I wanted to give you notice of that. Thanks, bye."

But even in response to written questions, Fields was hardly forthcoming: of the fourteen questions posed, he offered only eight complete answers. For example, he was willing to provide rudimentary statistics about the company, such as the total number of patients under CMS care, but would not describe any company protocols or reveal how much money the company actually spends on patients, except to insist that, of the more than half a billion dollars that CMS receives in taxpayer money each year, a "very, very significant portion goes to patient care." Although he was quick to claim that all CMS doctors and nurses are licensed in the states where they work, he dodged the question of how many have been suspended or had their licenses revoked in the past or in other states, insisting that the company is "not obligated" to reveal those statistics. Nor would he answer the question of whether or not the company has any plans to begin screening for hepatitis, claiming that CMS leaves those decisions to state legislatures and individual doctors, a claim contradicted not only by the company's detail-heavy and restrictive hepatitis pathway but also by the in
ternal communications of its regio
al medical director.

Since CMS officials were declining th
chance to meet with me, or to set up interview
or even to talk on the phone anymore, I deci
ed to contact some of their employees directl
This turned out to be easier than I expecte
Nurses tend to know one another, and afte
speaking with a few nurses who didn't work f
CMS, I was able to reach a few nurses who ha
once worked for CMS and, finally, nurses wh
still do. At the very least, I hoped they would tak
the time to reassure me that the gritty standar
of "deliberate indifference" was not being me
that nurses and doctors were not intentionally ig
noring their patients. But what I heard fro
CMS nurses was, in many ways, more upsettin
than what I had heard from inmates. One co
versation in particular stands out.

I had reached Christy through a series of re
ferrals by other nurses and their friends. A
first, she was anything but eager to speak wit
me. Her relationship with CMS was still goo
and she didn't want that to change. Althoug
she was no longer working in the jail in th
northern United States where she had been
CMS supervisory nurse for half a decade (sh
had left to manage a hospital facility), she wa
considering a return to the company and didn
want to jeopardize her ability to do that. Th
money was good at CMS, she explained, an
besides, she didn't need them as enemies. Bu
after thinking about it and talking with h
friends, Christy decided to speak with me any
way, mostly because, as she put it, she neede
to tell somebody what she had seen and don
especially what she'd done.

I was immediately drawn to Christy's stor
even before I had heard the details. As a superv
sory nurse, she had been the highest-rankin
member of the medical staff on duty, so she ha
been privy to many of the political and econon
ic machinations behind company policy. I w
also interested to hear about jailhouse medicin
in general. People in prison, after all, have bee
convicted of a crime and have forfeited some
their rights (the right to vote, the right to ow
handguns, etc.), but most people in *jail* are sti
awaiting trial, and they haven't necessarily bee
convicted of anything. Not only have those awai
ing trial not forfeited their rights; they are still o
ficially innocent. Our legal system takes gre
pains to insist on this, so I was curious to kno
whether or not it made any difference to CMS

The short answer, according to Christy, was n
"The way we treated inmates was a horror," sh
said. "Whenever a new inmate came in, the
would have to see me, and I would assess the

dical condition. If it looked like they were go- to require any kind of serious treatment, I uld go to the lieutenant and explain what I felt e cost of the treatment would be. I would say, 'e have this person here, and the treatment is ing to be horrendously expensive. We need to t them out of here.' If they were a real serious minal, like a murderer, the liability was high, they would keep them under arrest and we uld incur the cost of treatment. But if the lieu- ant thought the person was not a serious risk the community, he would proceed to get hold judges and other people to try to release the in- ate, or make arrangements to get the bail low- ed. The lieutenants would often call judges late night and on holidays to tell them the situa- n, then we would release the inmate and take em to the hospital, so CMS wouldn't incur the st of treatment. The lieutenants went along th it because they didn't want to incur the cost a deputy to stay with the inmate in the hospi- l. So we would let them know, and they would ake a call and release the inmate, then they uld take them to the hospital. After the inmate t their medical treatment, we would immedi- ely rearrest them.

"We did this frequently also with pregnant in- ates. If they went into labor, we would release em or give them a signature bond, then re- rest them and the child was put into the custody child services. I did that for years. You just ig- re what you're doing. The whole atmosphere the jail was, these criminals, these convicts, ese scumbags, they get what they deserve.

"Appointments were made for weeks or onths down the road, knowing that the in- ate would not be there anymore. Or we would ake appointments for days that we knew the mate was going to be in court. They don't ep the trial dates in the medical file, but you st call the booking desk up front and ask them hen the trial date is. Then you make their ext appointment for that date. We were told to ll them, there was a canned phrase, 'Don't orry, you have an appointment. We just can't ll you when it is because of security reasons.' o you would be consoling someone, knowing ll well that they weren't going to get to see any- dy. You just put them right back at the bot- m of the list again.*

"It was absolutely appalling, to the point that can't even tell you. You knew that as long as you orked there, you did not challenge any of it. But ur disgust builds as the horrible cases build. ven though a good majority of these people ended up being guilty, I just felt from a moral standpoint that it was wrong. They always play up, 'Well, look what they did to this other person,' so a lot of people say, 'Okay, justice is served.' But the way I feel is, we've all taken an oath and we have a license, and just because one person has died, that doesn't mean that a second person dying or being denied care . . . one doesn't justify the other. As far as I'm concerned, if you're sick and you get into one of these places, you might as well be signing your death certificate. Even if you don't have a death sentence."

The more I spoke with nurses like Christy, and looked at inmate medical files, and studied infectious-disease statistics, the clearer it became that, no matter where you looked or to whom you spoke, this was a medical system run amok, one that not only ignored sick patients but was actually skirting the limits of the law and, in the process, helping to unleash an epidemic on society. As one nurse put it bluntly, "We have no accountability. If I deny care, that's it. You have no recourse." Yet the clearer this reality became, the more baffling it seemed. Wasn't anyone keeping track? Where had the media been?

In the course of nearly a decade, only two newspapers had undertaken major investigations of CMS, and both were located in Missouri, which has become a kind of ground zero in the debate over prison medicine, largely because CMS is headquartered there. Even more discouraging, the reporters who wrote those stories had, in the aftermath of their work, become just as tortured and frustrated as everyone else who confronts the company. Not long ago, one of them agreed to meet with me in the basement of his office, but within the first two minutes of our conversation he insisted that I keep his name out of my story. In the weeks after his articles appeared in the *Columbia Daily Tribune*, he said, he had been under attack by CMS lawyers and publicists, who deluged his editors with denunciations, and he didn't want to be perceived as settling the score. He sat nervously with me, fidgeting, smiling, and trying to be as helpful as possible without getting further involved.

The other reporter I spoke with was less reserved, but only because he had less to lose. He had already lost it all. In 1998, Andrew Skolnick had been an editor at the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, a recent recipient of the Harry Chapin Media Award, and an inaugural fellow of the Rosalynn Carter Fellowship in Mental Health Journalism, which is a $10,000 grant. Using these lofty connections, he had managed to get himself and two journalists from the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* into CMS facilities, where they spoke with several inmates and doctors before

In response to these claims, CMS wrote, "Correctional alth care staff make every effort to work with corrections gencies to coordinate such offsite trips in ways that do t create conflicts with scheduled court appearances."

publishing articles in both *JAMA* and the *Post-Dispatch*, revealing a national pattern of abuse and neglect by CMS. As the organizing force behind both projects, Andrew had helped expose several CMS doctors with checkered histories and had revealed more than a dozen cases of egregious mistreatment, some of which resulted in death. One story revealed a memo from the medical director of the New Mexico corrections department explaining that several prison doctors had quit because CMS administrative officials were "changing physicians' orders and adding orders without seeing the patient or consulting the physicians directly." Another story exposed a CMS doctor in Alabama who had been convicted of having sex with a sixteen-year-old "mentally defective" patient in Tennessee. Another described the chief of mental-health services for CMS in Alabama, whose license had been revoked in both Michigan and Oklahoma after he was found guilty of sleeping with patients, harassing female staff members, and defrauding insurance companies. The newspaper series had won awards from both Amnesty International and the American Medical Writers Association in the late 1990s, but even still, looking back, Andrew said that he wasn't always certain it had been a good idea to publish it. After the articles appeared, he told me, CMS had sent a letter to *JAMA*, accusing him of hiding his involvement with the *Post-Dispatch*, which they called "fraud," and threatening to sue the journal. Within a week, *JAMA* had fired Andrew and, although CMS later paid him to settle a defamation lawsuit,* his professional life never quite recovered. Even today, the editors of *JAMA* refuse to comment on "the conditions surrounding his termination" or to defend his award-winning exposé, which has never been refuted or retracted.

"I had an exploding career," Andrew told me, "and it crashed. We may have won some awards, but the horrible fact is we lost. CMS won. After the articles appeared, they went to the state legislature in Missouri and protected themselves. They got a law passed expunging the records of physicians who are accused of malpractice in correctional facilities. So now, anytime the medical board doesn't take action on an allegation they disappear it. This means no pattern can emerge against a doctor. That is our legacy. That's our achievement. We actually made it worse."

But Andrew's investigation had a resonance far beyond that. It was his work that started CMS down the path of information lockdown, building barricades to public scrutiny, hiding numbers and statistics and the names of employees, refusing even to sit for a formal inte view, and stifling the efforts of journalists t cover the field at all. Andrew's series had p pressure on CMS, but that pressure had on deepened the company's aversion to publicit CMS officials were happy to continue operatir with public funds, but they were no longer wil ing to provide any serious accoun ing of them.

Like almost any wound, the weakness of a institution festers without proper attention, ar as CMS has retreated into its shell, its faciliti have only grown worse. Outside of anecdotal e idence, however, it is difficult to assess exactly ho much worse—it is nearly impossible, for exampl to know how many doctors and nurses it en ploys, or how adequate its facilities are, or eve what pathways and protocols it adheres to. Fe lawsuits have managed to expose details of th company's inner mechanisms, and aside from th Michigan hepatitis suit there is no major legal a tion pending against the company at the m ment, only scattered individual lawsuits—th great majority of them, it is safe to say, doome In Massachusetts a small network of attorne has been threatening to file a comprehensiv class-action suit, but nothing has gained muc traction so far. And although the U.S. Justic Department has reportedly kept an open file c CMS since the mid-1990s, collecting evidenc and reviewing cases, no formal charges have bee leveled against the company, and sources say it not a high priority in the post-9/11 climate. Eve Karen Russo has her doubts that CMS wi change. "It's not going to happen," she say "They don't want to be rehabilitated. They prol ably can't be rehabilitated. So the only solutio is to get rid of them, and they're going to fight th in every state, at every step. They're going to u all their money and power, and they have a lot

But if the battle over prison health care is b ginning to seem lost, littered with the bodies of th wounded, the sick and sickened alike, with inmat and nurses and journalists by the wayside, if th whole field seems deathly unwell and bordering c hopeless, it may, in the end, have more to c with the way we look at prisons in general th with anything CMS has done. This is not to o scure or to apologize for the company's failures ar crimes. It is simply to suggest that the secrecy a forded to prisons would be easy enough to str away. When we, as a culture, choose to see o prisoners as a part of our society (which they ar of course, and an ever growing part), when w remove the wall of secrecy that surrounds th prison itself, when we are willing to face and be witness to the punishments we disburse, the will be no more need to wonder what is bein done on the inside, in our names.

According to CMS, "Company attorneys determined that a small settlement of Mr. Skolnick's baseless claim was less expensive than the cost of ongoing litigation."

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The Parthenon, Acropolis, Athens, Greece

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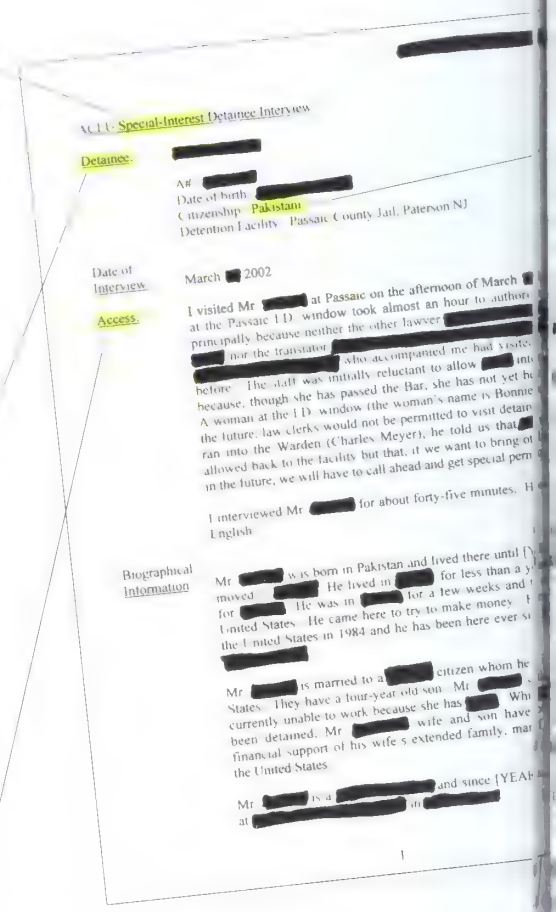
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NAME

Harsh justice for a Septer

In its investigation of the September 11 attacks, the U.S. government rounded up hundreds of Middle Eastern, South Asian, and Muslim immigrants. The precise number is unknown. In November 2001, the Department of Justice reported that 1,182 people had been arrested, but it has refused to supply a total since then. This June, a report from its Office of the Inspector General (OIG) chronicled the detention of 762 of the arrestees for violating immigration laws—typically, for overstaying visas. Almost all the September 11 detainees were men, and most remained in custody for months. Many were eventually deported, while others, like M., the man who is interviewed in this document, were released but are too anxious about their immigration status to talk openly to the press. The government has refused to give out the names of the detainees, whom it has labeled "special-interest." In fact, there was little more reason to arrest them than to arrest any of the eight million other out-of-status immigrants living on U.S. soil. Neither M. nor any of the other detainees was shown to have had any connection to terrorism.

M. lives in a brick home in a neat, middle-class subdivision. When I visited him this spring, a half-melted snowman, complete with carrot nose and coal eyes, was sinking into his front yard. A soft-spoken, middle-aged man with a slight accent, M. is cautious in conversation, and his anger at what has happened to him is apparent only occasionally in his words and never in his manner. In November 2001, he was at home with his young son and his wife, who suffers from lupus, when an FBI agent and multiple INS agents appeared at the door. A co-worker at the medical clinic where M. worked had called the FBI; M., she contended, wore a surgical mask "more than necessary." The INS brought M. to their headquarters for further questioning. Despite the fact that his immigration papers, which had been pending at the time of his arrest, were approved six weeks later, M. spent the next five months in a New Jersey jail.



ACLU Special-Interest Detainee Interview

Detainee:

A#
Date of birth:
Citizenship: Pakistani
Detention Facility: Passaic County Jail, Paterson NJ

Date of Interview: March [redacted] 2002

Access: I visited Mr [redacted] at Passaic on the afternoon of March [redacted] at the Passaic I.D. window took almost an hour to authoriz principally because neither the other lawyer [redacted] nor the translator [redacted] who accompanied me had visite before. The staff was initially reluctant to allow [redacted] int because, though she has passed the Bar, she has not yet be A woman at the I.D. window (the woman's name is Bonnie the future, law clerks would not be permitted to visit detain ran into the Warden (Charles Meyer), he told us that allowed back to the facility but that, if we want to bring ot in the future, we will have to call ahead and get special perm

I interviewed Mr [redacted] for about forty-five minutes. H English

Biographical Information: Mr [redacted] was born in Pakistan and lived there until [Y moved [redacted] He lived in [redacted] for less than a y for [redacted] He was in [redacted] for a few weeks and t United States. He came here to try to make money. H the United States in 1984 and he has been here ever si

Mr [redacted] is married to a [redacted] citizen whom he States. They have a four-year old son. Mr [redacted] currently unable to work because she has [redacted] Whi been detained. Mr [redacted] wife and son have financial support of his wife's extended family, mar the United States

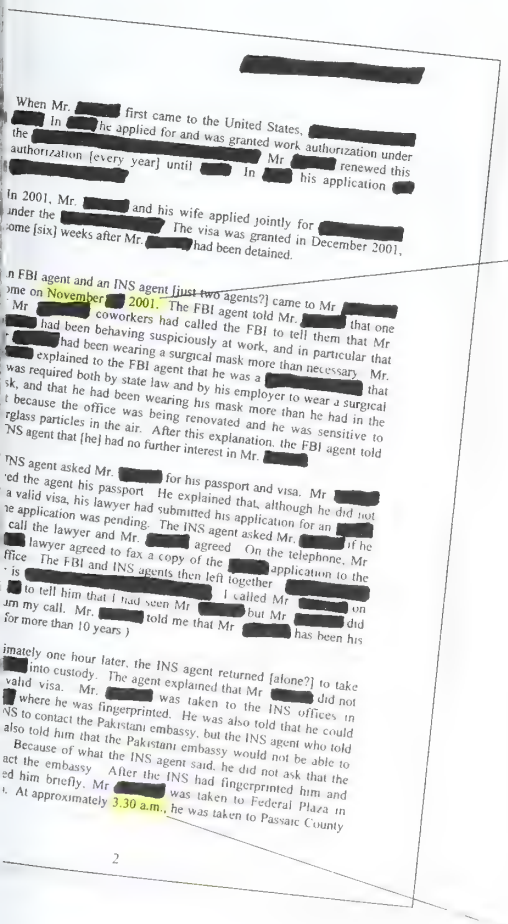
Mr [redacted] is a [redacted] and since [YEAR at [redacted]

1

Beginning in December 2001, lawyers from the American Civil Liberties Union visited several of the New York–area facilities where the detainees were being held. Despite Attorney General John Ashcroft's assurances to the Senate that "all persons being detained have the right to contact their lawyers and families," the attorneys at first had tremendous difficulty gaining access. In some cases, the prisons claimed that they were unable to "prepare" the men for questioning; in others, they were told that the INS had not given approval for the visit. When the lawyers were able to meet with the detained, they wrote up a brief report on each. The notes from M.'s interview, portions of which the ACLU released and all of which was approved for release by M., are at right.

IHELD

inee, *by Elizabeth Amon*



When Mr. [redacted] first came to the United States, [redacted] In [redacted] he applied for and was granted work authorization under the [redacted] Mr. [redacted] renewed this authorization [every year] until [redacted] In [redacted] his application [redacted]

In 2001, Mr. [redacted] and his wife applied jointly for [redacted] under the [redacted] The visa was granted in December 2001, some [six] weeks after Mr. [redacted] had been detained.

n FBI agent and an INS agent [just two agents?] came to Mr. [redacted] me on November [redacted] 2001. The FBI agent told Mr. [redacted] that one Mr. [redacted] coworkers had called the FBI to tell them that Mr [redacted] had been behaving suspiciously at work, and in particular that [redacted] had been wearing a surgical mask more than necessary. Mr. explained to the FBI agent that he was a [redacted] that was required both by state law and by his employer to wear a surgical sk, and that he had been wearing his mask more than he had in the t because the office was being renovated and he was sensitive to rglass particles in the air. After this explanation, the FBI agent told NS agent that [he] had no further interest in Mr. [redacted]

NS agent asked Mr. [redacted] for his passport and visa. Mr. [redacted] ed the agent his passport. He explained that, although he did not a valid visa, his lawyer had submitted his application for an [redacted] ne application was pending. The INS agent asked Mr. [redacted] if he call the lawyer and Mr. [redacted] agreed. On the telephone, Mr [redacted] lawyer agreed to fax a copy of the [redacted] application to the ffice. The FBI and INS agents then left together [redacted] is [redacted] I called Mr. [redacted] on [redacted] to tell him that I had seen Mr [redacted] but Mr. [redacted] did am my call. Mr. [redacted] told me that Mr [redacted] has been his for more than 10 years.)

imately one hour later, the INS agent returned [alone?] to take [redacted] into custody. The agent explained that Mr [redacted] did not valid visa. Mr. [redacted] was taken to the INS offices in [redacted] where he was fingerprinted. He was also told that he could NS to contact the Pakistani embassy, but the INS agent who told also told him that the Pakistani embassy would not be able to Because of what the INS agent said, he did not ask that the act the embassy. After the INS had fingerprinted him and ed him briefly, Mr. [redacted] was taken to Federal Plaza in . At approximately 3:30 a.m., he was taken to Passaic County

2

A third of the detainees were, like M., from Pakistan, by far the most common country of origin; the next most common were Egypt, Turkey, Jordan, and Yemen. All the detainees were immigrants, and after September 11, at the attorney general's request, the chief U.S. immigration judge allowed their hearings to be closed to the public and even to family members. At least 611 of the detainees were subjected to secret hearings, a practice that the Supreme Court this May allowed to stand as constitutional. The Department of Justice has argued that releasing even the detainees' names would compromise its terrorism investigations, despite the fact that the names of other terrorism suspects—e.g., Ernest James Ujaama in Seattle, Jeffrey Leon Battle in Portland, Sahim Alwan and Yahya Goba in Buffalo—have been trumpeted in the press by Ashcroft himself.

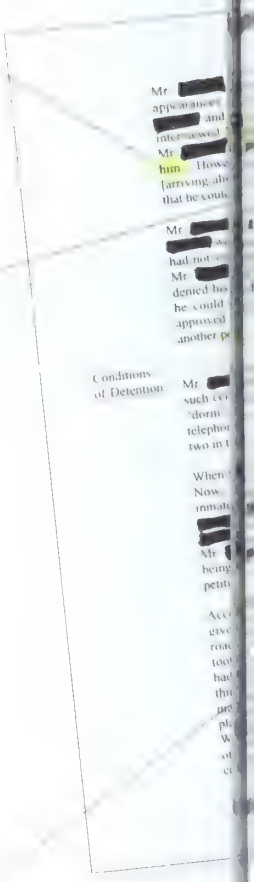
Of the 762 detainees covered by the OIG report, more than 80 percent were in custody by the end of November 2001. At the time, Ashcroft seemed to consider the numbers good P.R., and whenever speaking of the detainees he would take care to invoke "terrorism" once or, better yet, twice. (A typical statement, from October 2001: "Our anti-terrorism offensive has arrested or detained nearly 1,000 individuals as part of the September 11 terrorism investigation.") To this day Ashcroft, in his public statements, continues to imply a link between the detainees and terrorism. But the director of the Center for National Security Studies, which filed a lawsuit to obtain information about the detainees, says that in court papers, government officials never connect the detainees to terrorism. A General Accounting Office report from January 2003 found that nearly half of the DOJ's "terrorism" convictions had been misclassified as such. In New Jersey, 60 of the 62 terrorism indictments touted by the U.S. Attorney's Office involved foreign students who had hired others to take English proficiency tests on their behalf.

At 3:30 A.M. on the morning after his arrest, M. was taken to the Passaic jail and charged with having overstayed his visa—a civil, not a criminal, offense. On September 17, 2001, the INS changed its long-standing policy on immigrant detention, extending the time period that an immigrant could be held without charges from 24 to 48 hours and adding that, in "extraordinary circumstances," arrestees could be held uncharged for "an additional reasonable period of time." The DOJ's definition of "reasonable" has proved quite spacious. Of the special-interest detainees, 317 are known to have been held for more than 48 hours without charges, 36 for four weeks or more, 13 for more than 40 days, and nine for more than 50. Such arbitrary practices of detention contradict even the USA Patriot Act, which required that detainees be charged within seven days.

Amon is a staff writer for The National Law
nd is currently a Soros Justice Media Fellow.

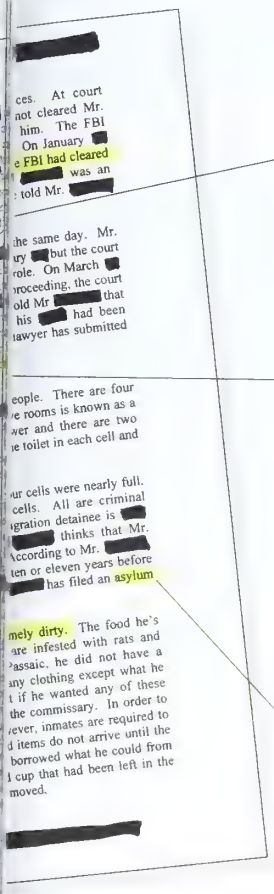
In December 2001, M.'s work permit and residency application were approved by the INS, and yet he was not released. The following month, the FBI cleared him of having any connection to terrorism, and yet still he was not released. Many detainees spent months in jail after they had been cleared; some had even received orders of deportation, or had volunteered to leave the country. Others were deported so quickly after September 11 that they weren't able to pursue any legal strategies for remaining. In many cases, men were sent to home countries where they had not lived or even visited for decades. The INS deported one Pakistani man, detained for having missed an immigration hearing more than five years earlier, without informing his American-born wife. The man was deposited, penniless, in Islamabad, even though his family lived in Karachi, more than 1,000 miles away.

Requests by M.'s lawyer to have him released on bond were repeatedly rebuffed, even after he had been cleared by the FBI. Most people detained on minor immigration violations, such as M.'s, have traditionally been released on bond until their court hearings. But, as revealed in the OIG report, the Department of Justice in September 2001 ordered a "no bond" policy for all the special-interest detainees, even in cases in which there was no evidence that bond should be denied. Soon thereafter, a new regulation allowed the immigration service to overrule an immigration judge about whether *any* detainee is released on bond, even if he is not suspected of a crime or of terrorist activity. Thus the government trial attorney, who essentially is the prosecutor in an immigration proceeding, is allowed to take on a crucial judicial role as well.



"My wife laughs at me," says M., "because I don't like my shoelace to touch the ground." The dirtiness of jail was an ordeal for M., who saw rats and roaches in his cell every day. More disturbing, the detainees—few of whom were guilty of anything more than having overstayed a visa—were forced to share cells with violent criminals. At the Metropolitan Detention Center (MDC) in Brooklyn, where many of the other detainees were held, conditions were even more brutal. The men were locked down for 23 hours a day and imprisoned in perpetual light. Ostensibly the lights were for videotaping—to ensure that the prisoners were not abused—but when the OIG tried to examine the tapes for evidence of abuse it found that those more than 30 days old had been destroyed. Prisoners at the MDC were routinely slammed against walls by guards and were allegedly taunted with anti-Arab slurs. The OIG's report notes that supervisors had told the facility's staff that the detainees were "suspected terrorists."

In general, only one detained immigrant in five obtains a lawyer, even though doing so greatly increases the chance of success—in asylum cases, for example, by four times or more. Because immigration proceedings are considered civil actions, the immigrant does not have a right to an appointed attorney. M. was fortunate to have worked with the same attorney for sixteen years, and to have been able to contact him during his detention. Many of the detainees had no attorney, and the lists of free attorneys at the jails were invariably outdated or incorrect. At the Brooklyn MDC, not a single number on the list was a working number for an attorney willing to take on cases. Prisoners there were not always offered their allotted call per week, and when guards did offer it they employed a cryptic shorthand, asking, "Are you okay?" A call to an inaccurate number on the jail's list was counted as the weekly call. According to the OIG's report, the director of the federal prison bureau was told she should "not be in a hurry" to allow the detainees their telephone calls.



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moved.

In late April 2002, M.'s request for parole was finally granted; he was released on a $5,000 bond, and had to get himself home by taking a bus to a train and then walking two miles in the rain. Both M. and his wife say they often are unable to sleep as a result of his experience, but they worry more about the impact on their five-year-old son (who sometimes asks, when M. leaves the house for work, "Is Daddy coming home?"). Moreover, M.'s five months of incarceration left his family $30,000 in debt. Despite these emotional and fiscal scars, M. is fortunate in how his case was resolved. Other of the detainees have not come home at all: an Egyptian man was deported and forced to leave behind his American-citizen wife and two American-born children; a Canadian man, originally from Syria, was deported to Syria—in violation of international law—where he disappeared for weeks. For others, detention was literally a physical trial. Two detainees contracted tuberculosis in the Brooklyn MDC. Another detainee there had a broken hand and was refused treatment.

Perhaps the most frightening aspect of the September 11 arrests was, in the end, how arbitrary they were. As a result, millions of other U.S. Muslims and Arabs—many of whom came here, as have immigrants for four centuries, in search of asylum from repression or hardship overseas—now see themselves as potential targets. Most of the detainees did violate U.S. immigration law, and for many Americans this fact seems to have absolved the government for its harsh and capricious justice. But in undermining the presumption of innocence, as well as the constitutional rights to due process, to counsel, and to a speedy and public trial, the Bush Administration has weakened these protections for all, citizens and aliens alike. In the process, it has tarnished American democracy, even as it hopes to export this democracy to the very nations from which these men arrived.

AN AMERICAN ALBUM

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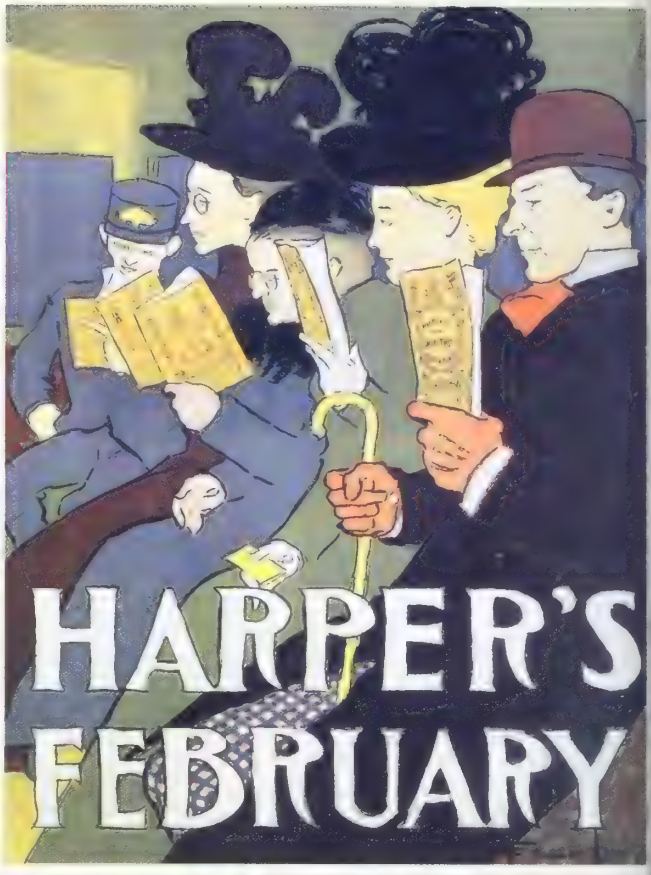
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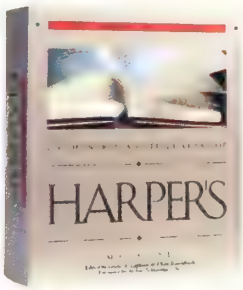
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WATCHING THE DETECTIVES

The Vidocq Society's tale of ratiocination

By Jay Kirk

The Texas lawman at the podium
a sullen figure beneath the TV lights,
hich wash out the projection of a dirt
ad on the screen behind him and
ist the walnut paneling of the Down-
wn Club in a nervous gloom.
nyone could tell that Chief
eputy David Kinney is out of
is element in this old Phila-
elphia men's club, but no
ore out of context than the
loody slides we will soon view
ver lunch, some of us less ea-
erly than others. Facing him,
stening to him with chins
ensively resting on knuckles,
lk ties tucked, forks paused,
e a hundred or so professional
nd amateur sleuths known
ollectively as the Vidocq So-
iety. The elegant setting does
ttle to ease the paranoia that
omes, for me, from being in a
oom stuffed cheek by jowl
ith cops. It is a teeming syn-
d of special agents—FBI,
EA, IRS—explosives and
rearms specialists, corporate-
aud investigators, wound-pat-
rn analysts, interrogation spe-
ialists, retired and active
olice brass, forensic hypno-
ists, forensic anthropologists,
itual-murder experts, criminal profil-
rs, psychiatrists, and forensic psy-



chologists. Here there are polygraph experts, masters at detecting the slightest galvanic quiver of skin, the anxious culpable heart, the tiny betrayals of the autonomic nervous system—a system upon which I have never much relied, being the sort of person who too easily feels that he is being punished, or should be punished, for some nebulous crime. It doesn't help when one of the detectives tells me that if I leak information he has just voluntarily revealed, he will "hunt me down like a dog."

I am sitting at a table with a private investigator, a forensic odontologist (a specialist who can identify human remains by teeth), and a medical examiner, specializing in exhumations, who has the sort of perfect telegenic looks that would destroy her credibility if she were playing the part on TV. The odontologist, over bites of salad, tells me how his expert testimony once caused an uproar when a juror, inexplicably aroused by the dental cast that he'd made of Megan Kanka's teeth (which matched the bite mark on the back of Jesse Timmendequas's hand), began to "cheer" and "pump his fist."

Between the salad and chicken courses I fidget with the plastic novelty "Lie Detector" business card given to me in lieu of a proper interview by Bill Fleisher, Vidocq Society commissioner, expert polygrapher, and former FBI agent with a striped tie and hair whipped back into a severe black meringue. Fleisher started the Vidocq Society ten years ago as a sort of forensic country club for his pals in the field. In a setting devoid of the usual bureaucracy, they could gather to unriddle cold murder cases, keep

ay Kirk's last article for Harper's *Aagazine, "My Undertaker, My Pimp," ppeared in the March 2002 issue.*

lustrations by Richard Beards

their games sharp, maybe help some people. Their victories have been as surprising as the unorthodox suggestions thrown out during their stately bull sessions. In 1992, for instance, eight years after a Drexel University student had been found barefoot and strangled to death, the Vidocq Society reviewed the case and suggested that investigators look for a faculty member with a foot fetish. When they discovered that one suspect, a security guard, had been court-martialed for stealing women's sneakers, he was arrested and convicted. They offer their services pro bono, freely giving whatever insights or clues they come up with, and pay all expenses for their guest presenters. Once enough evidence is found to take a case to trial, Vidocqians frequently travel on the society's nickel to testify as expert witnesses. Today they have a backlog of cases allegedly in the hundreds and have allegedly solved just as many. I use the word "allegedly" because, after being reluctantly invited, uninvited, and then re-invited to last September's meeting, I was eventually cut off entirely by the Vidocq Society. This, as far as I could tell, is because they tend to let in "media" only when they can control the end product. (It may also have something to do with the fact that I went out to lunch with a few members and neglected to invite their communications chaperone.) Regardless, the operation is conducted with style. The members deduce over grilled breast of chicken with sherry rosemary sauce and steamed asparagus.

The only man not dressed in a dark suit and tie, apart from one or two uniformed police officers, is Frank Bender, the Vidocq Society co-founder and token artist. He sits a few tables away from me, wearing a tight-fitting black T-shirt and boots. Now in his early sixties, Frank is a forensic sculptor. He puts faces on skulls. His intuitive powers of granting identity to anonymous bone is so uncanny that last year, with the help of another Society founder, Richard Walter, a criminal profiler and forensic psychologist, Frank re-created a face for a skull found in the woods that had no face left at all. Somehow he was able to summon the features of an identifiable woman, and the killer was convicted last October. Cops speak of Frank with awe. Some even say that he's paranormal. It was Frank who lured Hollywood into buying an option on the Vidocq Society's story (his agent had been floating the idea of a movie about the eccentric crime-fighting artiste for years). This transformation from secretive forensic luncheon club to Hollywood fodder happened in 1997, shortly after the Society, in conjunction with *America's Most Wanted*, resurrected the fifty-year-old case known as "The Boy in the Box," which involved an unidentified dead child found in a J. C. Penny bassinet packing box in the woods of northeast Philadelphia. In a gesture seemingly choreographed for a tabloid newsmagazine, the Vidocq Society erected a black granite marker in the potter's field where the boy was buried, rechristening him "America's Unknown Child." Several studios bid on the Vidocq Society's story, and Danny DeVito's Jersey Films walked away with the life rights of the three founders for a reported seven-figure sum. That option and its renewal have enabled the pro bono society to fly in and put up clients like Chief Deputy Kinney. This afternoon, as I watch a producer weaving between tables with a microphone for Court TV (the cable network currently capitalizing on America's love for all things forensic, with programs like *I, Detective*, an interactive homicide-investigation quiz show), I have to wonder if it was by design or just good timing that this murder-mystery dinner theater became an entertainment commodity as well as a forensic charity.

We have long granted detectives a lofty place in our pantheon, because, like the priests before them, and the oracles before that, detectives are our most reliable curators of life's waning sense of mystery. They sustain us with suspense, and they reaffirm our fables of revelation through death. But since the O. J. Simpson trial turned us into a nation of amateur forensic experts, and shows like *CSI* carried that ball into the pop-cultural end zone, the mechanics of detective work have been laid bare. We all carry a little knowledge about the rate of decomposition or how blood spatter can be geometrically rendered. There seems to be less interest these days in the w than in the how.

With his fierce mustache and mo of snaggleteeth, Chief Deputy Da Kinney looks, at first glance, like bad guy to be reckoned with in an Western. He signals to his sideki Detective Rick Wooten, a short s of a man in a tweed coat and flatt to cue the next slide. An instant la a rusticated-looking man with a sh gy mullet, lopsided mustache, a bright sarcastic eyes leers at us fr the screen. This will be the mur victim, Cody Rogers.

It was on a July morning, six ye ago, that Chief Deputy Kinney got call from Cody's father saying that twenty-one-year-old son was missi Cody lived with his parents. The time they'd seen him was the ni before, when he and his friend, Lan Barker, had been at the house, eat spaghetti and drinking beer; and th sometime before midnight, they'd g off in Lance's pickup. Lance retur the next morning to say that C had disappeared along a seldom-tr eled dirt road. At first, Kinney did think too much of it: just a coupl bubbas out joyriding, and one of th went off with a girl maybe. But the ther sounded worried. It being Sat day morning, and the chief deputy having much on his plate otherwise, drove out to where he was told boy had vanished. The father and missing boy's pal, Lance, a blond cle cut kid, were already there, waiti two diminished figures surrounded the lurching desolation of the plai

Lance told the deputy that C had disappeared when they'd stopp at this spot to take a leak. Know that, as a rule, Cody drank until passed out, Lance had waited for friend awhile and yelled his name a gone searching for him up and do the road, turning his headlights into the rows of cotton that en abruptly in blackness. His friend nowhere. He passed the night alt nately searching and dozing off in truck. Come daylight, he said, he kn that his friend had plumb vanish Kinney smelled something fishy. tried to get Lance to go over it slow, step by step.

"Tell me exactly which direct your vehicle was parked," Kinney sa

ou got out to take a leak. Where did
ı leak? Where did he leak? I want to
everything." And once he'd estab-
ıed a vivid enough portrait of Cody
the front of the truck, facing the
tton field, leaking eastbound, and
nce at the back of the truck, facing
stbound, leaking into the overgrown
w pasture, he conducted a search.
t he didn't find evidence of anyone
cing a leak. Kinney then tracked up
d down the road looking for foot-
nts. He picked up one set of tracks
at he followed into the cotton field.
ıese he followed east, and then back
wn another row west, and then he
ked to see Lance's boot prints. They
atched. Then he asked "old Lance
ıat Cody Rogers was wearing,
otwear wise, and he advised me that
thought he was in his stocking feet."
) he continued tracking until he
und what appeared to be sock prints
at went down a row of cotton and
en came back out and puttered along
e sandy orange-pink soil of the ditch.
'ith Lance and Cody's father follow-
g behind, he tracked the prints for
)0 yards until they vanished on the
utherly farm-to-market road. He
)uldn't understand why a man would
st set off like that in his stocking feet.
ıt the tracks confirmed at least part of
ıe kid's story, so he said, "If he shows
ıck up, call me."

I look around the room to gauge the reaction so far. At the table to my right a SWAT officer stirs sugar into his iced tea. In the back of the room a knot of pathologists pass around autopsy reports: the glossy morgue photos gleam under the chandeliers. A few pick at their plates, looking as bored as judges consigned to hearing traffic offenses. I try to guess which members aren't cops, because in addition to the admirable roster of law enforcers there is a motley assortment of amateurs: an English professor at the local community college, a construction-company owner, a vice president of Estée Lauder, travel agents, a publisher, and entertainment executives with connections to TriStar. Steven Seagal, an honorary member, is listed as a martial-arts expert.

Later that evening six years ago, once Chief Deputy Kinney was off duty, after he had eaten supper and checked on his cattle—some of them were calving now—he was watching the news when he got a dispatch about a possible suicide. He didn't know the area, an unpopulated corner of the county with unnamed roads. With only vague directions, he headed for the general vicinity he'd been given until he saw a point of swirling blue in the distant prairie dark, like a light at the end of a dock, and he drifted toward it.



We now view the image of a lonely spavined trailer quarantined by yellow crime-scene tape. A busted window screen dangles from its embrasure. The cop already on the scene, an officer from the little one-man unit up in Anton, told the chief deputy that he was waiting for backup because the owner, a vague retreating figure beside them in the night, had said that several guns were on the premises, and, furthermore, that the door was latched differently than he'd left it, so it was possible armed assailants might be waiting inside. So far this didn't match the initial report of suicide. Kinney turned to the owner, a quiet, young, blond clean-cut kid standing there with his hands in his pockets. He was surprised to recognize the guy with whom he'd spent the better part of his Saturday morning tracking sock prints. He asked Lance Barker what the hell he was doing there.

"I live here," Barker said. "It's my trailer. My friend is dead."

Still confused, Kinney commenced his building search. The trailer was dark, except for a shaft of light coming from the back bedroom, and as he moved toward it, gun drawn, he passed through a wood-paneled room with a Naugahyde chair in one corner and a television with a little potted cactus sitting on top. On the floor was a steer's skull painted with a bloodred Apache spirit bird. The lit doorway at the end of the dark hall was propped open by a Dallas Cowboys trash can, and just outside the door, on the faded blue-and-white lozenged carpet, lay a spent .30-30 shell. As Kinney moved closer, his senses were overwhelmed by the odor of cheap cologne.

When the chief deputy entered the bedroom, he saw what we also now see: the young man with the bright sarcastic eyes, lying on a bed in blue pajama bottoms, looking like he needs a shave, but much more notable for having been shot in the face. Blood is spattered on the wall behind his head. "He took a round right under that eyeball [which] busted that cheekbone and kind of laid his eye out," Kinney says. Indeed, one blue truant eyeball, its pupil stubbornly dilated in the photoelectric flash, dangles on the powder-stippled cheek.

"Kind of when you're standing in that doorway he's lookin' at you with

that eye," Kinney says, wincing. With only one murder or so a year, and sometimes none, the chief deputy can't say he's used to this sort of thing. He joined the Marines during Vietnam but was stationed stateside, and when it was all over and his friends had gone off to places like Taos, New Mexico, and Vermont to be hippies, he stayed behind to cowboy on a 40,000-acre ranch, where he could sometimes go for months without seeing another face, where he enjoyed the simple things like branding calves and riding horses at sunset, and the only thing he thought maybe he wanted more was to one day ride as a special ranger with the Cattle Raisers Association, the Texas Rangers' elite cattle-theft unit. In order to do that he had to earn a few stripes as a peace officer first, so he quit being a cowboy to take a job as a deputy until an opening came up, and he's been a deputy ever since. He guesses that the murderer "probably looked at that eyeball looking at him, and he boogered."

Several of the waiters serving coffee and dessert—a white ice cream truffle—duck their heads to avoid seeing the misery on the screen. Fleisher sits hunched forward, elbows braced on his knees, deeply engrossed by the dish of ice cream between his legs. The next slide shows how surprisingly *liquid* brains really are, especially flushed down the side of a quilt.

Mercifully, the next few slides focus on the victim's shoes and socks: Any fool can tell they didn't walk twenty-three miles—the distance between the spot where Lance Barker said Cody had disappeared and the trailer home. A more vexing technicality is that Lance now says both his guns are missing: the .30-30 determined to be the murder weapon (tool-mark comparisons match the shell retrieved from the bedroom with a shell on the coffee table that Lance admits he'd fired at a coyote) and a .22 rifle. The matter of the unstoppered bottle of Stetson cologne is another mystery altogether.

Given the angle of the gunshot, the medical examiner in Lubbock had said he would have ruled suicide if it weren't for the suspiciously missing .30-30; the same reasoning, more or less, moved Chief Deputy Kinney to arrest Lance Barker on the spot. But the D.A. made Kinney turn Barker loose for lack of anything beyond circumstantial evidence. Kinney kept digging. He dug four more years. He followed every trace. He interrogated the twelve-year-old boy who had ridden his bike past the trailer the day of the murder, and who said he'd stopped to latch the front door that Lance, maybe in a boogered rush, had left wide open. The deputy dismissed the likelihood that the boy had pedaled off with the rifles: "I can't imagine a twelve-year-old seeing a guy with his brains blowed out not freaking out. But that's one of the little stinks in this thing." He was still at a loss when he sent the case back to the D.A.'s office, where it's been for the last two years, awaiting grand jury.

And then, just a couple of months ago, he got the surprise call offering him a free plane ticket to Philadelphia. Cody Rogers's sister had contacted the Society herself after watching a true-crime show in which members had helped to persuade a reluctant prosecutor to convert one missing person and one inexplicably huge swath of blood-soaked carpet into a plausible homicide. (Coincidentally, the real-life father of the victim whose murder Cody's sister had seen re-enacted on TV had also discovered the Vidocq Society while watching a similar show; sadly, he saw it on a motel TV, hunting for his son after the police had given up.) Despite the backlog of cases, the Vidocq Society agreed to review the Rogers case immediately, partly because Cody's father was dying. The next thing Kinney knew he was showing pictures of Cody Rogers with his face shot off to an audience of spiffy-looking ladies and gentlemen eating fancy chicken. Unfortunately for him, the chief deputy does not like chicken.

The volley of questions and observations drifts toward the podium slowly, arising with no particular order. The eclectic wisdom compressed in the room is characteristic of forensics in general, its borrowing from the discordant world of science richly ecumenical: Were the signs of lividity consistent with the positioning of the body when it was found? Were there other people present when the suspect and victim ... spaghetti? Were the stomach conten analyzed? Are the dirty socks still ava able? Was the air-conditioning on the trailer? What was the weather li that day? Was the twelve-year-old b given a polygraph? Do you think th the cologne was used to kill the de smell? What kind of friends were Co and Lance? Did you conduct a parafi test on the suspect's hands? the v tim's hands? Were the socks tested f gunpowder? Did the pathologist es mate the distance of the gun from t victim? Did the parents or their c workers speculate about motive? We there any women in their lives? W there any attempt to obtain fingerprir from the shell casing? Was there a possibility that the cotton fields we used to dispose of the weapon?

When a psychologist asks what the co-workers had to say about them both suspect and victim worked at Lowe's store—Kinney nods defere tially and says, "Well, the co-worke said that Cody was a pretty good o boy, but he liked to tease you. And he ever got anything on you, he'd ju drive you crazy with it. Lance Barke they talked about him as kind of qu et but couldn't take any ribbing. S they was kind of an odd pair."

The next Vidocqian stands waitin for Court TV's microphone bearer make his way through the chairs. "Yo mentioned earlier that the victim w full of alcohol. What did you estal lish with regard to that?"

"Lance Barker drank Coors. Ju original Coors. Cody Rogers drank Ic house beer. And the way they talk, h didn't swap over, that's what he drank

This jibes with the autopsy repor another pathologist points out, but th victim could not have walked twent three miles—despite the inanity of d ing so in socks—based on the quant ty of alcohol found in his stomacl which empties fluid in less than a hour. "That means Cody Rogers en ed up in that trailer in some other w than the one described."

A retired federal agent suggests a explanation for the lack of fingerprin on the cologne bottle by saying tha the murderer—if it was his own trai er—may have been counterintuitiv enough to wipe everything down, prol ably from watching too much TV.

"Yes sir?"

"Were the two men involved with ch other sexually?"

Deputy Kinney pats his jacket as if make sure his cigarettes are still ere, and he sighs. "We done some ecking, asked around, but as far as I ow, in our part of the country that's t a very open thing. So we didn't ally get a whole lot of detail."

This response, for some reason, elic- a huge gale of laughter.

Making signs that it's time to wrap ings up, Fleisher passes around pies of Kinney's report. After two nal questions, he presents Kinney th a magnifying glass. The meet- g is adjourned.

While the Society members mill out, Court TV's producer drags the exans around for a few last-minute nity shots. The final tableau poses hief Deputy Kinney and the squat d pruned-looking Detective Wooten e two truant kids with the linguistics pert Donald Weinberg. The under- ing principle of Weinberg's work is at humanity has a choice between vilization and barbarism, and that vilization will disappear as it did in the ark Ages if people like himself, and urself, and myself, who have chosen vilization over barbarism, allow our llow humans to get away with too uch murder. Wearing a necktie de- icting a scene from the Bayeux ta- estry—wherein Harold is captured d brought before William the Con- ueror—Weinberg prods and parses nd deconstructs the statements made y Lance Barker on the morning fol- wing his arrest.

"Look at the pattern of pauses," Weinberg says. The gaffer's boom dan- les overhead like a dust mop. "Lots of llipses . . . lots of them . . . this large umber of ellipses indicates invention . . that is, I'm making up this story as go along." His analysis being that ance Barker is an unreliable narra- or and probably a liar. The Texans od with a glance at the camera.

"That's your meat and potatoes, here," Kinney says.

It strikes me how possibly depressing is—and, yes, paradoxical—that such gathering of civilized, reasoning minds s wasted on such a deeply *unreason- ble* act as murder—to cleaning up the nesses of the barbarians. In a way, the story remains the same. The priests need their steady supply of sinners. The innocent prey on the guilty. But the reason we keep returning to this story, I think, is less because of the connection between the unsolved and the divine than because violence is our most tantalizing sacrament. The sanctimonious ritual of the forensic dissection (as seen on TV) allows us to gaze upon death and sadism not only without guilt but with piety. It is only natural that we have ordained our detectives to the office of celebrityhood.

I am reading my copy of the police report when Frank Bender, the forensic sculptor, pulls me aside and tells me, out of the producer's earshot, that Richard Walter has offered to profile the Texas murder.

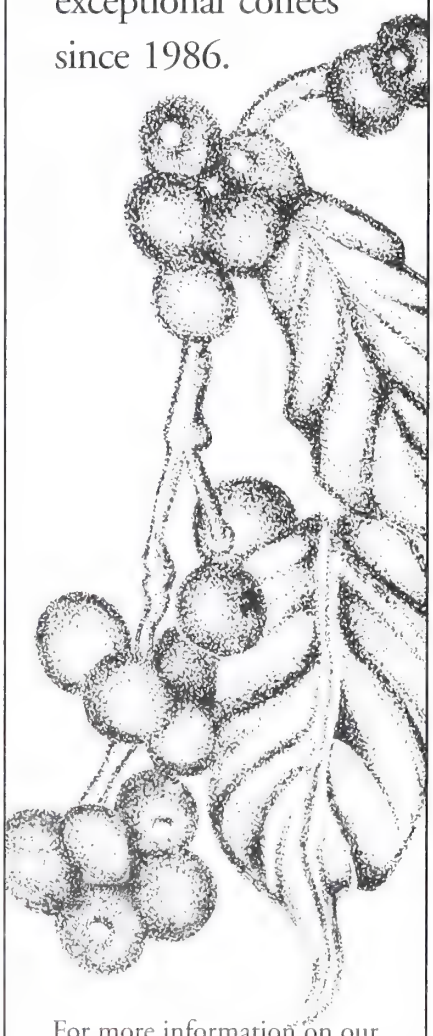
Frank has a white goatee and a silver incisor that winks at me from inside his own skull, which is shaped like a centaur's and bristled white. When you speak to Frank you can feel him limning the flesh-obscured contours of your own braincase with his beryllium eyes, as if he's curious how anyone has flesh on their skulls at all.

He asks if I'm wondering why he hadn't made any remarks during the meeting, and before I answer (I'm not), he tells me that he and Walter withheld their insights into the Texans' case in protest of the shameless media circus that certain board members have recently made out of what is supposed to be a cloistered event. It strikes me as funny, since I've spent some quality time with Frank, and I'm under the impression that he enjoys the quasi-celebrity more than the rest. He won't say any more about the inner circle's squabble but tells me that Richard Walter—who is notorious for refusing to write down his profiles—is going to dissect the case, now, out in the lobby by the ballroom. It is a rare opportunity. Walter, he says, is waiting for me.

Frank had already told me about the elusive Richard Walter a week ago, when I sat in his West End studio watching him repair a skull, delivered by the state police in a Rubbermaid "Cake Keeper." The body had been found with its hands and feet and head chopped off, crudely divided between two burn barrels in the Poconos.

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A human skull, price of oblivion, is a surprisingly fragile, almost disappointing artifact: the longer I stared at this one the more incongruous it became to the idea of another human being or anything as interpersonally dynamic as murder. The back was ventilated by a charred hole. The right half of the face was a jagged void, the bone beneath the left socket marred with black like the grease under a quarterback's eye. Frank is comfortable enough with these objects that for an extra $300, if necessary, he would deflesh a head in his studio, but he does not do this much anymore because his wife, Jan, objects to the smell.

He works standing at a plaster-spattered table and wears a headset to field the phone calls that come every few minutes from agents, television producers, cops, or one of the many women eager to play with the bone cobbler come nightfall. Possibly because of the double espresso he downed before getting to work, his hands tremble as he tries to crazy glue the skullcap back into place; it was removed during the autopsy and is yellower than the rest of the skull, which is bleached from defleshing agents. Dribbling glue around the ridge of the skull, he fumbles and nearly drops the lid. He slips again, catching the pate mid fall.

When Danny DeVito's partner calls to discuss the third, or maybe it's the fourth, draft of the script, Frank gets the top flush with the rim of the open cranium and flips the skull upside down. The studio has just taken on another scriptwriter — they didn't like what the guy who wrote *Gladiator* had churned out.

I only hope that whoever ends up getting the script right for Mr. DeVito thinks to include the story about one of the Vidocq Society's first meetings, in which Frank jumped up and accused the presenter—the owner of a sex shop—of committing the very murder for which he was ostensibly seeking consultation. This is actually one of the reasons that the Vidocq Society, whose members that only law enforcement present cases, rather than friends or family, but the story illustrates Frank's sixth sense perfectly. "I felt like he was coming in to find out how smart we were and get information from us so he could stay one step ahead." Ironically, it all turned out to be right, but as a consequence of his dramatic outburst at least one Vidocq member refuses to sit next to him at meetings anymore.

Then another agent calls about the book that the author of a bestseller about shark attacks is going to do on the Vidocq Society. I read in the *New York Observer* that he got $800,000 for it, but some think it's a raw deal, since the movie rights were already sold. Frank takes a scorched potsherd of bone the size of a piece of broken toast from the cake tub—a fragment of maxilla—and aligns the upper, toothless jawbone with the uncertain angle of the face. He traces crazy glue along the fracture until it gleams like a milk mustache.

"Beautiful, beautiful," he says.

He walks across his hangar-size studio to a bucket and scoops up a gray clod of clay that he then takes into the kitchen area (a pair of scuffed handcuffs dangles with the woks and soup ladles) to soften it in the microwave. The studio is a renovated meat market (his wife's office is a walk-in meat locker) with taper-spiked gothic chandeliers hanging from iron chains. The place smells faintly of earth, like a city garden in late fall. The frieze of ghostly milch-colored plaster heads crowding the tiered shelves reminds me of gourds rotted white in an abandoned root cellar. Every level space sports a head. There's the bust he did for *People* of the 5,000-year-old man, with a vaguely thawed expression, found in the Italian Alps; there's the age-enhanced Symbionese Liberation Army fugitive he did for the FBI; there's a bald plaster head wearing rose-tinted heart-shaped glasses that looks like a wig mannequin—a facial reconstruction of a skull once tenuously matched to a woman's face on a carton of milk; there's a small cell of dangerous felons he's sculpted for *America's Most Wanted*, such as John List, the man who killed his wife, his three children, and his own mother before going on the lam for eighteen years. Ten days after Frank's bust appeared on the show, List was caught in Virginia. He had remarried, was attending a Lutheran church, and lived more or less under the exact circumstances that Frank and Richard Walter had predicted.

The studio is crammed with buckets, ladders, heads in varying stages of re-creation, maquettes of cop memorials, piles of bricks, postcards of nude Parisiennes, and an endle clutter of erotic and morbid nove ties: a hand-carved pistol in th shape of a penis, the .22 rifle wi which his father-in-law tried shoot him in the head. For dow time, he has a model train layo with miniature trolleys and cars a village buildings along the tracks.

Once he has the maxilla in shape, h hands steadier now, he gently ancho a piece of lower jaw and sculpts t clay around the missing socket. He a justs it back and forth like the rudd of a grim toy boat. When he gent shakes off the paper towels lining t cake tub, a thin gritty scree of pulve ized bone trickles out. He sorts throu the pieces and picks up a chunk charred face the size of a scrabb square. He turns it in his hands, rubbi it with his thumb, puzzling over it li a rune. The veins in his hand twitch he flips and fondles the piece of ja oblivious to the fly buzzing around h head. It eventually alights on the r of the cake keeper.

He sets up a camera on a tripod look at the skull from different angl It helps him think, he says, to lo through a camera. He steps bac holding one wrist behind his back a kneading a ball of clay in his hidd palm. Using a shutter-cable release, snaps a few shots, and then pinches tiny globs of clay, making minute a justments here and there. Holding t forehead firm but gently like a fath would to remove a speck from h child's eye, he stuffs the hollow un the mouth and throat look gagg with clay. Once the jaw is rebuilt in a discernible if devastated—mout he flips the skull back right side u The upper lip and chin is a goatee charred bone. The skull looks as it has eaten a mouth of soot.

When he tells me that eve face is individual, that each unique and contains its own sort divine unpredictable harmony, I b lieve him. It is Frank's unorthodo bacchanalian spirit—his appetite women and self-promotion, if n the eponym's violent misadve tures—that makes me think of h as the Vidocqian most like Eugè François Vidocq (1775–1857).

:at dissembler, an impostor, a ef, and a murderer, Vidocq spent entire youth either in prison or the run. Reading his *Memoirs,* in ich the hero is "coupled with vil-ns whose conduct was one tissue impious blasphemy, atrocious ras-ity, and unutterable bestiality," I inly wondered at the incapacity the eighteenth-century French pe-l system to keep a man behind s for more than a few hours. The mber of Vidocq's escapes is stag-ing. Between slipping out of his ters under the nose of the bum-ng gendarmerie, he joins Na-leon's fleet only to participate in a itiny, fights duels, is arrested as a ckpocket, escapes, is jailed for awling. He tricks widows and ronesses out of love and money. disguises himself as a nun, a hus-, an Austrian butler. He forges a rdon and is sentenced to eight ars of hard time, escapes, joins a nd of pirates, is initiated into the cret society of the Olympiens. He ns with smugglers, is arrested ain, escapes, becomes a mime, is ked out by a jealous clown. Dur-g a stint in prison at Toulon, Vi-cq makes wooden toys. But after other attempted escape he is de-ived of even that minor employ-ent and spends the next six years ackled to his bench. Tired of his lebrity status as the greatest jail-eaker in France—peasants had it at he could turn himself into a ndle of hay to evade pursuit—he comes a police informer to reduce s sentence. Not until Sammy "The ll" Gravano will the world see an-her rat fink of Vidocq's caliber. ut once released, he enjoys the rk so much that he convinces the lice to let him go undercover and hire other ex-convicts in order to tter infiltrate the underworld. "I eferred men whose records had ven them a little celebrity," he rote.

Thus is born the first plainclothes tective bureau in the world, the igade de Sûreté. After one raid, in hich he led nearly forty men out of tavern in handcuffs, he announced r all who cared: "I am Vidocq! Re-ember me!"

Given the scurrilous provenance of the detective, it's no surprise that the profession's reputation suffered for years. They were known deceivers who shared a lineage with the criminals they yoked. One Anglo prototype was the so-called thief-taker, the constable who specialized in regaining stolen goods by tracking down the robber, with whom he then split a portion of the booty before returning the remainder to the owner for a reward, "no questions asked." That detectives with Pinkerton, the first private agency in the United States, rented themselves out as strikebreakers did not help the public trust either.

Despite allegations that he concocted and then solved his own crimes to increase his fame, Vidocq was unquestionably ahead of his time. He made the first plaster casting of a shoe impression. He compared the slug found in a body with a test bullet eighty years before the ballistics pioneer Calvin Goddard. He analyzed bloodstains, dabbled in fingerprinting before Francis Galton, and wrote what may well be the first detective novel, *Les Voleurs.* He was the model for characters in novels by Balzac, Hugo, and the first detective story—or "tale of ratiocination"—by Edgar Allan Poe, "The Murders in the Rue Morgue."

When politics finally turned against Vidocq, costing him his post, he created the first *private* detective agency in the world. His clientele were mostly victims of swindlers and con men who exploited post-restoration France's newly capitalized economy. The role of the detective in this new urban world—in America as well—was to be a lawful dissembler, a protean eavesdropper. To get at the truth one had to lie a little. Not much has changed, except that it's even easier to fake an identity (or to steal someone else's) and the world is shot through with private investigators. In New York alone the number of licensed private investigators has risen from 672 in 1992 to nearly 3,000 today. Both the increased availability of information on the Internet and the increased affordability of surveillance equipment help to account for the rise. But most P.I.'s I spoke to, in the Vidocq Society and

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elsewhere, said the popularity of the work could be credited largely to television's glamorous portrayal of the job.

When Court TV is done with the Texans, we follow Frank out to the lobby, where we are met by a long-faced man in owlish glasses, elegantly slumped in a Louis XV chair, one black shoe crossed at the knee and a lanky arm and cigarette poised haughtily aloft. Looking all the world like a Sherlock Holmes impersonator, or perhaps a droll public-television host who's been waiting to explain the fine but difficult movie we have just experienced and partly misunderstood, this is Richard Walter, among the four or five most famous criminal profilers in the world.

"I was going to let you just walk out," Walter says as Chief Deputy Kinney takes a chair facing him, and Detective Wooten and I sidle into a Victorian love seat. The detective, who kindly switches places with me so that I can hold my tape recorder under the profiler's nose, is short enough that I have a near-perfect bird's-eye view of his cropped scalp. He holds his fingers laced like one big fist between his knees.

Walter reveals, archly, that he already knows the suspect, Lance Barker, is the murderer. He gleaned this during the chief deputy's presentation by considering a few simple things. The clusters of behavioral *gestalten* . . . the probability factors . . . the subtypes of crimes . . . the constellations of criminal subtypes . . . the subtypes of probabilities: all patterns, to the discerning mind, as traceable as the frilly upholstery upon which the chief deputy is sitting forward uncomfortably, with pink tired eyes, looking as if maybe he's being had by this deductive playboy, who finally concludes, with a dramatically circumflexed eyebrow, that this particular case, in his opinion, "is a classic compulsory power-assertive murder."

Deputy Kinney shoots a glance at Detective Wooten, who scratches the side of his scalp, which merges seamlessly downward into five o'clock shadow, and asks, "You said this is a classi- [illegible]"

"Power-assertive," Walter says, turning to watch a table the size of a belfry clock go wheeling past us into the ballroom. A second waiter follows pushing a rattling cart of water glasses. "What that generally means, in sex murders for instance, as the sexual emotion, as the sexual dynamic increases, the *percussion* of death increases. Therefore, as I become hotter or more involved, I have to feel the *percussion* of my fist against you. I have to feel the knife going into you. There are a whole constellation of characteristics for power-assertive, m'kay?" A tiny scar on his bottom lip quivers with ratiocinative pleasure. "What *you* have is an atypical."

Detective Wooten grins skeptically, drumming his stubby fingers on the arm of the couch.

Walter jabs a precarious minaret of ash in the detective's direction. "I have over 22,000 felony interviews under my belt, m'kay? I've been around the block, and I have over 30,000 death scenes when I was at the Los Angeles medical examiner's office. So I have some experience with this. I've seen hundreds of these."

The gist of Walter's method—in contrast to Frank's emphasis on the uniqueness of each individual face—is that we are hopelessly predictable. This view is not so different from those held by pioneer criminologists like Cesare Lombroso, the Italian phrenologist, who sought out patterns in the late nineteenth century by studying hundreds of inmates and then compiling a system of identifiable "criminaloid" types based on physical features, such as that "highwaymen have thick hair and odd-shaped heads." He also rejected the notion of free will. Alphonse Bertillon later improved upon anthropometry—the system of identifying criminals by precise measurements of noses, skull widths, arm lengths, height, and other body parts—which was eventually usurped by the more reliable method of fingerprinting devised by Francis Galton. Of course, if you read only the memoirs by retired special agents from the FBI's Behavioral Science Unit, men such as John Douglas and Robert Ressler, who formalized profiling in the 1970s, and consider the way catchy classifications like "organized" and "disorganized" murderer have been injected into the pop lexicon by movies such as *The Silence of the Lambs*, you might think that they invented the idea.* But the general approach was already in print by 1486 in *The Malleus Maleficarum*, the manual used by Spanish inquisitors to identify witches.

Walter glares at the detective. "Incidentally, I'll also tell you why I know certain things, m'kay? In power-assertive cases, we know that the victim was alive if he was fucked. The victim will not—a lot of others will, but this particular subtype will not—if you're in the middle of a fuck, and you're strangling her, or whatever else, and she dies accidentally, they'll stop and they won't ejaculate. M'kay? Because it's only a pervert who fucks a dead body. And so I *know* it's a classic PA case. I know that the victim was alive when all that took place. Remember, he ejaculated and/or masturbated whether he did it inside him or he pulled his dick out and he groundshot it, then that's why he needed the towels to clean it off the sheets." He regards his watch, two black hands on a black face, without upsetting the still lingering ash of his Kool. He says that he already knows this particular type of murderer is trapped in a macho scenario of his own inflated ego's inadequate making and has killed because he has unforgivably violated his own strong self-image as a good Texan heterosexual. "Rules come into place. Absolute rules come into place. They're deathly afraid of being considered deviant. His style simply will not permit it."

Deputy Kinney strokes his mustache with a thumbnail, listening. Mouth slightly ajar, scalp damply ashimmer

* *Ressler, also a Vidocq Society member, takes credit for coining the term "serial killer," though several other profilers told me that the term was in fact first used in the 1950s. As recently as the D.C.-area sniper shootings, when a pageant of profilers came on TV nightly to guess the sniper's identity—most ended up getting wrong—it was clear that the world of criminal profiling suffered from the small-pond/big-fish syndrome. Since many of Walter's conclusions about criminal patterns were drawn from interviews with prisoners, it's also worth noting that the FBI's own similar research, often known as the "36 Offender Study," in which criminals were interviewed but agents neglected to corroborate the information provided with the case files, was so shoddy that, according to Brent Turvey, editor of* The Journal of Behavioral Profiling, *no peer-reviewed journal would publish the results.*

der the chandeliers, Detective ɔoten looks hypnotized if not en-ely comprehending. Walter's ges-es have the tense predatory grace of tork in a pond full of nervous frogs. ·el hypnotized, too—somewhat un-·tain where this rampant specula-n is all going. Somewhat like a frog. "And what it is is, you're two young cks. You're out. You're talking girls, u're talking this, you're talking that. rls are not going to get that hepped over you. So you get a lot of brava-. You get some alcohol in there, kay? And then you start playing." reaches over and thwacks my knee. nd one thing leads to the other. I ɔuld get a blow job, m'kay? Or some-nes they'll just kind of touchy-feely, natever. Now you can get various mbinations of that, m'kay? Where th parties denying in their mind's e, because it's not manly to be a ho-ɔsexual, but lo and behold they find emselves involved in homosexual-ɔe behavior. They're moving toward m'kay? All of a sudden, one of them ts a breath of fresh air—*whoa!* Get ur goddamn hands off my dick! Or natever it is, m'kay? And ker-bang!" e lurches forward with the charade of igh-powered rifle in his hands. "It's lled homosexual panic, m'kay?"*

Kinney shakes a Doral from a rum-ed pack and balances a crystal ashtray n his knee. Smoke warps through the ush of his mustache.

"It's a situation of circumstance," 'alter says. "Let's say the two of you—'kay?—for whatever reason, are lying n the same bed." A bored, cruel sim-r lifts the scar on his lower lip. "Say ɔu're drunk, and you're tired, and ɔu're buddies, and you're cops, and ɔu're this and you're that, and it's all cool and you feel machismo. All this kind of stuff. But then you wake up and your mouth is on his dick, m'kay?"

The Texans break out in pained, hysterical laughter, and the chief deputy actually puts his hands on the arms of his chair as if he's standing to leave us, but then he lays his hand across his shoe instead.

"We're not drinking tonight, pal," Detective Wooten says.

Walter leans toward Wooten. "Circumstance incontrovertible! I mean, that's proof. *Whoa!*" Chief Deputy Kinney is now plucking at the piping on the upholstery of his chair. "He knows, m'kay?" Walter makes eyes at the detective. "He's enjoying it. But you feel cheap and tainted."

Wooten queasily shakes his head, and says meekly, "It wouldn't be homicide, it'd be suicide."

"But you're going to shoot him, because he knows," Walter says, twirling a fresh unlit cigarette between his fingers as if he's screwing it into an invisible socket. "Remember this big image of this superman? You've just taken all the air out of that. *You're nothing but a cocksucker.*"

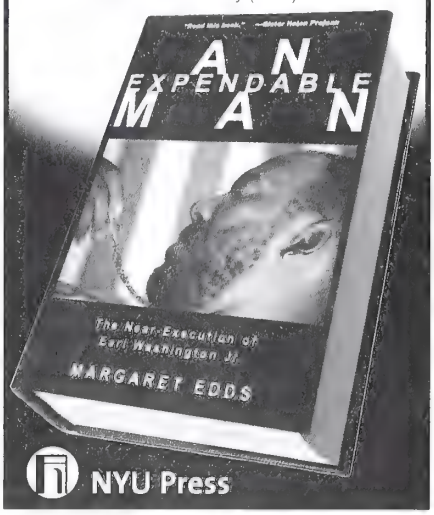
As if to remind Walter that they are talking about somebody else, Kinney slides a photo across the table. The profiler begins to extrapolate about the sissy nature of the victim's underwear, and soon enough the Texans, let off the hypothetical hook, get into the speculative mood, saying that as far as they're concerned the victim's pajamas were pretty sissy, too, not to mention his Mickey Mouse watch and "that mouthy bitch role," as Walter puts it, that the victim liked to play: his obnoxious tendency to get something on you and drive you crazy with it. Once they throw in the funny way the pillows are stacked and the wet sheets—evidence the Texans say made them suspect the relationship between Cody and Lance from the get-go, though they never bothered to test for semen over the course of a four-year investigation—the cops from Levelland and the prestigious criminal profiler have plumbed the suspect's psychological depths in absentia and have concocted a possibly libelous but ultimately probable scenario. The warm petal of Walter's thumbprint flares and then fades next to the dead man's boot.

Most of the prominent criminal profilers—or least the ones who sell books—focus on the xual homicides. Some of the theories, such as ɔssler's, smack of Freudian terms like "re-ɔssive necrophilia," a term he can legitimately ke credit for having coined. "Jack the Ripper's urders, though they did not include coitus, ɔre nonetheless sexual, because the murder ɔapon was a knife, and the thrusting of the ife into the body was a substitute for thrust-g the penis. Most cops and psychiatrists have ɔt understood the psychological significance of e knife or other such foreign objects; I stud-l the matter extensively, and labeled the prac-ɔe of using such substitutes for the penis re-essive necrophilia." Walter's monograph on the topic at hand: homosexual panic.

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"It all makes sense to me," Wooten says. "I mean . . ."

Kinney chuckle-snarls. "It shouldn't make sense."

"I was going to let you walk out, but I decided"—Walter lets out a triumphant guffaw that sends cigarette ash down his lapel—"You've got a case! Now, you see, before—you have to think about it a little bit, but I'll just do it for you, m'kay? What we've just done is given you a matrix that accounts for what's not there, what is there, and the staging that occurs after the fact. And behaviorally, now, we're even telling you about his M.O. He needs control. He thinks he's being slick. He's taking the time, and he's savoring it in part, but then he has to get ahold of you guys. He thinks you're going to be dumber than dog shit. That you won't figure it out. But he wants you to, on one side. He's exactly in the position that he wants—he's a suspect—because that gives him power and importance."

The lawmen from Hockley County were planning on taking a long detour down to Washington, D.C., tonight to see the Vietnam Memorial and then back up to Baltimore to catch their morning flight home. But Frank and Walter want to show the Texans how the supercops party, though, technically, of course, neither is a cop. Walter cajoles them into keeping their room at the Comfort Inn. Frank suggests we go to a west-side über-hip bar and restaurant called L2.

Waiting on the sidewalk outside the Downtown Club in the pumpkin light of late afternoon, Detective Wooten, who I now realize comes up only to my chest, asks if it's okay if he waves down our taxi. Frank and Richard have already flagged one and gone ahead. He's never done so before. I insist that he knock himself out, and he steps to the curb, arm lofted timidly.

"Lookit me! I'm wavin' down a cab, man!"

When we get to L2, which the Texans end up thinking is a gay bar, Richard and Frank are in the back, past the velvet curtains, in the cerulean glow of the fish tank, already buzzed. We come in on them venting about colleagues who they felt were playing for the camera at the meeting. Walter, who doesn't have an ounce of flesh on his bones, and in this light reminds me of an Edward Gorey creature, is shivering and complaining about how fucking cold it is in the restaurant. The Texans make shy-polite inquiries about the film Danny DeVito's going to make, to which Walter raises his fourth chardonnay and says, "They're making a movie about us: Frank's the pervert and I'm the guy with the big dick!"

That, Wooten says, wiping away tears of mirth, reminds him of this funny joke his friends like to make at his expense about how what *he's* got looks huge on him but only looks "this big" on another man.

Frank moans when the detective cocks his little finger.

Wooten excuses himself and then comes back a minute later and tells me, under his breath, that the bathroom doors just say "W.C." He's not sure which one to use. I assure him that he can use either.

"It's somewhat ambivalent depending on your mood," Walter says. "You have to sit for both."

The detective looks at me nervously. "Can I really go in there?"

When Chief Deputy Kinney excuses himself for a cigarette, Walter says, "Listen to them. Listen to the way they talk. A-yuk, a-yuk, a-yuk."

Frank orders another Cape Cod.

After the detective returns, Walter leans forward and says, "Listen, we didn't want to tell you, Wooten, but we got a complaint on you. You used the woman's W.C."

"C'mon!"

"You're lucky you didn't fall in," Walter says.

Over the next hour the mood changes as an undercurrent of tension between Walter and the detective, at first invisible, begins to escalate. Walter sees that the detective seems to enjoy being taunted mercilessly, but the nature of the detective's jokes seems to change from being a way of giving us something of himself, to show us that he takes himself lightly, to something more preemptive, akin to tossing chum to a shark. The detective tells me he's used to this kind of harassment, that his friends pick on him like hell for being short. "They say if we didn't love you we wouldn't pick on you." He tells me this with an almost apologetic intimacy. "Well, I wish you wouldn't love me so much."

Chief Deputy Kinney is dead qui[et] while he eats his meat loaf. When th[e] owner, Nathon, comes over to our tab[le] to say hello, casually rubbing my ba[ck] while he stands there, the deputy loo[ks] as if he would like to disappear und[er] his cowboy hat, if only he'd disregar[d] ed his wife's advice to leave it at hom[e]

In a lull, I ask Detective Woot[en] about the police report that I'd re[ad] while Court TV was taping Weinber[g]'s deconstruction. I was drawn to seve[ral] al contradictions. At one point th[e] bottle of cologne is described as bei[ng] in Cody's hand, but then later d[e]scribed as resting at the foot of th[e] bed. Another thing: if Cody was u[n]conscious when he was killed—[i.e.] while he was having gay ole sex—would he really have been found wi[th] a plug of chewing tobacco in h[is] mouth? But the most vexing detail [is] the one I found in a supplementary r[e]port about another alleged suicide, [in] Lubbock, on the same date—July 1[6], 1996—just a couple of hours befo[re] Cody Rogers was killed. This oth[er] body, found shot in the head with [a] .22, belonged to the live-in boyfrie[nd] of a woman named Trwyna Leha Ha[rt] who was Cody Rogers's ex-girlfrien[d]. Trwyna, a topless dancer, had brok[en] up with Cody after he'd punched h[er] in the face a little less than a year ea[r]lier. Because the two victims' respe[c]tive gunshots matched the calibers [of] Lance Barker's two missing weapo[ns], I'm curious why Chief Deputy Kinn[ey] hadn't mentioned this coinciden[ce] earlier to the Vidocq Society.

"Whatchyo talkin' about?" Woot[en] says. "I must've missed that." He sa[id] Kinney never mentioned that part [of] the story. Frank is shocked to he[ar] about it also. Immediately, I begin [to] fantasize that I've stumbled across [a] key piece of evidence that will e[nd] up providing the missing link a[nd] make me, however briefly, a sleuth [to] be reckoned with.

Frank shrugs, not exactly addre[ss]ing the deputy. "We can only wo[rk] with the information that's given to [us]. Why come to us if you're not going [to] give it all, you know, especially thin[gs] like that? We have all these peop[le] together for free. Top experts in t[he]

ntry, in the world. I mean, how we work a case to the max if we ı't get the right information? It's : coming in with a half-loaded ı—maybe that's not the example." twirls the lime in his Cape Cod.

He committed suicide," Kinney s. "There was a suicide note and suicide weapon—the .22 pistol—s right there with him. He was a rried guy that had been dating this ie dancer in one of them bars."

Wooten slowly comes around. "Oh, h. Right. Yeah. It occurred at Ran- a Canyon. It was ruled a suicide. ıie left a note to his child and his ents. Yeah, I remember that now."

'You can't assume anything," Frank s. "You've got to go over the suicide :e. You've got to see if it is in fact his ting. This raises a whole bunch of w questions."

But it was just a weird coincidence, ıney says. At first, he thought they ılly had something, too, so they ased down every lead about this man with two dead boyfriends. "Got heart beating when we started on at one." But there was nothing to it.

I ask how they know for sure that nce's .22 was a rifle? There is no gun gistry in Texas, after all. Kinney knows for a fact Lance owned a .22 e because the twelve-year-old neigh- r boy who'd stopped by the trailer to ch the door had told him so.

I ask again if it could really just be coincidence?

"Yeah, I think so," Wooten says. He iterates what the chief deputy says: e other guy had a pistol.

"And you *know* that it was a .22 ri- Cody was missing?"

"Right." Wooten slaps me on the shoulder. "But that was good thinking, man."

Following Kinney's lead—he has dered coffee—Detective Wooten or- rs a Dr. Pepper. "Thank you ma'am," e says to the waitress, though he's viously wishing it were another beer.

The chief deputy has come a long ay to get answers, and by now he oks tired as hell. I wonder if he's glad e flew across the country to tell us his ory. I wonder how much he regrets aving stayed in Philadelphia instead driving to Baltimore tonight. Cup- ng his coffee like a man who's leaking protoplasm, he thanks Frank and Richard again for their help today.

"Our job," Walter says, "is to look through bullshit."

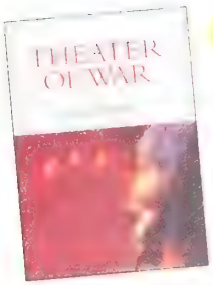
Sensing that he's made the Texans uneasy, Walter picks up the tab. Later, standing on the sidewalk, Walter recovers some of his Edwardian dignity. "You're only as good as your current case," he says, shaking Chief Deputy Kinney's hand. "And only a fool rests on his laurels. But you guys had the facts. The guy with the facts drives."

Watching them walk away, Walter says, "I could have talked to them in professional terms, but they wouldn't have known what the fuck I was talking about."*

Frank leaves Walter and me alone in a decrepit bar called Doobie's. There is no reason why we are still out. He buys another round and then I buy him a drink. We seem to be sharing a complicitous, ugly mood. I look at him and I see that he is quite drunk and not at all the same composed mind I first met in the Downtown Club lobby. Slumped on the table in an unbecoming way, I doubt that I much resemble the version of me from nine hours ago either. We are deteriorating in front of each other's eyes. We are in denouement. At least the Texans will go home inspired, their cold case a little warmer, their timid suspicions about love-gone-bad reaffirmed. But they will also go home inspired to think differently, to think more like Vidocqians. They will go over all the evidence again with these new eyes, they will re-interview ex-girlfriends and old high school teachers and parents and sisters and the boy next door who could have stolen the gun and therefore reinforced the suspicion that Cody's death was a suicide, though it seems to Detective Wooten, the more he thinks about it, that a suicide would not have the prescience to anoint himself with cologne to mask the scent of his own impending decay. And so, with new eyes, the detective will keep returning to the faint yellow stains on the victim's T-shirt that no one else noticed, not even Richard Walter. Taking a chance, he will go out and buy a bottle of Stetson cologne and a hundred-percent cotton white Fruit of the Loom T-shirt. When he sprinkles the cologne over the T-shirt, the same faint yellow stains will appear, identical. He is a real sleuth. Then it will only be a matter of time—so much has passed already it hardly makes any difference—before the lab confirms this insight, and Lance Barker, whose fingerprints have subsequently been found on the cologne, is placed at the scene of the crime, and they will have their long-awaited grand jury. Of course, in this detective story, the identity of the killer was never much in question. Perhaps it is this lack of suspense that gives me the terrible impulse—I have felt it since we came in the bar—to ask the forensic psychologist to profile me. I can see that he sees through me already, like he saw through the detective—like the detective saw through him—but whatever it might mean in this context, I have a self-destructive impulse to reveal my darkest side to a complete stranger, to confess that part of me identifies more with the killer than the victim, because the killer is always a victim of free will. He regards me with sallow features that remind me of pictures of Poe—the dark-circled eyes inverted by the morbid contemplation of the endless sadism of the human soul. For Poe, who said that Vidocq was just a "good guesser," just as some detractors say that profilers are only "glorified mystics," the genius of the detective was not deduction so much as being able to cross into the "spirit" of his *opponent*. It's not so much that I fear Walter will tell me something dreadful as that he won't detect anything at all. But then he tells me that no, he doesn't do that. Not for free. Finally I have the sense to order coffee. Then, having missed the last train, I hail a cab for home. ■

* *Later, when I told Detective Wooten that I was sorry they had left so early, he told me that Chief Deputy Kinney was afraid the supercops "were gonna get us in trouble." But perhaps they would have been better off if they'd stuck closer to Frank and Walter. "See, we had a little trouble when we left. We were walking around downtown and I was trying to flag a cab down, and the first two turned us down. And this black guy high on dope came up behind us. So we were keepin' an eye on him. And then another black guy, obviously a homosexual, made a crude comment to me. He said, 'Hey man, you want me to suck your dick?' So that ticked me off and I went after him. I was yellin' at him and Dave said, 'Rick, you're gonna get us killed! Let's get out of here!' So he grabbed me and we took off."*

HARPER'S BOOKSHELF



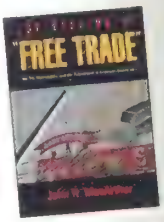
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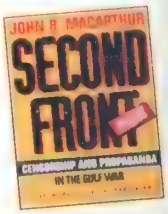
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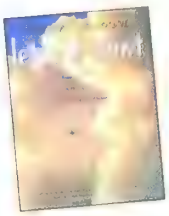


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NEW BOOKS

by John Leonard



For writers there are plenty of reasons to leave town. Heartsick, you are running away from marriage or your mother. Saddlesore, you need to baste or slalom. Sluggish, you seek the exasperation and romance elsewhere. Bored, you wander into other cultures as if they were boutiques in which to shop for Greek light, French sauce, Russian soul, German usage, and Spanish bull. On a quest, you want to rub your fuzzy head against the strange and see if something kindles—Zen koans, Toltec stelae, hearts



of darkness, or Veils of Maya. And then, of course, there's money.

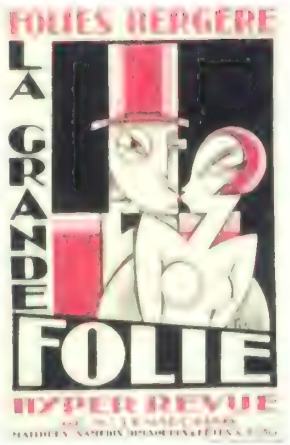
Evelyn Waugh left town for the money, which isn't to say that his travels didn't inflect his fiction. As Nicholas Shakespeare notes in his nuanced introduction to WAUGH ABROAD: COLLECTED TRAVEL WRITINGS (Everyman's Library, $25), novels such as *Black Mischief*, *Scoop*, and *A Handful of Dust* would be unimaginable without the months the grumpy author spent in Ethiopia and British Guiana, more than once on a camel. Nor is it to say that what he reported seeing on those travels, no matter who paid him, wasn't filtered through the thick lenses of his politics (a born conservative) and his religion (a convert to Roman Catholicism after his wife ran off with a bounder). "Unlike more curious writers," Shakespeare tells us, "Waugh travels to have his biases confirmed, choosing destinations where his prejudices are most likely to be annoyed." But Waugh shipped out after almost every one of his early novels in order to earn enough money to buy time for the next one.

And he, too, could be bought. "If," notes Shakespeare, "a hotel or a shipping line was willing to give Waugh advantageous terms he did not blush to commend them in print." He was likewise a pen for hire in the right cause: "In 1935 the pro-Mussolini *Daily Mail* employed him as a war correspondent to cover favourably the Italian invasion of Abyssinia. Two years later he entered into a secret deal with Clive Pearson to write a book excoriating the corrupt and anti-clerical government of Mexico," which had expropriated the Pearson family's oil fields. By the time you get to the end of these thousand pages, you will also have come to the end of your patience with Waugh's appalling opinions on race, women, Islam, democracy, colonialism, and Jews.



Still, leaving home, each of us brings our own privilege (white skin, male chromosomes, U.S. passport, gold credit cards) and our own periscope (think of Waugh as a Peeping Thomist). Waugh just happened to write better than most of us. If this compilation of his seven travel books gets sadder as it goes along, from Paris to Zanzibar to Mexico City to Jerusalem, so did his novels and so did the century. The mordant satirist and the disappointed romantic turned into a misanthrope with paranoid-delusional Gilbert Pinfold tendencies. In *Waugh Abroad*, the elsewhere we visit is really

Photograph of Evelyn Waugh © Mark Gerson; painting of the Italian invasion of Abyssinia, Ethiopian School, 1937 (left) © Private Collection/Bridgeman Art Library; fresco of equestrian saints, Ethiopian School, 19th century (right) © Church of Debre Berhan Selassie, Gondar, Ethiopia/Bildarchiv Steffens/Bridgeman Art Library



Early on (or late at night) in *Watch Myself*, the novel that Linh called Brick Lopez, "a really intimate and delightful negro cabaret. Brick Lopez came and sat at our table. She seemed the least been-person in Paris." This same Brick Lopez, Ellen Adi Smith, a Harlem chanteuse who perpetuated in the 1920's, doesn't show up to teach the Charleston to the Aga Khan until close to the end of (Viintage, $15). But she seems to have enjoyed every night of her sojourn more than Evelyn Waugh ever enjoyed anything except incense. And so did the other twenty-eight Americans whose reminiscences Jennifer Lee has gathered into this encyclopedic anthology, even those with a chip on their shoulder.

Put down that Freedom fry and light up a Gauloise. From Ben Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and John Adams to Mark Twain, Edith Wharton, and T. S. Eliot to Ernest Hemingway, Gertrude Stein, and Lincoln Steffens to M.F.K. Fisher, Saul Bellow, and James Baldwin, Americans attend Paris as if it were graduate school at the circus. Some, like Bellow, worry too much about being conned; this is common. Others, like David Sedaris, claim to spend all their time at the movies; this is not more believable. Waugh, on hand in the eighteenth century for the French Revolution, sounds surprisingly like John Reed, on hand in the twentieth for the Russian one. Dave Barry is funny ("I

[illegible] drug for soldiers . . . to put them to sleep, and they don't know how the French handle it up there, because in my two weeks in Paris I never saw a French person actually leave a cafe"). But Y. Ehrling [illegible]

The problem is that [illegible] don't expect. There's no Julian Barnes, [illegible] she'll tell you that she will have no chance to take a dip. In her own [illegible] she must have to play more sophisticated [illegible] to love with her classic [illegible] mother. The tragedy is [illegible] compelled to try to make [illegible] Paris by people like to write now, because it can be done in one act, in the [illegible]

France was not at all fun during World War II, and most Frenchmen would rather not talk about it. But now, as a sort of scholarly buttress to the oral history in Marcel Ophuls's 1970 film *The Sorrow and the Pity*, we have Robert Gildea's [illegible] OCCUPATION (Metropolitan Books, $35). It is worth recalling that even though *The Sorrow and the Pity* was commissioned for French television, it would be seen almost everywhere except on French television until a decade after its debut. This is because, as Oxford historian Gildea explains, it depicted the French as "self-reckoning, cowardly, deceitful, and self-deceiving." Interviewing everybody in the Loire Valley who didn't hiss at him and reading every document in the municipal archives that hadn't been shredded, Gildea paints a picture considerably more complicated, if not much prettier.

During the Nazi Occupation, everything was negotiable. Collaboration had more degrees than a thermometer; many believed that socialism instead of Hitler was responsible for the fall of France; the same local notables who had been in place for the Republic had also to be relied on by Vichy and stayed put after Liberation; not nearly as many heroes were in the Resistance as later pretended to be; not all Maquisards were Communists and some were even bandits; shooting a Nazi meant mass reprisals on innocent civilians; prisoners of war squabbled with conscripted laborers over who deserved more handouts; dancing was illegal; and nobody really cared about the Jews.

In *Marianne*, a work of witness scrupled to the bone, we hear from housewives, businessmen, workers, and pols instead of the usual literati, intellectuals, which means that the [illegible] are less embroidered. How you feel once you finish it will depend on how you felt when you emerged from *The Sorrow and the Pity*. I remember hoping that I would have been braver than I feared I was.

Occupied France lasted only four years. Occupied Romania was forever, with a boot on your face. Or so it seems to the exiled novelist and Bard professor Norman Manea, who was sent as a child by cattle car to a concentration camp from which only half of Romania's Jews returned, who lived the life of a Young Pioneer, student engineer, and dissident litterateur in a life out of socialist-realist trouble; who waited maybe too long to leave home with only his language to house him, like a snail, in 1986; who refused to return to Romania, from Berlin or Paris or New York, even after the collapse of the nonprofit police state in 1989; who was browbeaten into going back in 1997 by his boss at Bard, Leon Botstein, who wanted company when he conducted a symphony orchestra in Bucharest; and who now must write this furious book, [illegible] (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, $25), in which, as much as he needs to purge himself of Ceausescu and the Iron Guard, he must also vanquish his mother—and say kaddish for the bread, the book, and the Chagall shtetl.

Imagine, on the other side of a totalitarian looking glass, an obverse image of Nabokov's *Speak, Memory*. Every departure is a banishing, every nomad is a fugitive, every intellectual is a hooligan. The memoir is a nightmare, like its century.

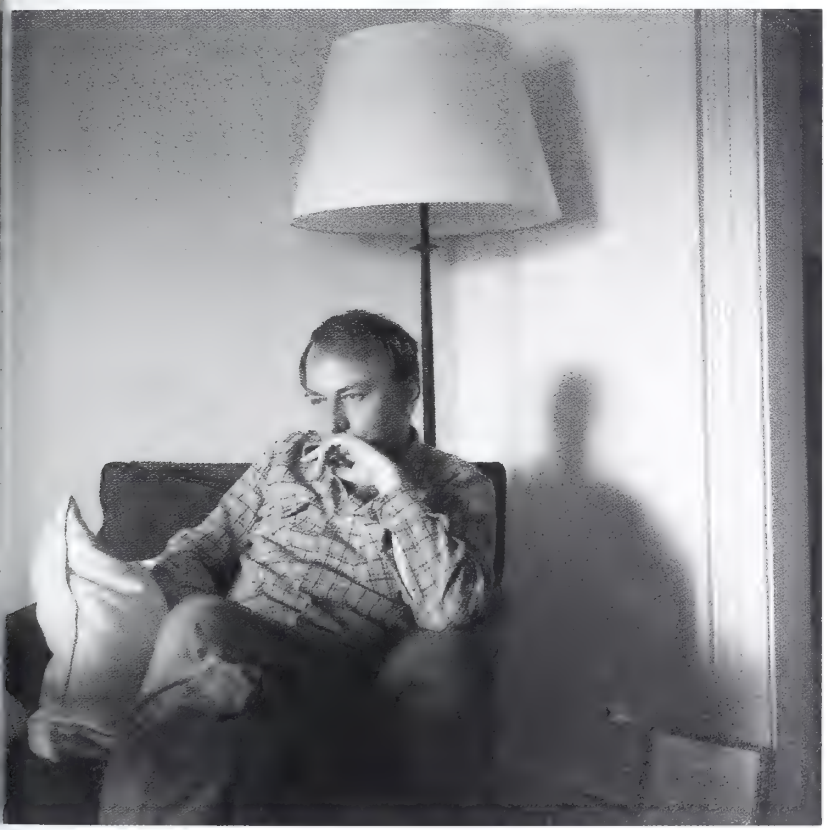
LOVE IN THE TIME OF HEDONISM

Michel Houellebecq's new novel

by Cristina Nehring

Discussed in this essay:

Platform, by Michel Houellebecq. Translated by Frank Wynne. Knopf, 2003. 272 pages. $25.



Of the two most inspected monuments in France, one belongs to the city of Paris and the other to Michel Houellebecq. Although appreciably smaller (it stands—when it stands—at approximately five inches), Houellebecq's commands indisputably more attention than the Eiffel Tower these days. This, in any case, is the impression one gleans from the controversy surrounding his books, all of which possess an unabashedly autobiographical bent.

He is an unlikely sex god—this slight, unfashionable, forty-five-year-old Frenchman—and an even more improbable celebrity. At book parties in his honor, he's the stooped figure in the yellow windbreaker, the guy in the corner slurping down drinks and studying his fluorescent Nikes, the man who leaves early, whose voice trails off when you ask him a question. Inviting him to a meal, according to members of the Paris literati, is like "asking the plumber to lunch." But you wouldn't want to bank on the docility of this plumber: taciturn as Houellebecq can be, he has galvanized global attention with his inflammatory statements to journalists as much as with his "willfully pornographic" fiction. The former have landed him in the French courts for "incitement to racial hatred"; the latter has installed him firmly on international bestseller lists.

It is with his second novel that Houellebecq seized literary celebrity. An earlier novel, *Whatever*, had provoked comparisons to Albert Camus but failed to propel its author to the attention of a larger public (he had also penned two poetry collections by that time, as well as a still overlooked biography of H. P. Lovecraft). Houellebecq remained a civil servant throughout it all, quietly debugging computers for the French ministry. And then, in 1998, came *The Elementary Particles*. The novel was not so much launched as "detonated," in the words of one reviewer. Packed with graphic renditions of variably transgressive sex—sadomasochistic, solitary, orgiastic, exhibitionistic, aquatic, pseudo-incestuous—it also bristled with offensive aphorisms about everything from women's liberation, racial equality, and personal freedom to individualism and the possibility of human intimacy. In many ways, it was one bleak book—"a deeply repugnant read," as Michiko Kakutani put it in the *New York Times*. It was also bracing, insistently thought provoking, and altogether original. It was graced, too, with a deadpan humor that provoked laughter in the midst of the most desolate depictions of human frailty.

What most critics emphasized in their reviews, though, was Houellebecq's "frontal attack on the generation of '68" and on the vices it presumably unleashed upon the Western world: promiscuity, spiritual humbug, hedonism, a cult of youth, the apotheosis of individualism. The two heroes of *The Elementary Particles* are half brothers abandoned, as Houellebecq was, into the care of reluctant relatives by hippie

Cristina Nehring is a contributing editor to Harper's Magazine. Her last review, "Our Lives, Ourselves," appeared in the May 2003 issue.

Photograph © Peter Marlow/Magnum Photos

parents with far more patience for their children than for their revolving lovers. One brother, Michel, has turned into a socially dysfunctional scientist "faithful to his local Monoprix." The other, Bruno, is a sex fiend who spends most of the novel ministering to the insatiable needs of his genitalia. The lives of these brothers, we are left to infer, have been ruined by the values of their "idiotic parents" and the "liberal, vaguely beatnik movement" their parents represent.

Indictments such as these have earned Houellebecq—amid the scandal surrounding his book's sensational sex scenes—the reputation of a profound moralist and an author, as the *Wall Street Journal* intoned, of an admonitory and "brilliant novel of ideas." But how considered *are* Houellebecq's ideas? one wonders, as one reads *Platform*, his third and most controversial novel yet. He has been taken to court for them—or at least for his ideas on Islam, expressed, as they are, by several characters in the novel and closely echoed in his own interviews. He made a number of flamboyantly confrontational remarks to his judges that day: If the Koran was a joke, the Judeo-Christian Bible was "so boring" it made "you want to shit." If Islam was "the most stupid of all religions," *every* monotheistic religion was inherently abusive. Was he aware that his comments might violate the French Penal Code? "No," he replied to the delight of audience members. He hadn't read the French Penal Code; he suspected it had "many boring passages." He also made a more sober remark: He had never, he insisted, had a coherent idea in his life. Houellebecq's self-assessment is worth considering.

Platform begins with the hero—once again named Michel—contemplating the funeral of his father. The contemplation takes no very grave form—it is conducted on the Exercycle of the deceased, over a granola bar from his kitchen, in front of a television game show. As he pedals, Michel is aware of having made an "excellent general impression" at the ceremony:

> I'm always clean-shaven . . . and when I developed a bald spot at about the age of thirty, I decided to cut my hair very short. I usually wear fairly staid and sober ties, and I don't look particularly cheerful. With my short hair, my lightweight glasses, and my sullen expression, my head bowed a little to a Christian funeral-hymn mix, I felt perfectly at ease with the situation; much more at ease than I would have been at a wedding, for example. Funerals, clearly, were my thing.

Social interactions, clearly, are not. When a woman raps on the door, introduces herself as his late father's cleaning lady, and asks to retrieve her belongings, Michel freezes: "'Well . . . ,' I said, '. . . well.'" He barely manages a gesture "intended to be welcoming," waves her up the stairs, and collapses on the sofa, "exhausted by the confrontation." It's the same glum, distressingly awkward, prematurely balding hero whom we know from Houellebecq's other novels, and whom we know from his interviews. Even the hero's father—a mountain guide with nothing but contempt for his civil-servant son—closely resembles Houellebecq's own father—a mountain guide who abandoned his toddler son and watched from afar as this son became a civil servant.

Having come into a large amount of money and sympathy for his bereavement, Michel decides to take a vacation. Never a man to risk his creature comforts, he settles on a pre-arranged and pre-evaluated package tour to Thailand. "I was particularly fond," he confesses, "of the star-rating system, which indicated the intensity of the pleasure one was entitled to hope for." Once in Thailand, he "behaves like a typical tourist," taking a "timid dip," making dreadful small talk, masturbating to mediocre novels at night, and dutifully attending the cultural field trips. He also visits several Thai prostitutes and mounts a spirited defense of their profession and character. They are "good girls," he concludes, "who send money to their parents." Western women are unavailable, unappetizing, unsexual, or just too much bloody trouble. Between the dinners, entertainment, and sensitive interrogation required to woo them, it's a lot easier "to just stay home and wank," as the poet Philip Larkin (whose erotic temperament often mirrored Houellebecq's) once wrote. It is for this reason that Michel returns to France without so much as having attempted to seduce the one woman he fancies in the group: the "serious" brunette, Valérie.

It is not until Michel and Valérie are back in Paris that they arrange a meeting and fall immediately into each other's arms, beds, and lives. The seemingly retiring twenty-eight-year-old turns out to be preternaturally adept at the sexual acrobatics and endearments that Michel had believed the exclusive purview of Thai prostitutes, and even more open than he to erotic experiment. It is she who suggests they recruit other girls and other couples into their adventures; it is she who teaches him the Marmalade Trick, among others. She also turns out to be a top executive in the travel industry, a generous and warm-hearted human being, and an enchanting conversationalist. What does she find in this "washed-up guy, . . . very sociable, more or less resigned to his boring life" that Michel knows he is? "I'm not particularly handsome," he acknowledges after their first night of love. "I'm not funny; I find it difficult to understand why anyone would find me attractive." She responds to his doubts in the most eloquent way he could wish: she initiates oral sex. "I got the impression she was going to say something, then she put her hand on my balls, brought her face toward me. Immediately I was hard again."

This becomes something of a refrain in the remaining three quarters of the book, a refrain greeted by the reader—at least by this reader—with an increasing admixture of fatigue. *Oh, no*, we find ourselves thinking after the seventeenth erection in a chapter, *not again*. Houellebecq prides himself on his skill at portraying sex scenes, and indeed he is better than many—better, certainly, than the awful Catherine Millet, his fellow Parisian, whose abominable erotic memoir, *The Sexual Life of Catherine M.*, fortunately lost its place to *Platform* on the French bestseller list. Yet serial penetrations get dull on the page, no matter how various the orifices enlisted and how numerous the participants. This is a problem, since Michel and Valérie live out a sexual

ana for the next several months, of
ch we are spared hardly a thrust.
y also grow toward each other in
er ways—becoming fast friends,
ing confidants, and even honorary
ness partners. It is in this last ca-
ty that Michel suggests to Valérie's
ıpany a new option for their inter-
onal resort packages: sex tourism.
get those elephant rides in Mar-
sh, he tells them, forget scuba div-
in the Third World—most people
el in the hope of finding sex and ro-
ıce, not sea anemones. After some
ial inhibitions in the industry,
érie and Michel are ferried to
ıgkok to inaugurate the opening of
new—and already overbooked—
hrodite" club. Smitten by the at-
sphere and Michel, Valérie propos-
o quit her job in Paris to remain as
rt manager with him. The vision of
ew and gleaming life opens for the
ple. And then it happens: the same
n fate that befalls many of Houelle-
q's heroines. Only this time it is at
hands of Islamic fundamentalists,
ıed with explosives and irate at the
spect of another Western sex club
iling the East. Valérie is not the
y one to go. But she is the only one
o matters to Michel.

The hero at the end of *Platform* is a
ken man. After lengthy bouts of
nesia, insanity, and treatment in
nch nerve clinics (where Houelle-
cq also served his time), he returns
Thailand to die. He holes up in the
iest part of town, sees a prostitute or
, starts to write up the "few months"
ife he has known, ceases to see pros-
ıtes, finishes his notes, and becomes
ecluse: the madman on the block
ıo emerges only for his cup of soup.
'hen you give up on life," he says,
ıe last remaining human contacts
those you have with shopkeepers."
Valérie went with a bang, Michel
nault will go in silence, unnoticed;
e locals will smell something in the
a few days later, that's all. "In this
mate," he notes, "corpses quickly
ırt to stink."

What to make of this book? This apologia for sex tourism, this love story, this oadside against Islam, this anatomy banality, this indictment of Western lationships, this biography of dis-abuse, this fantasy of male wish fulfillment, this tale of a cock? It addresses everything—love, death, religion, the nature of the individual, the meaning of life—but is coherent on nothing. Julian Barnes has said Houellebecq "hunts big game while others settle for shooting rabbit," and Houellebecq does, in fact, go after the big quarry, the big quandaries, the big issues of his age. But he goes after these issues in so individual and honest and blithely self-centered a way that it is almost impossible for him to offer a consistent statement about them. He is full of contradictions on whatever subject he broaches. He laments the promiscuity handed down to us by the sixties, but it would be a morally gullible reader indeed (and there are many) who fails to see how he simultaneously exploits this promiscuity, how his protagonists wallow in it, and how he enjoys it himself. A passage from his first novel, *Whatever*, illustrates what critics have meant when they refer to Houellebecq's assault on the advocates of sexual liberation. "Véronique belonged," he writes of one of his heroines,

> as we all do, to a *sacrificed generation*. She had certainly been capable of love; she would have wished to still be capable of it . . . but it was no longer possible. A scarce, artificial and belated phenomenon, love can only blossom under certain mental conditions, rarely conjoined, and totally opposed to the freedom of morals which characterizes the modern era. Véronique had known too many discothèques, too many lovers; such a way of life impoverishes a human being, inflicting sometimes serious and always irreversible damage. Love as a kind of innocence . . . as an aptitude for epitomizing the whole of the other sex in a single loved being rarely resists a year of sexual immorality, and never two. . . . Extremely quickly, one becomes as capable of love as an old slag. And so one leads, obviously, a slag's life. . . . All that remains is resentment and disgust, sickness and the anticipation of death.

And yet Houellebecq's protagonists deliver themselves to this slag's life with unusual gusto and initiative, even inventing new and optimal venues for it with sex-club chains across the Third World. At least one London critic has suggested this celebration of sex tourism is a spoof—comparable to Jonathan Swift's "Modest Proposal" for eating Irish children in an effort to satirize the callousness of his contemporaries—but this is wishful English high-mindedness, and it does the cheerfully low-minded Houellebecq an injustice. Even aside from any consideration of biography or authorial intent (Houellebecq spent several months exploring Thai brothels, and it's hard to think it was all sour duty), *Platform* abounds with glowing portraits of Eastern prostitutes and their affectionate clients; it also (in common with Houellebecq's other books) offers ringing indictments of Western lovers' lack of sexual "generosity" and loss of "animal instinct."

"'Suck me,'" Michel commands Valérie in the middle of a discussion about what has gone wrong with occidental sexuality.

> She looked at me, surprised, but placed her hand on my balls and brought her mouth toward me. "There!" I exclaimed triumphantly. . . . "That's precisely what's so extraordinary about you: you enjoy giving pleasure. Offering your body as an object of pleasure, giving pleasure unselfishly: that's what Westerners don't know how to do anymore. They've completely lost the sense of giving."

In a passage from *The Elementary Particles* that is often overlooked by those aiming to draw Houellebecq closer to some version of correctness, Houellebecq has Bruno's likable girlfriend, Christiane, express the wish that his fifteen-year-old high school student had offered similar favors when he dropped his pants one day after French class:

> "We need . . ." she said haltingly, "we need a little generosity. . . . If I'd been in that Arab girl's place, I don't know how I would have reacted. I think . . . well, I hope I would've consented to give you pleasure."

The point is couched in the same language of generosity and "giving" as are Houellebecq's other defenses of his sexual ideal. It is clear that we are meant to be moved by Christiane's argument; it is equally clear that Houellebecq is a hard sell to the conventionally moral and, moreover, that the "generosity" he so fervently praises is incommensurable with the model of "love as a kind of innocence . . . as an aptitude for epitomizing the whole of

the other sex in a single loved being" whose disappearance he passionately decries on other occasions. Romance and "generosity"—at least conceived, as it is here, as a docile willingness to render sexual services at any time to any person—are mutually exclusive.

To me, the sex scenes between Valérie and Michel are ultimately drab: amicable, inventive, good-natured, certainly not immoral, but drab. Consenting adults giving each other directions for what operation they would like performed on their anatomies. Monkeys delousing each other come to mind. But sexuality is at its most potent when it has some element of spontaneity and the sacred, some share of tension, mystery, and intuition; when it incarnates the unspeakable, not when it occurs in response to oral injunctions. Nonetheless, Michel and Valérie's relationship is increasingly remarkable for the devotion and force it inspires in both its participants. This devotion is the more surprising because neither Michel nor Valérie sentimentalizes sex, and either of them seems happy to have it with many different people. Yet their relationship revolves around sex. Michel hardly seems to have any knowledge of the personality of his lover when he decides, after their first night together, that they will "probably be happy together"; all through his Thai tour he assumed she was self-effacing and awkward, possessed, as he put it, of a "canine docility." Turns out she's an overachieving career woman—intrepid, ambitious, articulate, and full of initiative. He does begin to take an interest in her as their sexual liaison develops—to the point of sharing her work, her worries, and her childhood memories—but the mental always seems somewhat secondary to the physical. And since the physical seems so interchangeable, particularly to two people in the business of commercializing it, their loyalty to each other often appears perplexing.

But loyalty it is. Even when Valérie overworks herself and her sexual responses become "more muted, more restrained, as though muffled by a curtain of fatigue," Michel realizes he "loved her more and more." The great hedonist, the man who calls all women "sluts," gives voice to the most sweepingly romantic of declarations: Valérie has become all that matters. His work and his previous existence have shriveled to nothing: he is ready to abandon all to be her full-time support, even her chef. "I would never have believed that one day I would take pleasure in cooking. Love sanctifies," he marvels. "The very order of things had been upturned. Strangely, and without in the least deserving it, I had been given a second chance. It is very rare, in life, to have a second chance; it goes against all the rules."

And when those rules are violently reinstated? When Valérie is taken from him? Why doesn't he find someone else? A woman at the swingers clubs they attended together? His solicitous secretary? A marriageable Thai girl? But no; his life is over. He awaits his physical demise in exile, because "the absence of a will to live is, alas, not sufficient to make one want to die." He is already a member of the living dead.

Houellebecq, The Romantic? The Most *Unlikely* Romantic writing today? He is clearly more amorously idealistic than other celebrated writers known for their frank treatment of sex—more than Philip Roth and Milan Kundera; more than Catherine Millet or Virginie Despentes—and more, too, than many of the late greats—from Henry Miller and Anaïs Nin back to the Marquis de Sade. Relentless graphic sex has rarely kept company with romantic idealism. In Houellebecq, oddly enough, it does. If that seems contradictory, it is only one of many contradictions in his surprising *oeuvre*.

For more contradictions, we need look no further than his notorious rap on Islam, which deserves neither the invectives nor the defenses it has inspired. It is essentially casual, only partly in earnest, and overwhelmingly incoherent. How seriously can one take the remark, ungracious though it may be, that Islam "could only have been born in a stupid desert, among filthy Bedouin who had nothing better to do... than bugger their camels"? Placed into the mouth of an Arab scientist in *Platform*, the statement becomes the prelude to a religious argument that, though perhaps more thought-provoking, is equally specious: Islam is disparaged for being the "most rad monotheism"—monotheisms alre being billed as incitements to viole and dampers on creativity. "Rea the Koran," claims the scientist, " cannot help but be struck by the grettable mood of tautology that ifies the work: 'there is no other but God alone,' etc. You won't get far with nonsense like that." Perh not, but it sounds pretty familia anyone who has examined the Juc Christian Bible—replete, as it is, assertions such as "I am the Lord God; thou shalt have no other before me" and "I am that I am."

But Houellebecq's is only in pa theological point—and those have defended him, like Christop Hitchens, on the grounds that cussing *theology* can hardly be an citement to *racial* hatred," miss point. Houellebecq's treatment o lam has as much to do with the p udices of the "poor white trash" ment of French society (which h the first French writer in decade portray) as with theological ar ment. And if Mr. Hitchens judicio ly distinguishes between religion race, the man whom he is defend does not. Hitchens reminds us t "most Arab-Americans are Chr ian" as well as "perhaps 20 percen all Palestinians," whereas Houe becq is happy to dispense with s niceties: he has his hero evaluate attractions of "Muslim pussy" w standing before his father's explic agnostic Arab maid. Worse, Houe becq has Michel declare delight reading that "a Palestinian terro or a Palestinian child, or a pregn Palestinian woman, had been gun down in the Gaza Strip." It is obv why such a remark causes indig tion and injury, not only am France's Arab population but am sensible souls in general. This in nation might be tempered by the that Michel is mourning the deat his beloved at Arab hands when expresses the sentiment; that i self-consciously and rather tragic embraced in the hope of giving some reason to continue living ("i certainly possible to remain a animated simply by a desire vengeance; many people have li that way"); and that it is eventu

hdrawn (a "simple thought," chel reports on the next page, is sufficient to dispel my hatred"). Houellebecq is very nearly an ial-opportunity offender; women, n, individualists, socialists, Mus- s, Americans, Germans, Japan- —all eventually come under his el gun. This is part of the abrasive raction of his prose as well as nething for which he occasionally erves to be taken to task. But if he requently incoherent in his general nouncements, he is ingenious in local insights. Houellebecq's fic- n is full of jarringly honest micro- lections; fascinating fragments, ttering shards that cut us to the ck. Take his passage on the power- of the individual, in which Michel scribes preparing to move in to a w flat with Valérie:

I realized that I didn't feel the slightest attachment to anything in my apartment. . . . I had managed, it seemed, to live for forty years without forming the most tenuous of attachments to a single object. All told, I had two suits, which I wore alternately. Books, sure, I had books, but I could easily have bought them again. . . . Several women had crossed my path; I didn't have a photograph or a letter from any of them. Nor did I have any photos of myself: I had no reminder of what I might have been like when I was fifteen, or twenty or thirty. I didn't really have any personal papers: my identity could be contained in a couple of files that would easily fit into a standard-size cardboard folder. It is wrong to pretend that human beings are unique, that they carry within them an irreplaceable individuality. As far as I was concerned, at any rate, I could not distinguish any trace of such individuality. . . . When all's said and done, the idea of the uniqueness of the individual is nothing more than pompous absurdity. We remember our own lives, Schopenhauer wrote somewhere, a little better than we do a novel we once read. That's about right: a little, no more.

is not that these meditations are cessarily true, or that Houellebecq es not immediately contradict them, t that they are provocative: they up- t our easy vanities; they undercut e consolations and pieties of our cul- re. Occasionally expansive, they are ore often brief, pithy, and contex-

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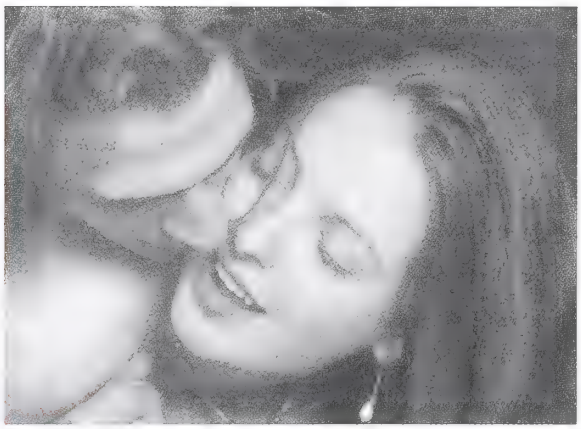
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HARPER'S MAGAZINE

tual. Talking with a lover of his late father, Michel marvels at the things he must have missed about the man—the many traits he never noticed—and concludes that "men live alongside one another like cattle; it is a miracle if, once in a while, they manage to share a bottle of booze."

Sometimes the candor is just droll, sometimes it is profound. A few comments from the early days of Michel's group tour:

> For now, my mission was to choose a pair of shorts for the walk on the Ubinas. I opted for a longish pair in blue denim, not too tight. . . . In the bathroom mirror, I contemplated myself disgustedly. My anxious bureaucratic face clashed horribly with what I was wearing, and I looked exactly like what I was: a forty-something civil servant on vacation, trying to pretend he's young; it was pretty demoralizing.
>
> . . . I still didn't feel like eating with the others. It is in our relations with other people that we gain a sense of ourselves; it's that, pretty much, that makes relations with other people unbearable.
>
> . . . I made a small hole in the sand to bury the two books [I had brought to Thailand and finished]. The problem now was that I had to find something to read. Not having anything to read is dangerous: you have to content yourself with life itself, and that can lead you to take risks.

Houellebecq's vices are closely linked to his virtues: the fact that he has no investment in larger ideas makes him better able to supply small observations—unsubordinated, unprettified, and unsettling *aperçus* into the human condition. Faithful to no abstraction, he is fanatically committed to concrete detail; obeisant to no ideal—whether his own or his readers'—he is merciless in his mug shots of reality. It is for these mug shots—offensive, jarring, and often revelatory—that we should inspect his work. Not, as many critics have claimed, for his grand ideas; certainly not for his moralities.

He is a man of apparent contradictions, frequently bleak yet hilariously funny; he revels in the common (if you've lived in France you recognize every brand name, market, and mail-order service in his books) yet is currently Europe's most original novelist; he champions hedonism yet remains profoundly romantic. It is this latter contradiction that his reviewers seem least able to fathom: only yesterday I ran across a feature on erotic writers in the *Los Angeles Times* in which Houellebecq's narrators are charged with "abandon[ing] love for sexual escapism." But one of the most unexpected disclosures by this fascinating, flawed, and necessary writer is that he believes in private utopias. Pessimistic about society, pessimistic about the individual, Houellebecq believes, nonetheless, in utopias of two. Relationships—even when they begin in arbitrary or purely physical ways—hold within them a possibility of redemption.

"One of the surprising things about physical love," says Bruno in *The Elementary Particles*, "is the sense of intimacy it creates the instant there's any trace of mutual affection. Suddenly—even if you met the night before—you can confide things to your lover that you would never tell another living soul." Nothing is perfect, of course, and Houellebecq isn't about to pretend it is: when the woman he loves becomes wheelchair-bou Bruno ultimately abandons her—at least hesitates so long to invite to live with him that she throws h self down a stairwell. But her en Bruno's as well; like Michel in *P form*, he does not survive the end love. It is the one great chance have in life, according to the avow cynic and hedonist Houellebecq. . bitrary and fragile, it is the only th that makes life memorable.

Having finished his notes ab Valérie, Michel consig himself to oblivion. notes, presumably, become *Platfo* He himself will disappear. "A f street hawkers," he predicts, "w shake their heads" on his death. " apartment will be rented out to other resident. I'll be forgotten," says. "I'll be forgotten quickly."

It is only his accidental encoun with Valérie which, to quote Lar again, will

> come to be
> [his] final blazon, and to prove
> Our almost-instinct almost true:
> What will survive of us is love.

ART WILL EAT ITSELF

What distinguishes art from everything else

By Mark Kingwell

Discussed in this essay:

Conceptual Art and the Politics of Publicity, by Alexander Alberro. MIT Pr 2003. 236 pages. $35.

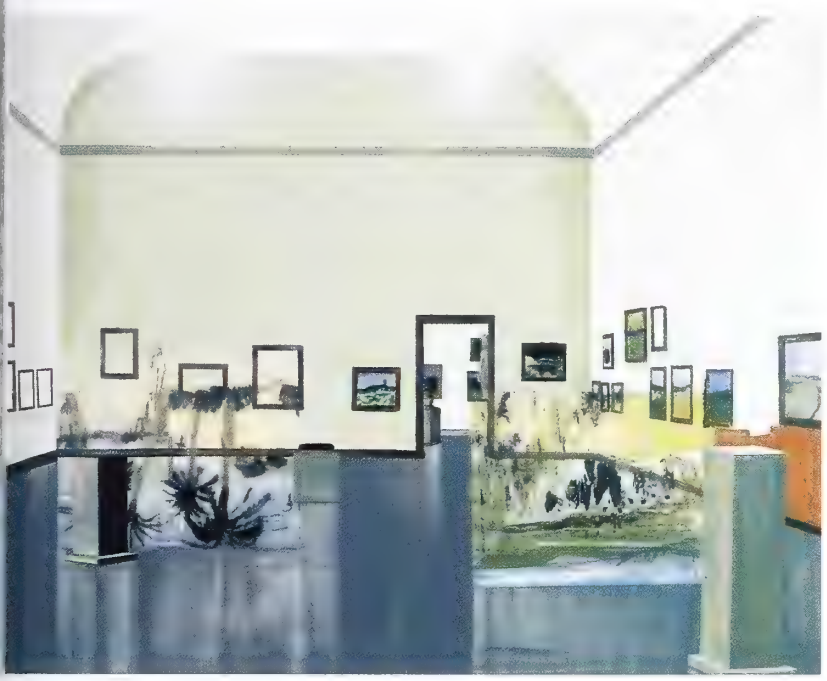
Real Spaces, by David Summers. Phaidon, 2003. 704 pages. $75.

On any given Saturday you may observe them, the pilgrims of art, haunting the long blocks of Chelsea. Rich and mostly good-looking, they are nevertheless a sad lot, in search of something, they kn not what. Less certain of salvation th those reeling in the miles to Santia de Compostela, they follow a t mapped by *Artforum* and the Arts Leisure section of the *New York Tim* Sometimes they are impressed, sor times even moved. Sometimes th buy. But always they harbor a sense thwarted longing: Is this all there

Every couple of years the pilgri

Mark Kingwell is professor of philosophy at the University of Toronto and a contributing editor to Harper's Magazine. *His last review, "Interior Decoration," appeared in the June 2001 issue.*

ıder the hangar halls of the ıitney or the hills of Venice, ere the art is not for sale, looking the large vista, the big picture, overview. Perspective never ıes, not least because they can't e believe in big pictures like that more: they have been taught to



trust them, to question the grand rrative and the universal claim. even evaporated desire can leave rusty residue of dissatisfaction. A ıse of what it all means would be e, even if we are too sophisticated say so. And there is an awful lot of bish to sort through, isn't there? would lay a nagging problem to t if we could say, in some defini- e fashion, what art is all about. t the thought self-destructs in the ry act of being formed.

t is too simple to say that the art world is in disarray, since by many measures it is in good nick deed. Despite complaints about llery access, bad dealers, cabals, d who slept with whom, more art produced and shown now than er before. Art schools are thriving, least in the sense of producing reg- ar battalions of graduates to throng e warehouse spaces and downtown fés of our cities. The market for art, once considered so elite a preserve that democrats were driven to invent the public museum, is now within the reach of anyone with a few hundred (though better if it's a few thousand) spare dollars.

It is, to be sure, a market that resembles the distribution of stock, where mutual funds and day-trading do nothing to alter the basic facts of wealth concentration except provide a cozy illusion that those facts are alterable. And, like finance, art has become television, with a vast undifferentiated schedule that is constantly available, always growing, offering every species and manner of product. We believe there are gems in there somewhere; occasionally we might even believe we have found them. But the television-styled art world cannot avoid a descent into generalized cliché and creeping depression. In most large North American cities, "international art fairs" are held regularly, sprawling aesthetic trade shows where gallery owners crowd in next to one another on convention-center floors and flog their wares, spewing forth everything from the shamelessly twee kitsch of Thomas Kinkade, "Painter of Light," to bits of compelling cleverness from William Wegman or Bruce McCall. With their unpredictable plunges from sublime to ridiculous, these shows become exercises in vertiginous aesthetic profusion, channel surfing for the cultured. You may turn any corner and come upon something good, but the sheer force of volume—for once honestly presented in a jumble rather than the self-conscious minimalism of the white-walled gallery—soon renders its banal essence. Armed with a glass of art-world white wine, you wander the pallid and partitioned corridors of post-historical art: art cut free from narratives of progress, beholden to no school or tradition, where anything—any medium, any style, any subject—will be displayed. The Whitneyites and other biennaleans may disdain these fairs, but they are no more free of the facts than people who like to tell you they just watch public television.

Even blockbuster exhibitions of artistic virtuosity, such as the Gerhard Richter retrospective that graced the Museum of Modern Art last year, merely reinforce the current confusion. For all its moments of genuine brilliance, the Richter show was a testament not so much to vision as to preoccupation. The shifts from figuration to abstraction, the self-conscious, often very beautiful renderings of blurred photographs, the effortless command of pigment: all of this tells us that Richter's true subject is not *what* he paints but *that* he paints. Richter may flirt with politics and memory in portraits of Baader-Meinhof terrorists or in unsettlingly gorgeous images of American fighter-bombers, but these are merely exercises in technique; his real subject is always the medium itself. Paint, paint, and more paint. Perhaps the most honest work in Richter's *oeuvre* is *256 Colors*, the massive installation of precisely pigmented panels that mimics the paint-chip catalogues consulted by artists and home decorators.

Being interested in, even moved by, this kind of artwork might be a sign of sophistication or intellectual elevation—and, indeed, shows like this slyly encourage a moment of "getting it" set on top of the sheer lusciousness of the works themselves.

allation, by Mamma Andersson, courtesy Galleri Magnus Karlsson, ckholm. Photograph by Per-Erik Adamsson

consumption all too typical of the postmodern condition, consuming our own cultivation as a by-product of some first-order experience—such as beauty—understood to be insufficient by itself. Knowing, for instance, that Richter's color panels are an allusion to Ellsworth Kelly's 1951 *Colors for a Large Wall* can be fun if you know how to shop or surf; but recognizing allusions and supplying theoretical fill-in are just more self-congratulation. If we were bolder and more honest, we would see the current aesthetic economy as the sign of a depressing endgame in which art has lost its way and is too scared to say so for fear of what the consequences might be. So-called fine art has struggled to free itself from the bonds of elitism and privilege, opening up to a larger public sphere only to find that the result was an empty and defeated art world. Three hundred channels and nothing to watch. It's a bit like the old rap against democracy: in the land where everybody's somebody, nobody's anybody. When anything is art, art becomes nothing.

It is no surprise that the same period of art's meandering has shown a dearth of good thinking about art, for in a sense there is nothing much to think about. Grand aesthetic theory is as certain a casualty of the war on metanarratives as any other kind of grand theory, ejected with other suspect detritus of the Enlightenment. Now we have a theoretical free-for-all, a shopping mall of philosophical options. The assumptions of the art world are as jumbled as the techniques and the works on offer—a mishmash of self-protection and uneasy accessibility. Aesthetic autonomy, yes; faculty of taste, no. Tortured romantic genius, yes; primacy of beauty, no. Politics, yes; responsibility, no. Vestiges of Bloomsbury formalism somehow stagger on next to the crudest versions of art-as-imitation, along with half-baked constructivism and warmed-over anti-consumerist ranting.

It also is not surprising that the most comprehensive aesthetic philosophy of recent memory—Arthur Danto's "institutional theory of art"—is also the most deflationary. Danto conceives of Warhol's *Brillo Box* as the end of art history: art is now anything that is accepted as an object "of rapt attention" in a conventionally structured institutional setting. The art world is a conceptual space, a linked series of locations and discussions, where objects are given a certain status; but there is nothing inherent in the objects themselves that makes them art. You cannot look into the work of art and hope to find the quality or the feature that sets it off from everything that isn't art. Anything can be art, including the most ordinary object. Art is simply whatever the art world talks about.

Danto is much reviled for this view—a Harvard professor I know calls him a "master of the flat-footed assertion"—but the theory is hard to defeat. Neither "beauty" nor "genius" is a category with the same logical extension as "art"; that is, art may include those things, but it need not. Significant form, purposiveness without purpose, emotional communication, illumination of "higher reality"—all of these have been served up as the definition of art, too. But none succeeds, for there is always a new work (or even an old one) that surges past a given conceptual boundary. A Tracy Emin installation or a Jeff Wall photograph of an unmade bed is still capable of arousing old-school outrage among editors at *The New Criterion* or the *Daily Telegraph*, but their ire confesses its own futility. Whatever you think of their works, these artists of the supremely ordinary know that the only quality that defines "art" is "found in the art world."

Danto's institutional theory is often seen as hostile to art or beauty, but that's a misconception. When philosophers write in this mood they are not trying to destroy practices; they are simply trying to understand the underlying assumptions. The health or otherwise of the art world should be unaffected by the truth of the theory, since art is supposed to do whatever it does for us no matter what the philosophers say about it. In practice, of course, matters are more complicated, since artists and viewers alike want art to "mean" something, usually something "deep," expressing sort of table-thumping frustrat over articulating what "deep me ing" actually is.

In the resulting vacuum thought, art itself tries to t over the job of saying what about. Since good artists are of bad philosophers, the results are quently excruciating. Conceptual rises to the top, irritating and fling by turns. The surest sign of times is not someone like Rich with his literally palpable technic but instead the celebrated concep al artist like Ian Carr-Harris or Je Holzer, whose work is either unc graduate-quality thought beautifu presented or else collections of jects and in-jokes incomprehens without the exhibition essay. All often, the work is both.

The rise of conceptual art America during the 1960s is counted by Alexander Alberro in elegant but uncritical book *Conc tual Art and the Politics of Public* Alberro, a young art historian at University of Florida-Gainesvi does not eschew aesthetic judgm of works by such pioneering conc tual artists as Dan Graham, Sol Witt, and Joseph Kosuth, but concentrates on the impresario r played by the New York dealer S Siegelaub. More than any other i vidual, Siegelaub can be credite which is to say, blamed—for open up a gallery market for heav ideational works in the latter thir the twentieth century. Amid swirling confusions of mid-19 New York, where Pop had softe the boundaries of what could be garded as art, Siegelaub was prac ing branding *avant la lettre*, mak his chosen artists into what one them called "the best dishwash liquid around." They were packa and sold to a hungry public ever they created works of vanish ephemerality that couldn't be: g marked in fields, chunks remov from gallery walls, labels and c tracts, magazine ads proclaim themselves the artwork.

If one is inclined to be a little m cynical than Alberro, this marks first coordinated instance of an ex

ce that is now familiar: the art show utright scam. Three decades later, ceptual art has become a winking ilt, a condescending piece of self- ilgence dressed up as a radical chal- ge to the staid old art world, where ngs had to be painted and displayed maybe even the result of talent. ere are exceptions, of course: Yoko o and her Fluxus Movement col- gues, for example, created remark- e works that combined witty intel- nce and arresting beauty even as y played with the very idea of art. now, since Siegelaub, art can be ade" by anyone with sufficient self- ard or lack of shame. Success is ged by degrees of arrogance and self- motion. "He was the advertising ncy," conceptual artist Lawrence einer said of Siegelaub in a 1971 in- view, and it is a mark of how far the rketing techniques of Madison Av- ue have come to dominate the art rld that no one today should be sur- sed by the choice of metaphor. It is fully logical outcome of an art world ed not by aesthetic criteria but by the titutional imperatives of displaying, omoting, buying, and selling. The nceptual artist tells us that the work secondary to its ideas, the experi- ce secondary to the system of com- unication. These moves are swiftly f-defeating, of course, with non- ows of non-works in non-galleries e new norm. They destroy all hu- n connection to the art object and vate the artist as that familiar type, e elitist democrat, who decries the ranny of traditional beauty" in the rvice of a baffled "wider audience."

David Summers's *Real Spaces* arrives on this enervating scene with a loud flourish. Its hibition is nothing less than a com- ehensive theory of art that will, nong other things, dethrone the odern West's habitual assumption cultural superiority. That superior- y has taken many forms, but the ntral expression here is the ursquare "virtual plane" of the can- as, wall, or page: the flat pale surface n which any image can be inked, inted, penciled, or projected. Sum- ers's method has many moving arts, but it is best described as gal- ping aesthetic anthropology, a globe-trotting exercise in vast erudition and dizzy equivalencies. Aztec temples in Central America illustrate the same points as artifacts from ancient Sumeria; twentieth-century abstracts are pushed up against prehistoric cave paintings. The book, sprawling and undisciplined at almost 700 dense pages of history and analysis, offers a repositioning of the very idea of art.

Much of his analysis will be familiar from debates both inside and outside the art-history academy. For instance: The modern art museum or gallery, cornerstone of the art world, is not only of very recent vintage, but it's a particular and skewed temple dedicated to the isolation and display of works. It is the warehouse of the singular genius, dominated by the esoteric and still novel oddity of painting scenes or figures on rectilinear flat surfaces. Objects and creations predating this institution may be brought into it but only by submitting to its insistence on "aesthetic" appreciation independent of other values. Religious and cultural artifacts that might once have signaled the presence of the sacred or the shared are removed from the "real spaces" of their making and displayed and inserted into an arid space of seclusion.

Like Erwin Panofsky, pioneer of the art-historical approach known as iconology (which is accessibly glossed in Michael Frayn's novel *Headlong*), Summers wants to excavate the deeper significance that fashioned objects and structures offered to the people who first lived with and experienced them. These artworks, he argues, created spaces of focused attention, where relationships to land, history, divinity, and destiny were sketched and contemplated. The facts of their making—materials, placement, style, duration—were essential to this function. In the deep connection between makers and made, a dimension of human existence is exposed, a "second nature" that typifies the way a local community or culture understood its relationship to "first nature": earth, mortality, the human body, and consciousness. First nature is invariable, but second nature is realized in multiple forms throughout space and time. Indeed, different notions of space and time are crucial aspects of that variation—the ticking clock and the biaxial geometry of the modern West are merely examples from a large range of options.

Such a notion of art takes the wind out of progressive and anti-progressive sails alike. Art history is not a long narrative of movement from lesser forms to greater ones; that is just the Whiggish arrogance of hindsight. Nor can we declare the end of art history and dismiss the bubble of the contemporary art world as a self-contained, ahistorical realm. The virtual spaces typical of the modern world's art (not to be confused with Modern Art) are themselves attempts to create new real spaces, typically in an art show so crowded it reduces "contemplation" to a quick hip-to-hip shuffle past works obscured by bad haircuts and worse conversation. We go to the Louvre ostensibly to "look at" the *Mona Lisa* but really so we can say we didn't, to have the experience of *not* enjoying its aesthetic qualities while feeling firsthand the impossibility of doing so. Burping crowds, the thick pane of security glass, the long waits on line—all of this forms a real space, too.

The best sections of *Real Spaces* are the final two chapters, in which Summers traces the West's creation of single-point perspective and "metaopticality," or the imaginary grid that extends beyond every picture frame. Perspective doesn't merely revolutionize painting; it opens up a whole new world, creating radically new notions of space, subject, object, location, even identity. The spatiotemporal universe we now inhabit was born in the studios of a few exceptionally talented Italian painters, mathematicians, and lens grinders who laid down the possibility of everything from reliable navigation to the high-precision ballistics of the cruise missile.

This story deserves a book of its own, perhaps many of them. But Summers can dwell only briefly on the genius of Filippo Brunelleschi, Leon Battista Alberti, and their followers as they sketch, then realize, the advantages of coordinate space

and infinite perspective. From Michelangelo's reckless, astonishing frescoes in the Sistine Chapel it was a small step to the frame-flooding moodiness of Caspar David Friedrich, and then, in stages of ever more clever reaction, to the cubist fractures of Braque and Picasso, the playful geometric forms of Mondrian, Pollock's drips, and Reinhardt's eye-filling blackness.

Or consider the page on which these words appear, trailing themselves from top to bottom and left to right—another rectilinear space essential to the modern world's dominance. In Chip Kidd's novel *The Cheese Monkeys*, an imperious graphic-design instructor clarifies for his young pupils the relationship between illustrator and viewers:

> The page, the poster, the surface you are working on. THAT's your territory, and they are going to invade. Fine, let them. That's what you want anyway. But be ready. They are coming from the left. Always, always, always, always!! . . . We are the Western world. We read, see, think. Left. To. Right. We can't help it. You have few givens in this life, in this class. That is one of them. Use it.

All of this is wonderful, if again familiar. But does it deliver the goods we seek? Could a theory of "real spaces" aid us in the age-old task of distinguishing art from non-art? (Not to be confused with the equally ancient task of telling bad art from good.) Could it explain why art seems to matter to us, though we cannot always say why or how? Here it seems the idea of real spaces is not wrong, merely unhelpful. Art history alone cannot resolve the uncomfortable question of what art is or what it means.

In part this is a function of generality. Summers suggests that art is about the peculiar role that made things have in our lives, the way creativity, skill, and gorgeous materials can, in virtuoso combination, establish the ordered spaces of embodied consciousness—that is, you and me as we experience a structured world of up and down, left and right, inside and outside. But the more widely this notion of art is applied, the less critical purchase it seems to have in our world. We live in times of unprecedented image-profusion, a great spasm of pictures and visual stimuli. "We have now become aware of the possibility of arranging the entire human environment as a work of art," Marshall McLuhan and Quentin Fiore said as far back as 1967, in *The Medium Is the Massage*. And yet less and less can we say, with any confidence or happiness, that this image, this one in particular, is laden with the special sort of meaning we seek from art. General scope, for so long the goal of theory, combines with the wide availability of works to become its own worst enemy: the result is the night in which all cows are black.

Maybe this is just a non-problem and any general aesthetic theory a non-solution to it. Maybe all we need to do is relax and surf. Why shouldn't art be whatever anyone says it is? The conceptual artists of the 1960s collapsed the distinction between art and advertising from both sides, making the art world a realm of anti-aesthetic intellectual play where cognition overruled experience, all the while constructing themselves as artful objects of marketing savvy, the artist as brand. They could not quite complete that collapse, since it would have spelled the end of their special status in chains of social-capital exchange. Nor could they entirely follow through on the anti-material logic of conceptualism, which would have eventually rendered the artwork dispensable.

Unfortunately, the end point of conceptual art, namely the non-object non-event, is reached too quickly and too finally: once that happens, there is literally nothing left to say. This horizon is what Jean Baudrillard called "a xerox-degree of culture"—conceptual art's attacks on modernist art institutions and their "aesthetic fascism" simply end up blurring any distinction between art and publicity, art and mass culture, art and everything else. Instead, then, artists continued (and continue) to show their works either in traditional galleries or in installation spaces—parks, traffic intersections, streets—which soon became equally traditional. Paradoxically and predictably, these attempted anti-elitist moves have only sharpened the art world's privileged boundaries with[out] giving art anything much to say [bey]ond the banal tautology that "[a]rt." Conceptual art isn't so much a [c]ideas as it is about the idea of idea[s].

Summers ends up arguing a s[im]larly empty conclusion. Anyth[ing] can be, indeed has been, art. [B]ut with this claim, anthropological [u]versalism collapses under its [o]weight. This overarching histor[ic]ing denies what might be the [re]maining element of truth in [o]fashioned aesthetic philosop[hy], namely, that there is something [pa]ticular in artworks that makes th[em] artworks. Summers wants to br[eak] the Western prejudice that th[ey] are only art when viewed for t[heir] aesthetic qualities alone, which c[on]fines art to the austere precinc[ts] the museum or the gallery. It's [t]that this prejudice robs sacred [ob]jects of their original function [of] placement; it's also true that it [can] lead to a dominance by what Da[nto] called "arrogant Kantians." So w[ell]. Maybe there is a defensible narra[tive] in artistic endeavor after all, wh[ich] by the creation of things simply [for] their interesting play of beau[ty], ideas, and resonances is what w[e've] been struggling toward all along.

That is precisely the sort of thi[ng] respectable academic art histor[y] does not say these days, but ev[en] now and then his desires, like [all] our own when wandering the galle[ries] and streets, surface nonetheless. [To] my ear, the strongest echo in Su[m]mers's notion of real spaces is Ma[rtin] Heidegger, courtier of Nazism [and] critic of technology, whose gnom[ic] 1936 essay on "The Origin of [the] Work of Art" is worth considering again. Heidegger sees the work of [art] in its material form. But this conn[ec]tion to the earth is extended by [the] artwork's ability to force a clearing [in] the everyday exchanges of existe[nce]. The artwork presents no particular truth—it does not "mean" someth[ing] or other. Rather, it offers the deep[er] truth of Being, a moment of reflect[ion] on the fact that there is someth[ing] rather than nothing. This is wh[at] Heidegger means by art's ability [to] open up a world, to illuminate [the] fourfold structure of earth, sky, m[or]tals, and gods: "By the opening up[en]

ld, all things gain their lingering
nastening, their remoteness and
ness, their scope and limits. . . . A
, by being a work, makes space
nat spaciousness." Uselessness is
he artwork's essence but is an
rtant aspect of its otherness, its
y to arrest our attention. Art is
a piece of equipment but a slab of
ence. The authentic work there-
obtrudes upon our field of expe-
e, forcing a confrontation with
der. Instead of the curiosity and
el of the spectacle-soaked every-
world, instead of the play of
ıp novelty and distracting im-
we confront an existential insis-
e on the question of *what it*
is to be here.

ummers distances himself from
degger, citing the German
osopher's "primitivizing" and un-
sant politics. He might also have
tioned the overly negative view
echnology. But he should not be
asty, or so ungrateful. Heidegger
rs, in just a few pages, what Sum-
s tries and fails to provide in an
ire book: a sustained thought
ut the wonder of art. We seek
der fitfully and with misgiving,
quently disappointed and even
e frequently distracted by the
ering of critics and theorists, but
ehow we still know it when we
it: the staggered attention, the
ring of thought, and the shock of
ognition that a work of art alone
kes possible. Historical compre-
siveness, analytic precision, and
ceptual shenanigans all fail to il-
ıinate this fully. They can, at
t, weave a discursive web around
outlining the mysterious space of
s work. Only art itself can open
that space from within. Art, like
sciousness, cannot be translated
o any terms other than its own. ■

**swers to July Quiz, "Babbling
"**

1492; **2** Egyptian hieroglyphics; **3**
in; **4** F. B. Morse; **5** Los Angeles;
George Bernard Shaw; **7** Braille; **8**
uth Korea; **9** Esperanto; **10** Jimmy
rter and Ronald Reagan, respec-
ely; **11** India; **12** Urdu; **13** A riot;
W. H. Auden.

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SOLUTION TO THE JULY PUZZLE

R	E	S	T	I	N	G	A	S	T	I	N	G	E	R
E	■	P	■	R	■	O	■	A	■	D	■	L	■	I
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E	R	A	S	I	N	G	T	G	A	I	N	E	R	S

NOTES FOR "FINDING THE RIGHT WORD":

The right word is ANGRIEST.

Puzzle editing by Dan Asimov.

Anagrams are indicated with an asterisk (*)

ACROSS: A. era-sing; B. Ga-in-ER's; C. re-Tina's; D. stag-i.e.-r; E. G.(ran-it)E.; F. t(ie-dyed)-easing; G. na(rev.)-s.-tier; H. sting(1)er; I. st-range; J. gaiters, a-tigres(s)*; K. star(r)ing; L. ingesta (hidden); M. in-grate (inn-great); N. re-sting; O. (g)ratings; P. gar-nets.

DOWN: 1. (p)resenting; 2. spat (rev.); 3. iritis (hidden); 4. gore, two mngs.; 5. S.A.G.-a; 6. idiots*; 7. glean*; 8. (aste)risk; 9. S.U.(rev.)-Gary; 10. reassess, two mngs.; 11. retest*; 12. sag, (rev.); 13. l-i-on; 14. stern, two mngs.; 15. atria, (hidden); 16. leaguers*; 17. B-rogue; 18. p(I)rate; 19. ti-a-r(ing)-a (rev.); 20. sting(y); 21. m(in)'I(rev.); 22. ugli (hidden)*; 23. e.g-G(oth).

MR. SIMMONS TAKES A PRISONER

By Deb Olin Unferth

Mr. Simmons was not a family man.

This, although he had a family. A wife, two daughters. A large apartment to put them in. A dog. He felt attached to them (fuzzy headed, waving from a distance), as he did to certain household kinks—the sticky lock, the weak showerhead. Comfortable inconveniences, he might say. He preferred the empty office on Sundays to the fussy kitchen at home. He didn't heft a pine up the steps at Christmas, perform science experiments with lightbulbs and tinfoil, romp off to the corner store for snacks. No bike rack on the Toyota, no ski trips, no corn in the city of Chicago community garden. He worked late, told the kids to cut the racket at dinner, read political magazines before bed. He sighed heavily, slammed the refrigerator door when the kids asked for cash or keys. But Mr. Simmons wasn't cruel. He never beat his family or tossed them down the stairs.

The younger Simmons daughter entered college, and the apartment grew quiet. He kept to his routine. To his surprise his wife went out and got a teaching certificate and within a year had a classroom of ten-year-olds. Each morning she left earlier than he, left him to rinse his cereal bowl alone. In her absence, he walked through rooms spread out and white, felt the air around him, poked his head into the abandoned bathroom by the kids' rooms—folded towels, wrapped soap, clean tiles. He thought irritably, "Why do we need such a big apartment?"

This was the first thing. Then, new emotions. His wife spoke endlessly on the phone to the girls, left Mr. Simmons to wait his turn to talk, helpless, dying as he stood there, yes, each moment another moment lost. Finger drumming, heavy sighs, wild hand signals to no avail. She finally handed him the phone. He didn't have anything to say.

Or when his elder announced she was moving to San Francisco with her husband, he was stunned.

"You're leaving with that truck driver?"

"He's an environmental lawyer."

"I'd like to see him fit a tie around that thick neck," he said.

Minor outbursts like these increased. The family backed off in bewilderment, then ignored him.

The day after his daughter moved, he woke, put his feet in his slippers, and went looking for the dog. A bit old now, the pooch. "Here boy," he called, patted his leg, whistled. The dog limped over. "Treat? Treat?" he said. In the kitchen he fed it a puppy biscuit, tossed it the squeaky toy [illegible] waved from the door as he lef[t] work. "Good boy. Sit." That nigh[t] carried the dog into the bedroom [illegible]

"Thought the old mutt ma[y] well stay with us tonight," he sai[d]

"Won't your allergies bother y[ou]" his wife asked, looking over her b[ook]

"What allergies?"

"Your allergies. You know," [he] said, "allergies."

Years before he must have lie[d] keep the dog out of the bedro[om] He shooed it into [the] hall.

He knew plenty of wome[n] A proper jacket, one hand presse[d] the small of her back, the other [ra]ed to summon a taxi, her dress s[pi]ning in a slow circle. But most o[f] women he knew were his w[ife's] friends—painted cracked lips, p[ur]ed hair. They had stopped talkin[g] him beyond the required nice[ties] years ago.

He watched the women at w[ork] They strolled through the hallw[ays] with files tucked under their a[rms] studied the bulletin board in [the] lunchroom. He pretended t[o be] busy with the coffeemaker. [He] couldn't approach.

His younger daughter arrived [for] visit. He followed her from roo[m to] room, knocked on her door w[hen] she shut it.

"What do they have you rea[ding]

Deb Olin Unferth teaches at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. She has recently completed her first collection of stories and is at work on a novel.

chool?" he asked, leaning in ugh the doorway.

he sat on the floor, held the dog's with both hands and cocked it k and forth. "Nothing you'd be rested in," she said.

What makes you think I'm not rested?" he asked. "I'm not an insting enough person to be interd?" He turned on his heel. "I ext a list by suppertime!"

ater in bed, he explained the ter to his wife in a diplomatic e, "It doesn't matter what she ls. She has her life, I have mine. it should be."

Then don't make such a fuss next time," his wife said and snapped off the light.

A pivotal moment is imminent, . Simmons thought, marching o the lunchroom. A notice tacked the board read like a personal ssage: ILLINOIS PRISONER REFORM SOCIATION. An ink drawing of a n in a studious pose over a book. . Simmons leaned closer. The tion read, BRING HOPE, ALLENGE, REWARD. An) number below.

Back at his desk, he made ttle square out of pens. A soner, he thought. I ght like that. He called e number.

The meeting was held in hurch basement. Crayon awings of bulbous people ving stick hands hung on e wall. Mr. Simmons balced on a chair for a dget and listened to the ader of the reform group ll stories about grateful soners getting diplomas, rning Chinese. Mr. Simons filled out the questonnaire, received his cket, group philosophy, tivity suggestions.

And a week later Sally Baum, num-r 8745.

A woman. At a women's prison. ow about that?

Mr. Simmons looked in the mir-r, wearing a smart blue suit and a ack tie. He stood at different anes, pointed at himself, rubbed his in thoughtfully. He stripped down to his boxers, walked back and forth, waved and smiled like a politician. He put on black pants and a tweed jacket. He brought his head up close to the mirror and studied his scalp. He slapped on a cap.

Two guards patted him, swiped at him with a metal detector, made him turn out his pockets. The prisoners were easy to distinguish in their blue uniforms. They bounced kids on their laps, leaned across the table to speak quietly.

A guard touched a woman's arm and pointed at Mr. Simmons. She walked over. Thirty maybe, thirty-five. Sat down in front of him. She wasn't pretty. An amorphous sexual fantasy about a helpless beauty and himself, hatted, faded.

"I'm Mr. Simmons from the Prisoner Reform Association," he said.

"You got any stamps?" she asked.

"I have some at home," he said. "I could send some."

"That'd be great," she said. "I could use some stamps."

"I'll send some."



She fiddled with her hands in her lap.

"Cigarettes?" she asked.

"I don't smoke," he admitted. He cleared his throat.

She stared at him from under ragged bangs. "I sold drugs," she said. "I get out in two more years."

He was relieved. He believed vaguely in drug legalization. "I'll send those stamps," he said.

I wonder if she likes to read, he thought as he watched the steel gate clang between them.

In the week between the first and second visit, Mr. Simmons compiled a list of books. He consulted his library, strained to remember the college classics. She'll round out her education, he thought.

He called his older daughter to ask if she had any ideas about books he should add. He read the list to her over the phone.

"A Latin grammar?" she repeated.

"Once she knows the roots, any romance language . . ."

She interrupted with a sigh.

He crossed out "Latin" and wrote "Spanish." He called his younger daughter to ask her opinion.

"Why didn't you ever give me a reading list?" she demanded.

"I'm sure I did," he said. "I suggest books all the time."

"No, Dad," she said. "You always act like I just spit on the floor."

Mr. Simmons was deeply offended.

"See? You're doing it now. I can hear through the phone. I just spit on the floor."

Mr. Simmons brought cigarettes. He wasn't allowed to bring in paper, so he memorized the reading list and recited it.

"Which one do you like best?" she asked.

"I didn't put my favorites on the list," he admitted. "They're a bit difficult. Marcel Proust. Thomas Mann."

"Better get me those," Ms. Baum said. She reached for a cigarette.

He went home and found his wife in the kitchen fixing dinner.

"She wants to read Proust," he said. "I think she's quite bright."

His wife stopped chopping onions and stared at him.

"I wonder if she went to college," he said.

She switched on the food processor.

Mr. Simmons asked Ms. Baum about the book he had sent from the bookstore. "It's all right," she said. A little wheedling and he confirmed his suspicion that she only had a high school diploma.

"How would you like to take a college class?" he asked. "Something simple to start, like composition or beginning math." He paused, gathered courage. "I'd be happy to pay for a correspondence course."

She spun the pack of Camels in a circle.

"You can think about it," he said.

"Math."

Mr. Simmons had to admit: something about his time at the prison was satisfying, like crossing items off a list or winning at backgammon. He learned the visitors' rules, told them to his wife, chuckling. He could have nothing in his pockets, he said. No wallet, no keys, no pens. Only unopened cigarette packs and quarters for the vending machine. And No Blue Shirt—they might confuse him with a prisoner. Books could only be sent directly from a bookstore, new. She couldn't receive maps, not even of France. In case she dug a hole to Europe.

Ms. Baum could quote the rules like a sports announcer: "We're allowed three electronic appliances in our rooms. I've got a TV and a heating pad—for my back, you know. A VCR would make the third. If I had one."

Mr. Simmons visited Ms. Baum on Sundays. On Tuesdays, he sent her stamps and enclosed notes with them, perfunctory little letters, lists of ideas to consider, practical matters she might attend to. If she was beginning college, she ought to think about a major. If she would be released in two short years, she should think about employment opportunities. Did she have a Social Security card? Did she remember how to fill out a job application? He had taken the liberty of making up some sample job applications for her to practice on. See pages enclosed.

At visits, they talked about the letters.

"Those job applications," she said. "Yes? Did you have a look at them?"

"What do I say when they ask if I committed a felony?" she asked.

"In my opinion," he said, "impolite questions don't deserve a response."

Ms. Baum found her correspondence class difficult. Percents stumped her. Fractions made her panic. Mr. Simmons helped her as much as he could without using pen and paper in the visiting room. Finally he ordered his own copy of the book and wrote out some of the exercises for her, sent them in the mail.

He wrote her about the technical video company he worked for. "I personally invented all their filing systems," he wrote. "Where would they be without my organizational expertise? In a very messy corner, I can assure you." He wrote about his wife and daughters, about the time he sent his younger to France. "Poor little thing was scared, only fourteen. She didn't speak the language. She refused to go, made a big to-do with a social worker at school. But I forced her. Who complains about going to France? She had a wonderful time *and* learned French. But ever since," he wrote wistfully, "she's snubbed me like an ugly suitor. Was I wrong?"

He sent copies of the letters to his daughters. "Perhaps you should write to Ms. Baum," he suggested when they called. "She needs human contact."

"When was the last time you wrote me a letter?" the older one demanded.

"It was Spain, Dad, not France," the younger one sighed. "I speak Spanish. God."

He was pleased: they had called to talk to him.

Ms. Baum told him stories about her ex-husband who introduced her to drugs, and her baby girl, not a baby anymore, eight years old, in Florida with an ex-boyfriend's mother. Did she have any brothers or sisters? She had a brother. "He shot himself. A few months after I was arrested. I didn't get to go to the funeral."

Mr. Simmons shook his head, patted her hand shyly.

He sent Ms. Baum piles of books, all his favorites. He reread them, jotting notes on a yellow pad, ideas they might discuss. Along with his usual letters and stamps, he sent cartons of cigarettes, tins of fancy crabmeat, boxes of chocolate, and, a few times, cash for her to spend at the canteen. [illegible] lay in bed and dreamed. A parad[e] Ms. Baums marched down the [a]venue, held aloft diplomas, aprons [a]rakes, books and violins. Reun[ited] loved ones twirled batons and wa[ved] to cheering crowds. At the podi[um] the original Ms. Baum introdu[ced] him. Mr. Simmons spoke, sh[ook] hands with the mayor. His wife [and] daughters stood to the [side] smiled for the cameras.

Then one Sunday, he arrive[d] the prison and Sally Baum was g[one].

"Released," said the guard at [the] front desk.

"How can she be?" Mr. Simm[ons] asked. "She had another year [and] two months . . ."

"Released."

Mr. Simmons turned, ga[ped] mouthed, and looked behind hi[m] the long line of boyfriends and m[other]ers. He squared shoulders and jaw [and] marched past them.

At home, his wife was out, hadn't [left] a note. He called the Reform Ass[o]ciation. "My prisoner is gone. Releas[ed]."

"That's fine," the woman said. "[We] have a long list."

What sort of crappy system [lets] people go without properly paying [for] their crimes? He took the initiat[ive] to write the warden his though[ts]. "How do we expect our criminals [to] learn respect for a government t[hat] says one thing and does another? H[u]man law is not God's law. It is [not] based on grace and forgiveness [but] on transaction and fulfillment [of] contract," he wrote on his new l[et]form Association letterhead. "I assure you Ms. Baum will want [to] finish her sentence on principle. S[he] will not walk with dignity given [the] present circumstances. When [you] hear from Ms. Baum, tell her I *m[ust]* speak with her."

If Ms. Baum had stayed in the ar[ea], she clearly wasn't taking the bus. S[he] didn't have a job in any of the con[ve]nience stores in Rogers Park, but L[au]ra Baum and Larry Baum, both un[re]lated, did, along with several wom[en] who looked vaguely like her. In a pa[rk]ing lot, one woman screamed wh[en] he grabbed her arm.

She may have returned the boo[ks], sold the stamps, made a fortune, a[nd]

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split for New Guinea. He'd be getting a postcard any day now: *The sailboat is ready. Come . . .* Would he leave his wife and children? Certainly not. She'd have to return before he'd even speak to her. "After all I've taught you," he'd say, shaking his head. "At least *that* you should know."

Or perhaps she watched him each morning as he left for work, stood with her back against the bricks, peered around the corner as he stepped off the curb. One day she'd step out, appear before him. "Why, it's Ms. Baum," he'd say to her shy smile. Every morning he paused on the front step, rocked on his heels, whistled, waited.

He drove to the small town in southern Illinois where Ms. Baum had mentioned her mother lived. He walked from feed store to grocery to bank. Placed his palms on counters and asked, "Have you seen Ms. Sally Baum?" He drove home alone in the rain.

"Heard from Houdini?" his wife asked over dinner.

"I'll have you know I'm very concerned for her welfare," he said. "And I will not put up with this scrutinizing my every move."

He didn't think it strange to hire a private investigator. After all, anything might have happened. She may have fallen in a ditch, could be lying there now, she may have hit her head, been kidnapped—Lord knows what lunatic friends of her dead brother might be out prowling the streets. After all, he thought, sliding Ms. Baum's prison Christmas picture into a manila envelope, what function does man serve other than to ensure his wards do not topple out of windows or off of bridges? After all, he thought when the call came in (Logan Diner, four to midnight shift, back-door exit), a man must keep track of his charges' coordinates on this wretched lonely tossing sea. After all, he thought, trembling in his light coat, foot-planted, near to midnight by the back-door dumpster, it isn't as though he had specifically told her to contact him in the event of her release. It isn't as though they had a plan.

The door swung open. A rectangle of light, then she stepped out.

"Sally."

She started. "Mr. Simmons!" wore a beige uniform, tugged a ja around her. "You gave me a scare

"I'm sorry," he said.

"What are you doing here?"

"I've been looking for you."

"You have?" She looked up down the alley. "You want mone

His mind went blank. "Money

"For the books and stamps."

"No—"

"I know I owe you."

"No. No."

"Oh," she said. Her eyes narrow "Then what do you want?"

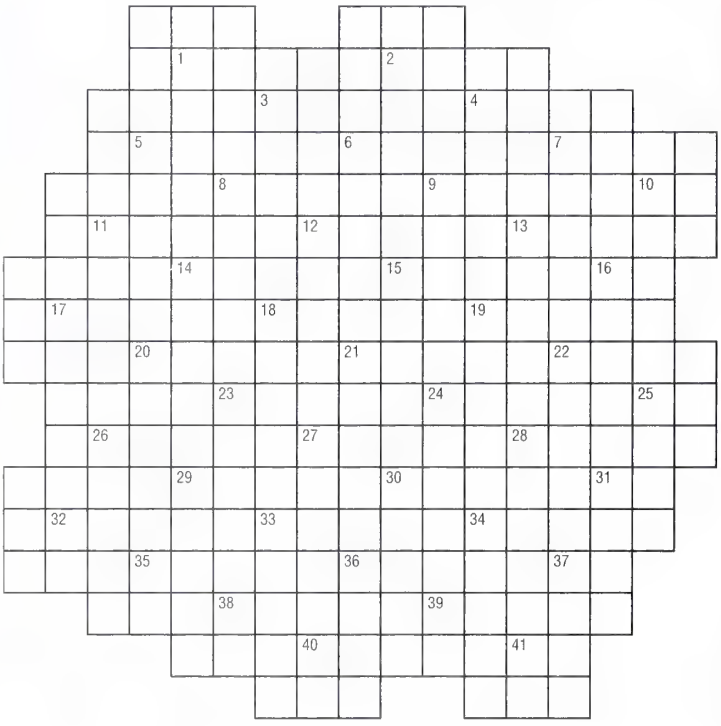
Suddenly he was very small. He way down there by the dumpsters, l ly recognizable—a man in a coat, h in his pockets, a plain, dull womar fore him. The man lifted his ha stepped forward—in explanation gesture? in a long, heady reach? — "No, you don't understand—"

August Index Sources

1 International Institute for Strategic S ies (London)/U.S. Office of Manager and Budget; **2** U.S. Department of Defe **3** International Institute for Strategic S ies; **4** U.S. General Accounting Offic United for a Fair Economy (Boston); **6** S Bureau of Labor Statistics; **7** National C ference of State Legislatures (Denver)/ per's research; **8** The Center for Public tegrity (Washington); **9** U.S. Departm of the Treasury; **10** Emory University lanta); **11** Bucks County Community Co (Newtown, Pa.); **12** Cadbury (Bourn U.K.); **13** Samantha Heller, New York versity Medical Center (N.Y.C.); **14** tional Institute of Standards and Techno (Washington); **15** NASA Jet Propul Laboratory (Pasadena, Calif.); **16** San F cisco Department of the Environment Field Poll (San Francisco); **18** Federal ation Administration (Washington); **19** The Center for Public Integrity (Wash ton); **21,22** eBay Inc. (San Jose, Calif.) Lawyers.com (N.Y.C.); **24** Barna Rese Group Ltd. (Ventura, Calif.); **25** *The Chr icle of Philanthropy* (Washington); **26** A G. Breed, Associated Press (Raleigh, N. **27** Horowitz & White (Denver); **28** C of the State of Rio Grande do Sul (P Alegre, Brazil); **29** U.S. Bureau for Inte tional Narcotics and Law Enforcement fairs (Washington); **30,31** Jonathan Fi *Washington Post*; **32,33** Carnegie End ment for International Peace (Washingt **34,35** United Nations (N.Y.C.)/NATO tegrated Data Service (Brussels); **36** W Health Organization (Geneva); **37** M ers Against Drunk Driving (Irving, Te **38,39** National Highway Traffic Safety ministration (Washington)

Dressed to the Nines

By Richard E. Maltby Jr.
(with acknowledgments to Jackdaw of The Listener*)*



Each numbered square is the center square of a block of nine. Each answer is nine letters long and is to be entered in its appropriate block, the first letter in the numbered square and the rest around it, in correct sequence, in either direction starting at any appropriate square.

As an extra aid, the six extreme-most letters on each side can be rearranged to spell: FOES CUBE UP ADDITIONAL TEXT.

There are no uncommon words or proper names. As always, mental repunctuation of a clue is the key to its solution. The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 85.

CLUES

1. Big covering of ground can produce first down
2. Gas station oil, perhaps with backrub, in a layer!
3. It's big blooming fun, dancing in duller surroundings
4. Add spices before time for preparing game?
5. Shakespeare gets sick with ticket sales advertising for movers
6. Mixed audience takes Latin from a mathematician
7. Register for singers: perversely, a groove is certain
8. Vehicle maneuvering right around a Gallant
9. Hydrogen involved in sporadic shot over the moon
10. Former Penthouse Girl swallows line I have—#$%&$#$!!!
11. I will, for example, tear the cover off a great book that's impossible to read
12. "I've changed," claims the old quack
13. Lord announced no bids during auction for tops
14. Mickey's third, Ava Gardner, initially remains embracing, then splits
15. Impatience with topless girl's meanness
16. Bad joints he will cheer in high school
17. Once again came across moved
18. A girl taking time to go after fat guys who like spare ribs (figuratively)?
19. Doctor, single, was part of the dinner setting
20. Pugnacious CEO's libel processes
21. Like *A Man Without a Country* but, say, not as important
22. Specially-outfitted limo (in the vernacular) for getting down with Gates!
23. Break down and say bad things about famous #7?
24. In Handel, e.g., a *Te Deum* imparted power
25. It can fertilize living fruit
26. Louses correctly bracing at following Republican clone
27. Scanner group of doctors operated is one way to stay afloat
28. Remains unmoved as single man put article back
29. Concealing weapon, I exhausted good taste
30. Well-groomed guy I made healthy
31. Heads communicate storied way to reach the clouds
32. Create acts in which one group running gets leg up!
33. Fine navy man for holding second-rate starting exercises
34. Stop being taken in by ruses involving consequences
35. A torn leaf outside where you come from
36. Number finally able to be extracted—like 4/8
37. Model so antique there are two sides to them
38. Informed on lightweight in *Dead End*
39. Curling to dueling, it stretches between two poles
40. Moral erosion ten years before new Christian Era
41. Shot at, too, in gun stores, making a show of arms, perhaps?

Contest Rules: Send completed diagram with name and address to "Dressed to the Nines," *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Entries must be received by August 14. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive one-year subscriptions to *Harper's Magazine*. Winners' names will be printed in the October issue. Winners of the June puzzle, "Save One for Me," are Vincent Daly, Baltimore; Barbara Edelstein, Philadelphia; and Douglas Smith, Ann Arbor, Michigan.



LABOR PAINS

1. What eighteenth-century Philadelphia tradesmen were the first U.S. workers to unionize?

2. What group of European-American adults and minors constituted the majority of workers in the country's first factories?

3. U.S. troops teargassed a Washington, D.C., shantytown built to demand promised bonus pay by U.S. veterans of what war?

4. Which of these future generals took part in the gassing: Douglas MacArthur, Dwight D. Eisenhower, George S. Patton?

5. According to a congressional committee, how many state or local police departments bought more military supplies in the late 1930s than Republic Steel did to combat strikers?

6. Which came first—a record strike of 20,000 New York City garment workers or the Triangle Shirtwaist fire, in which employer abuse and negligence killed 146 workers?

7. What U.S. president made Labor Day a national holiday six days after ordering 12,000 federal troops to break up a strike by railroad workers?

8. What future U.S. president called unemployment insurance "a pre-paid vacation for freeloaders" in 1966?

9. What U.S. labor activist who inspired a folk ballad advised on the eve of his execution, "Don't waste any time in mourning—organize"?

10. For what elective office did labor leader Eugene V. Debs win 920,000 votes in 1920 while imprisoned for sedition?

11. For what New York newspaper was Karl Marx a foreign correspondent while writing *Das Kapital*?

12. Fill in the blanks in this quote from nineteenth-century railroad baron Jay Gould: "I can hire one —— of the working class to kill the other ——"?

13. What African-American author and activist wrote, "Modern imperialism and modern industrialism are one and the same system"?

14. What group of American adults remain specifically exempted from the Constitution's Thirteenth Amendment ban on slavery?

Contest Rules: Send numbered answers with name and address to "Quiz," Harper's Magazine, 666 Broadway, New York, NY 10012. If you already subscribe to Harper's, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Entries must be received by August 14. The sender of the first correct set of answers opened at random will receive a one-year subscription to Harper's Magazine. The winner's name will be printed in the October issue. The answers to last month's quiz, "Babbling On," appear on page 85. The winner of the June Quiz, "I Do Knots," is Sally Jacoby, Durham, N. H. The winner of the May Quiz, "I Spy," is John Winer, Haverhill, Mass.

Research by Andre Picher. Illustration by Ralph Ke

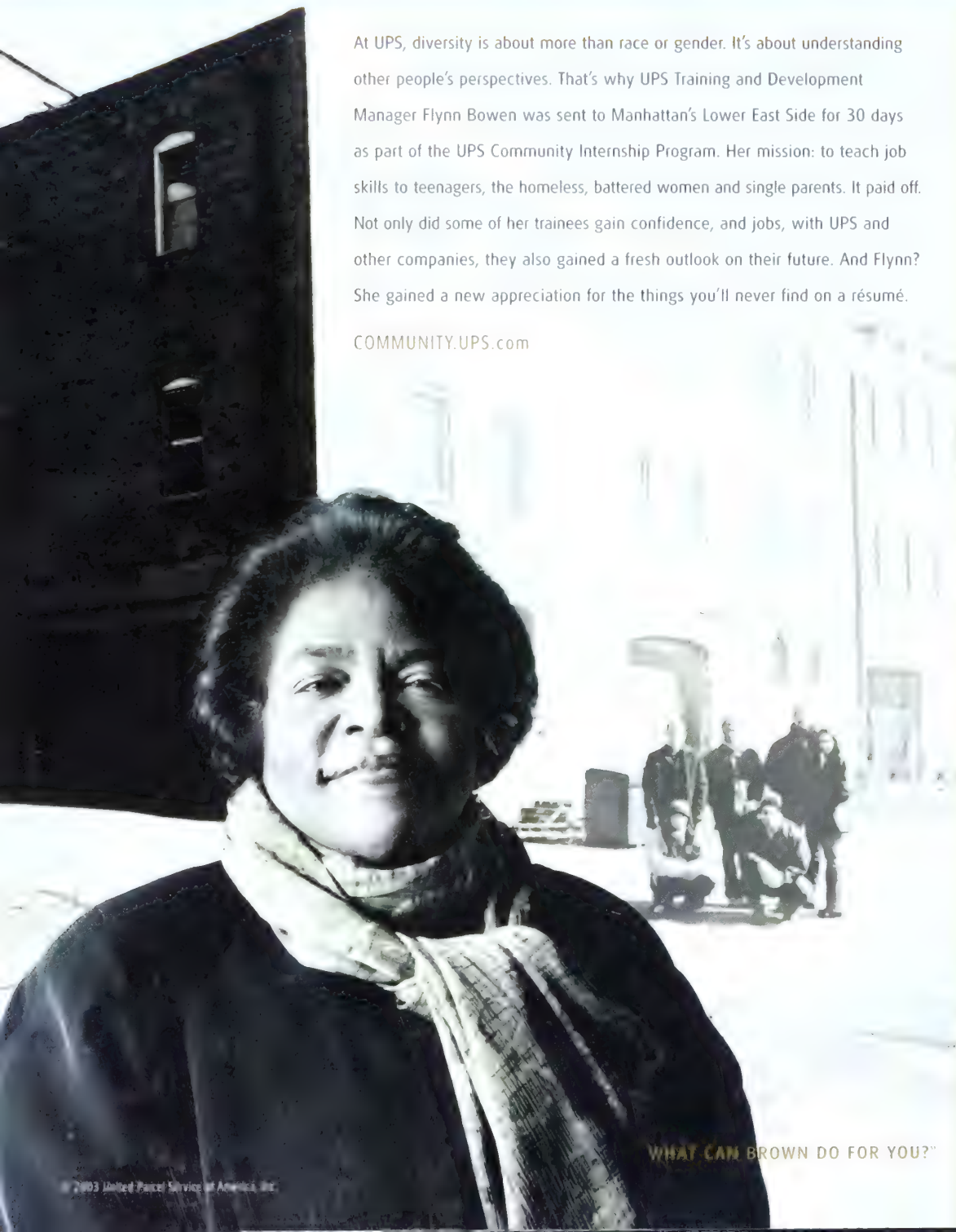


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LETTERS

The Economics of Poverty

William Finnegan's report ["The Economics of Empire," May] is a plea for a world economic order in which poor countries and poor people get a much greater share of global wealth and its benefits. Nobody disagrees with that objective. The implication of his argument, however—that poor countries are victims of a "conspiracy-led" global economy—is wrong-headed. The development lesson of the past forty years is clear: countries that have actively engaged in the global economy, including through trade, have been the most successful at reducing poverty and increasing prosperity for their people. The East Asian nations, which have lifted hundreds of millions out of poverty, are an outstanding example, and there are many others.

According to Finnegan, the World Bank espouses trade policies that benefit only rich countries. Yet the Bank has been among the strongest and most consistent advocates of greater access to northern markets for developing countries. Finnegan also claims that the main beneficiaries of our work are multinational corporations, yet he neglects to mention that the Bank is the largest single external provider of resources to developing countries for primary education, basic health care, AIDS prevention, and environmental protection. Finally, Finnegan argues that there has been no progress in reducing poverty and that "the World Bank's declared mission . . . has been a bust so far." In fact, using indicators such as life expectancy, incomes, literacy, and access to clean water, more people have been lifted out of poverty over the past forty years than at any comparable time in human history.

Finnegan is right that a billion people still struggle to survive on a dollar a day, and we agree that this is unacceptable. That is why, as the world's largest international development organization, we are strongly supporting the Millennium Development Goals with the objective of cutting the poverty rate in half by 2015. It is a complex challenge, and we certainly do not have all the answers. But as our 184 member governments recognize, the Bank is part of the solution.

Gerry Rice
The World Bank
Washington, D.C.

William Finnegan responds:

I'm not sure what a "conspiracy-led" global economy is. I've never

Harper's Magazine welcomes reader response. Please address mail to Letters, Harper's Magazine, 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012, or email us at letters@harpers.org. Short letters are more likely to be published, and all letters are subject to editing. Volume precludes individual acknowledgment.

l the term. There are stronger weaker players in the global nomy, and the World Bank is, in ıy ways, a powerful player. The ral question about the Bank has ays been: Who is it actually king for? The Bank may consider f "part of the solution" to global erty, but calling its 184 member ernments as witnesses to this m is disingenuous. Decision-king power at the Bank is not dis-uted equally. The Bank operates poor countries on instructions n rich countries, and the latter ıt to see a return on their invest-nt. Generalizations about "mem-governments" are misleading.

Some of the best-informed and st disturbing studies of the Bank's ectiveness at poverty reduction ve actually been performed by the nk itself. A comprehensive report olished by the Bank's Operations aluation Department in 2000 ob-ved that "insufficient attention s been paid to ensuring that lend-for social services actually bene-s the poor." The Bank's research department has consistently found that the rapid development of oil, gas, and mining in poor countries leads not to prosperity but to war, corruption, environmental destruction, and even exacerbated poverty. And yet the Bank, unable to change what its own officers call the "culture of loan approval," retains close and mutually profitable relationships with multinational corporations and continues to push rapid, extractive development. It contributed, for example, $180 million to a 660-mile oil pipeline built by ExxonMobil and other companies that will run from Chad to the coast of Cameroon and is scheduled to start pumping this year.

It's true that the Bank has been calling for greater access for developing countries to rich-country markets. Unfortunately, rich-country governments have no reason to heed such calls. The Bank has no clout in their capitals. If the Bank wanted to advocate seriously on behalf of poor countries in the crucial area of trade, it would challenge hypocritical free-trade orthodoxy and bless selective protection of vulnerable industries in the developing world.

This is where Mr. Rice's citation of East Asia's economic successes takes gall. East Asian countries have prospered, in large part, by *defying* the dictates of the Bank and its partners, the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization. My report told this story in some detail. Suffice it to say that the countries in question protected markets, directed investment, and provided free and universal education and health care. The Bank's ideology militates against all these policies, and its programs in education and health care, for instance, are controversial precisely because they introduce user fees for schools and primary health services.

Countries benefit from trade openness only after they have reached a certain level of development. Yet the Bank continues to push privatization, the elimination of social subsidies, and trade openness on poor countries, even where the impact of these



policies on poor people has been shown to be destructive. As always, the question arises: Who is the Bank really working for?

Finally, is world poverty decreasing? As a percentage of population, the number of those living on less than a dollar a day has indeed decreased. At the same time, the absolute number of such desperately poor people has increased. The question can be argued either way. What seems clear is that the World Bank should not be taking credit for the progress made against poverty in East Asia or anywhere.

Smoke Screed

Lewis Lapham's tirade against New York City's Smoke-Free Air Act ["Social Hygiene," Notebook, July] is long on misguided theory and short on fact. Secondhand smoke kills. Last year the World Health Organization confirmed that secondhand smoke causes cancer. And even the 1993 EPA study Lapham cites concluded that secondhand smoke is a Class A carcinogen responsible for the deaths of 3,000 nonsmokers annually. Virtually every respected national and international scientific organization, based on reviews of all available data, has concluded that secondhand smoke causes cancer, heart disease, asthma, lung infections, and low birth weight, among other health problems.

Nor is concern about secondhand smoke "elitist"; it is an issue of workers' rights. The New York City law is based on the simple premise that one person's right to smoke does not override another person's right to breathe smoke-free air on the job. Lapham and others fail to recognize that their places of entertainment are other people's places of employment. Those who benefit most from New York City's smoke-free laws are the more than 400,000 nonsmoking bar and restaurant employees, who are disproportionately African-American, Latino, and lower income.

Years from now, we will look back on the smoke-free legisl. passed in New York City and where, and wonder why we pe ted bar and restaurant workers exposed to other people's tob. smoke for so long, even afte knew it was harmful to their he.

Thomas R. Frieden
Commissioner, Department Health
New York City

Contrary to Lewis Lapham's tion that attempts to classify sec hand smoke as a "weapon of mas struction" have failed, we *can* lear harmful substances by check health and mortality data. About years ago, the English surgeon P vall Pott noted a higher frequen scrotal cancer among chimney swe and concluded that there was so thing carcinogenic in soot. Wh new angiosarcoma appeared am railroad and factory workers w handled vinyl chloride regularly,

Continued on pag

Edward Tufte, The Cognitive Style of PowerPoint



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NOTEBOOK

Wild West show

By Lewis H. Lapham

is not easy in any given case—indeed is at times impossible until the courts ve spoken—to say whether it is an in- nce of praiseworthy salesmanship or penitentiary offense.

—Thorstein Veblen

When President George W. ush moved into the White House n the winter of 2001, he let it be nown that he intended to run the overnment as if it were a business, nd two years later I don't know why comes as a surprise that the ten- ear federal budget projection has een reduced from a $5.6 trillion urplus to a $4 trillion deficit, or that ur splendid little war in Iraq turns ut to have been sold to the Ameri- an public in the manner of a well- romoted but fraudulent stock offer- ng. The man has been true to his ord, the corporation of which he eems himself chairman and chief xecutive officer not unlike the ones ormerly owned and operated by his riends, fund-raisers, and fellow ban- lits at Enron and Arthur Andersen. The administration's economic and nilitary schemes rely for their suc- ess on budget analysts who recon- igure debt as credit, on auditors at he intelligence agencies who rig heir balance sheets with sham ransactions (for African uranium), alse data (establishing Saddam Hus- ein's connection to Al Qaeda), off- shore special-purpose entities (to ontain the otherwise invisible weapons of mass destruction).

The acknowledgment in early July of the president's misstatement about the African uranium prompted the members of Washington's politi- cal theater company to strike strong poses of indignation and dismay, to call for congressional investigations, and to bat the tennis balls of blame around the Sunday talk-show circuit. Condoleezza Rice, the national security adviser, told the cameras at FOX News that the suspect information had come from the British government; on NBC's *Meet the Press* as well as on ABC's *This Week,* Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld said that "it's not known" what is or was "inaccurate," and to watch the ministers of state search for ways around the truth was to be reminded of the swarm of thieving corporate executives hustled into courtrooms over the last two years in the hope that they might recall what happened to Global Crossing's once-upon-a-time $47.6 billion of market value or to the 59,000 employees who used to work for Kmart. Nine times out of ten they met the questions with answers matched in quality to Vice President Dick Cheney's best guess as to the whereabouts of Osama bin Laden.

Because the Bush Administration's modus operandi resembles that of a corrupt monopoly (publicly owned but privately managed), much of its domestic and foreign policy can be understood in terms of the hidden surcharge and the dishonest annual report. Fraud is another word for freedom, "to make a killing" the highest form of patriotism or praise. Mark up the price of the American military occupation of Iraq from $2 billion to $4 billion a month, or guide WorldCom into the desert of a $9 billion accounting error, and whether it is Donald Rumsfeld or Bernard Ebbers explaining the arithmetic to Tim Russert or a judge, the story follows a by now familiar script—the once trusted brand-name corporation becomes entangled in the nets of perjury and graft, assets worth $100 million depart for points unknown, the stock price falls from $95 to 30 cents a share, the company's pensioners cast adrift in open boats with a cup of rainwater and a scrap of raw fish. The high-end executives meanwhile cash their stock options at the best possible price, reward their own grand and petty larcenies with severance payments in the amount of $30 million or $40 million, retain the apartment in Paris and the bank account in Zurich, go off to Colorado with the golf clubs and the skis. Transfer the procedure from the private to the public sector and the government fattens the defense budget by sending the soldiers and the tanks out to pasture in Iraq, clears the Pentagon's inventory of weapons no longer stylish, and distributes the reconstruction contracts to Bechtel, Halliburton, and any other friend of liberty willing to lend a hand with the oil derricks around Baghdad and the balloons at next year's Republican nominating convention.

The administration's current tax law could have been written (possibly *was* written) by a caucus of fund managers at Merrill Lynch or Goldman Sachs, less a matter of poor policy than of outright theft and solidly grounded on the time-honored principle beloved by generations of Wall Street stock touts—steal from the poor to feed the rich, and if asked to explain the mechanics of the deal, talk about family values. When the president proposed the legislation last February, he said that 92 million Americans would

receive an average tax reduction of $1,083. A time sentiment that Veblen undoubtedly would have recognized as an instance of "praiseworthy salesmanship," but, like the statement about the African uranium, not true and probably better understood as a "penitentiary offense." For families with incomes of between $30,000 and $40,000 the dividend reduction amounts to $24; in the safer parts of town where the wine comes in a bottle with a cork, John Snow, the secretary of the treasury, receives a refund of $275,000; Defense Secretary Rumsfeld, the sum of $184,000. The high-end campaign contributors meanwhile shop for another beach house in sunny Florida, and President Bush tours the country with a message from the Bible, poses for photographs in front of signs bearing the motto CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY, saying to the newly out-of-work clerks and factory hands assembled in the convention center, "I believe people have taken a step back and asked, 'What's important in life?' You know, the bottom line, and this corporate America stuff, is that important? Or is serving your neighbor, loving your neighbor like you'd like to be loved yourself?"

Given the transparency of the Bush Administration's lies, the unctuousness of its voice, and its unilateral contempt for any rule of law—civil, international, moral, or financial—why is it that we don't make unto the Lord a not-so-joyful noise? It's neither accident nor coincidence that as the stock market over the last two and a half years has lost roughly $6 trillion in value, so also the unemployment rate now stands at its highest level in a decade (6.5 percent), and the current budget deficit of $450 billion at the highest level in the country's history. We see before us a government fitted to the specifications of not just any corporation (most of which preserve some sense of obligation to the public welfare and the common good) but an especially rapacious corporation more nearly resembling a criminal syndicate, the risk remanded to the uninformed taxpayer instead of to the unwitting investor. Why then the audible silence in the news media and on the part of our nominally democratic politicians, and how does it happen that no crowd armed with lead pipes gathers in the union halls or the streets?

The customary answer comes in the form of a sermon about our all-American faith in a better future and a brighter tomorrow. The servants of the status quo shift the venue of possible complaint from a criminal to a civil jurisdiction, quieting the murmurs of objection with a flood of reassuring cant about the country's lack of class consciousness. The American oligarchy doesn't prey upon the American democracy because in America we have no such thing as an oligarchy. Perish the thought. What we have in this great country is what the Republican propagandists like to call "the Wild West of economies," the swinging door of a saloon on the old Arizona frontier, where sudden fortune might come for anybody with a $5 poker chip and a mule. The words to the wise invariably repeat the lesson taught by Norman Rockwell, Walt Disney, and the editors of the *Wall Street Journal*. A few liberties having been taken with the paraphrase, the standard text reads as follows:

> *Being Americans and therefore blessed at birth with the gene of egalitarianism, we don't envy people richer than ourselves; nor do we labor in the shadow of the false class distinctions that still cloud the mind of Old Europe. If a CEO earns 500 times as much money as one of his secretaries or assembly-line workers ($15 million as opposed to $30,000 per annum), it doesn't mean that the CEO is a selfish thug. The suspicion is invidious and French. The mere mention of his good fortune to hard work and his belief in God. We don't begrudge him his opulent lifestyle (those six-story mansions, his private jet, his yacht, not enough time for his neighbors or his pet toad) because we know that soon, probably sooner than anyone thinks, we ourselves will become rich. In the meantime, while waiting for the report from the assay office or the coroner, we are expectant capitalists, devoid of resentment, happy to be living in a land of great abundance and unlimited opportunity. We are Americans, bless our hearts, just folks who would rather be shopping at Wal-Mart than at one of the boutiques on Madison Avenue or Rodeo Drive, and anybody who wan[ts] to talk to us about class conflict or Marx better damned well know tha[t] don't hold the notion of a society [that] looks like some sort of English layer ca[ke]*

I don't question the Ameri[can] generosity of spirit and natural gif[t] forbearance, but I think the Norm Rockwell portrait two or three gen[er]ations behind the times, and I s[us]pect that President Bush owes [his] standing in the opinion polls to [an] equally American inclination to make the criminal and the outl[aw] figures of romance. Whether cast[ing] the hero or the villain of the tale, [a] man at ease with violence bends [the] rules to fit the circumstance, certa[in] that his always noble ends justify [the] sometimes less than noble means. [If] we know the game is rigged, we [are] like to think that the owner of [the] roulette table loves his mother a[nd] looks like Michael Corleone.

President Bush walks the walk th[at] can be imagined as once familiar [on] the old Chisholm or Santa Fe tr[ail] entitled to his cocksure swagger [by] virtue of his having stolen his el[ec]tion to the presidency. The robb[ery] stands on a par with Enron's loot[ing] of $28 billion from the California state treasury and admits Preside[nt] Bush to the long line of Americ[an] criminal ancestry that descends, w[ith] mounting degrees of firepower a[nd] computer capacity, from James Fe[ni]more Cooper's Deerslayer to t[he] Rocky Mountain fur traders, John [Ja]cob Astor and the Sundance Kid, t[he] Texas cattle barons and New Yo[rk] railroad kings, John D. Rockefell[er], Boss Tweed, and Al Capone, Hu[m]phrey Bogart, Huey Long, Lynd[on] Johnson, Clint Eastwood, Micha[el] Milken, Oliver North, Ivan Boes[ky], Tony Soprano, and others, as th[ey] say at the Academy Awards ce[re]monies, too numerous to mention.

Where else does Hollywood a[nd] the tabloid press find our company['s] heroes if not among the archetyp[al] men on horseback who wander in[to] dusty wooden towns to burn down t[he] sheriff's office or eliminate the gri[n]ning Mexicans who have been t[er]rorizing the dance-hall girls with th[eir] aimless and maniacal gunplay? Wh[o]

nk and Jesse James held up the nsas City Fair in 1872, the local vspaper described the exploit as be- "so diabolically daring and so ut- ly in contempt of fear that we are ınd to admire it and revere its per- rators," comparing the gang to the ights of King Arthur's Round Table. e national news media in 1960 bor- ved the same romantic legend to rald the Kennedy gang's capture of government suddenly bright with e banners of Camelot. The editors *Fortune* and *BusinessWeek* greeted e early success of Bernard Ebbers at orldCom and Kenneth Lay at Enron th a similar fluttering of mindless e—fearless CEOs, freebooting cap- ns of commercial enterprise, tough- nded and resolute, driving up the ck price as if punching cows across e Missouri River into Marlboro country and the California energy market.

When too many proofs of gov- nment theft or corporate greed ac- ımulate on the ledgers of the news nother defense contractor indicted r fraud, five more chief financial of- ers found to be in possession of in- ecent loans), the country's loyal edia outlets stage the equivalent of a airie revival meeting meant to call own the great spirit of financial reform on the temples of Mammon. A choir Harvard economists bears witness to ıe restoration of investor confidence; lan Greenspan lowers the interest ıte; four committees of Congress set rth to recover America's lost moral ompass; a few sheepish perpetrators ppear in handcuffs on CNN, Martha tewart tied like a sacrificial goat to the ost of a courthouse press conference; andy Weill, chairman of Citigroup, rbidden to talk to his own research nalysts unless in the presence of a awyer. George Tenet, the CIA direc- or, takes a well-publicized fall for the nistake with the African uranium, and vhen the New York attorney general's ffice levies a $1.4 billion fine on the ountry's largest securities firms (among hem Salomon Smith Barney and Mor- an Stanley), the newspapers an- ıounce "the dawn of a new day on Wall Street."

The new day lasts for maybe a week r a month. Nightfall descends as abruptly on the New York financial markets as it does on the Brazilian rain forest, and although in our public discourse we like to bemoan the decay of conscience, in our private conversations, variations on the answer, "Yes, but I did it for the money," satisfy all but the most tiresome objections. Were Al Capone still alive he probably could count on steady work as a talk-show host on FOX News—an elder statesman, garrulous and wise, remembering the good old days in Chicago, offering his opinion as to whether money is better starched and laundered in the Cayman or the Channel islands.

President Clinton made it his practice to pardon friends convicted of felonies; President Bush makes it his practice to appoint them to federal office, and in California Arnold Schwarzenegger presents himself as a candidate for governor. To the extent that the romance of crime has become more popular over the last thirty years, in part the result of the continuous panorama of violence running around the glass walls of our news and entertainment media, we make heroes of the politicians and business executives who resemble the bounty hunters wandering in the wilderness of the old American West, predatory and nomadic figures holding to the rule "get in, get rich, get out," bored by the tasks of government, indifferent to the pleasures of civilization. If occasionally called upon to bring justice to Gold Hill or Silver City, they do so with a terrible and godlike vengeance. After the requisite number of killings, they depart (into the sunset, back to the aircraft carriers in the Persian Gulf), leaving to merely mortal men the tedious and un-American chores of settlement and burial. Although I don't doubt that many millions of voters admire President Bush for the handsome platitudes he distributes under the labels of "moral clarity," I suspect that an equal number of citizens place their trust in his work and record as an outlaw—maybe not up to the mark of Meyer Lansky or Shane but a gunsel reliable enough to ride with the Clanton gang and fit to hold the horses when the time comes to burn out the sheep herders or rob the train. ■

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HYBRID SYNERGY DRIVE

TODAY TOMORROW

TOYOTA

HARPER'S INDEX

Change since last year in federal spending to implement the No Child Left Behind Act : –$1,200,000,000
rcentage refund that Laura Bush's office sought in June for a $15.95 children's book that it bought for a TV reading : 100
Percentage of the first month of British sales of the new Harry Potter book accounted for by "adult" editions : 11
Average age at which an American believes that adulthood begins : 26
Ratio of Strom Thurmond's age at his death in June to the average U.S. life expectancy in the year he was born : 2:1
Age at which Katharine Hepburn made her acting debut, as the beast in a charity production of *Beauty and the Beast* : 11
Number of females on the American Film Institute's list of the fifty greatest movie villains, aliens included : 15
Number on its list of the fifty greatest movie heroes, Lassie included : 7
Percentage of Indian college students who cite Gandhi and Hitler, respectively, as models for leaders of India : 23, 17
Percentage of Palestinians who said in May that Osama bin Laden would "do the right thing" regarding world affairs : 71
Percentage who said that George Bush would : 1
Amount of evidence, according to the *New York Times* in June, that Bush "did not believe" his own statements on Iraq : 0
Number of officials who ever suggested that Iraq had nuclear weapons, according to Donald Rumsfeld in June : 0
Number of times Democrat Howard Dean mentioned Iraq in announcing his candidacy for president this year : 0
Year in which Dick Cheney said that his policy as CEO of Halliburton was that "we wouldn't do anything in Iraq" : 2000
Price of the oil-field supplies sold to Iraq by two Halliburton subsidiaries during Cheney's tenure : $73,000,000
Amount Pat Robertson has invested in Liberian gold mining : $8,000,000
Number of times he cited the country's leaders as wronged Christians on his TV show while President Bush was in Africa : 3
Ratio of the number of Ethiopians at risk from famine today to those who died in 1984's record famine : 13:1
Amount Thailand has promised to pay survivors of anyone who dies of SARS contracted there : $100,000
Rank of measles among diseases that kill the most children worldwide each year and can be prevented by vaccine : 1
Cost of vaccinating the 745,000 children who died from the disease in 2001 : $558,750
Estimated number of soccer balls the U.S. government sent Iraq this summer to help "bring life back to normal" : 60,000
Percentage of Basra's liquor stores that have closed since March : 100
Amount New Zealand's Fire Service spent this year on a TV campaign against cooking while drunk : $201,300
Estimated acres of forest Henry David Thoreau burned down in 1844 trying to cook fish he had caught for dinner : 300
Number of paragraphs devoted to global warming in the EPA's 600-page "Draft Report on the Environment" of 2003 : 1
Number of paragraphs removed by the White House before publication : 5
Maximum number of miles that Ford's most fuel-efficient 2003 car can drive on a gallon of gas : 36
Maximum number its 1912 Model T could : 35
Months after the first manned flight that Wilbur Wright identified "war" as a potential use for airplanes : 22
Price a San Diego physicist paid at auction in June for mechanisms used to drop the atomic bomb on Hiroshima : $167,000
Percentage of Americans in June who favored U.S. military action to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons : 56
Percentage in July who disapproved of the United States waging preemptive attacks on any country : 58
Percentage of the bombs dropped on Iraq this year that were not precision-guided : 32
Ratio of U.S. soldiers killed in the 1991 Gulf War to those killed in Iraq this year : 1:1
Chance that an American believes that "suicide is an acceptable solution in certain circumstances" : 1 in 4
Number of the three drugs used for U.S. executions that are banned for animal euthanasia : 1
Number of Canadian prison inmates who overdosed in March on fellow prisoners' methadone-laced vomit : 2
Number of inmates charged with drug trafficking for providing the vomit : 3

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[Fragments]
CLAUSE 21

From Picnic Grounds, *a novel by Oz Shelach, published in April by City Lights Books. Shelach, an Israeli journalist, now lives in New York City. He edits oznik.com.*

THE ROAD TO JERUSALEM

We made the mountains evergreen—like Switzerland, we used to say, just like the snow-peaked mountains in the jigsaw puzzle we used to assemble with our children—without, naturally, the snow or the lake (we had to remind ourselves constantly: this is not Switzerland). All along the road to Jerusalem we planted over the past. We covered slopefuls of terraces with pines. The pining hillsides we dotted with red tile–roofed houses, but our trees grew sick and stood bare and gray, fell one over the other, dry, and burned for three smoky summer days. An army officer whose regiment had depopulated several villages along what was to become the forested road to Jerusalem, and who later became a construction contractor in the same region, said, in response to the fire, that these trees had done their job, it was now the property developers' time.

VACUUM

At the Tel Aviv airport, waiting for a flight out, we noticed a poet from Tel Aviv buying cartons of menthol cigarettes and cheap local brandy. In his youth, early on in the colonization, the poet had been associated with a pioneer militia, which prided itself on its violent attacks against the British, as well as its ruthless struggle against the locals. When asked by his friends in the militia to translate a manual for an English gun, the poet found a vocabulary vacuum in Hebrew—a language that preceded guns, if not violence—and had to invent words for trigger, bolt, range, and the like. His talent in these inventions—now household words in the army, the press, and the judicial system—is evident to this day. *Kavenet,* literally "sights," the name he gave his daughter, is today a popular name for girls in Israel. We asked him, Are you that poet? He said, No.

COMPLAINT

The proprietor of a bar in the Russian compound received complaints from patrons about sounds that filtered into his bar at night and tainted their drinking pleasure. He sent numerous letters to the police, pointing out that these unsettling voices, as he called them, came from the jail across the street, traveling from the interrogation rooms deep under the police station—four, some said six, floors underground—all the way up to his bar on the street level. He even visited the police headquarters in person to make his case heard, but the voices persisted. Finally, the bar owner had no choice but to increase the volume of the music playing in his bar during quieter hours. His hearing deteriorated.

'AYN LAVAN

On a Saturday morning, the Lavan family took us for a walk from their house in Qiryat Menahem down the mountain slope. We walked past an egg-packing factory, and down toward the valley, on a dusty limestone path. Their eldest, who was my good friend, pointed out a small double-peaked

mound of construction refuse, known among neighborhood kids as Ass Mountain. It was early in March, and warm. We followed the vague trail through a wood of pines, crossed two firebreaks, and came upon a pool of water. Tall walnut trees, bare of leaves, their white branches like upraised arms, surrounded the pool. "This is the reservoir," our friends said, "the spring is up at the end of this open duct. We discovered it, and named it after ourselves, 'Ayn Lavan, The White Spring." We bathed in the reservoir in our underwear; the water was very cold, and we lay back on the old, gray plastered bank to dry. Later we also took friends to this spring, and told them that we had discovered it, and named it, appropriately, after ourselves.

CLAUSE 21

Our lawyer friend, whom we had known since attending the same small kindergarten in Rehavia, told us about a curious case he had worked on. His client, a mutual friend whose name he disclosed without a smile, had asked him for help in obtaining a final release from active reserve service—thirty or forty night shifts every year, spent sitting in front of a big screen at the underground air force intelligence headquarters in the heart of Tel Aviv—a duty that devastated his already unstable sleep cycle. Our lawyer friend suggested the common path for relief from *miluim*, a visit to a mental-health officer. The client, however, wished to avoid the mental clause, commonly known as Clause 21. He asked the lawyer to inquire with the authorities whether conversion to Islam would suffice. At the end of a long correspondence the army confirmed that a reserve soldier who converted to Islam would indeed be dismissed from active reserve duty service. Our friend's release document, however, indicated that he was discharged under the mental clause.

GUINNESS

It happened that most of us had not made it to the bar by the time the shooting began, but our friend told us that after the first shots were heard everyone who was sitting outside on the sidewalk rushed in—some, although not, of course, himself, forgetting to take their drinks in with them. Then the doors were locked, the dark curtains drawn, and the radio turned on, to supplement the sounds that came from the street with official reports from the army and the police. The so-called Arms of Security took just a few minutes to gun down the attackers but kept combing the neighborhood for suspects for several hours more, during which residents and inhabitants were ordered to stay indoors. The moment the doors to the bar were locked, our friend said, the barman announced that all drinks were on the house. Everyone was eager for intoxication, and our friend showed particular urbanity by making what he felt was an homage to Belfast. "I ordered a Guinness," he sealed his story, emitting a rattling laughter, then said it again and laughed again.

A FUNERAL

On the outskirts of Tel Aviv, in Qiryat Shaul cemetery—named, like most cemeteries in Israel, after suicide king Saul—we watched a small procession slowly making its way down the concrete path, between the concrete gravestones. Most of the mourners were women, who walked and wept in silence. Some men who were present stood back and participated from a distance. We thought: this is the funeral of a woman murdered by a man. The woman actually was, we were soon informed, murdered by her husband. She had written a letter to a popular radio host, Halas, begging him for advice on her situation: married to a prominent banker who was rude and sometimes violent, she had turned, in her despair, to a man she had been in love with since high school, who agreed to see her, and whom she had begun to meet regularly in secret. She closed her letter by telling the radio host that her life was in danger, beseeching him not to disclose any details about her identity, which would certainly lead to her death. Since Halas had not read the letter before reading it live on the air, this warning had come too late.

ONE AFTER THE OTHER

On his deathbed, in Jerusalem, a survivor of seven camps and the death march of Hungarian Jews confessed to his daughter that he had taken part in the military capture of three villages and in the deportation of the villagers, and had been a witness to the razing of what houses were left of those villages. His illness had consumed his body to thin fragility. He made his daughter swear never to tell a soul, and she promised to keep his secret. Driving down the narrow roads off the highway to Tel Aviv, the daughter looked at the grounds that used to belong to those villages, and hated the forest of pines, funded by our rich supporters in Canada and named, understandably, after them.

HABIT

On a class trip in the Judean desert, a teacher fell off a mountain cliff, after which a rule was established in our school: trips to flat areas only. We were glad, therefore, when our mother took us away for the Sukkot break to the Pyrenees, where we traveled in a rented car. Out of habit we switched on the radio at the hour, in a forest in Catalonia, and scanned the airwaves for the news. Twice we heard the inflected name of our city on the news, "*Jerusalema*." On the next hour we stopped by the side of the road and sat prepared to listen. We could make out the words "*dos bombas*." That night we took a room with global tele-



Today Is Yesterday Tomorrow, *by Mamma Andersson, was on display last July at the Venice Biennale.*

vision and saw pictures from the produce market very near our home. Our mother telephoned the neighbors and her good friend, since the bombs exploded on the day of the week and around the time that she and her friend usually go shopping in the market. Once it was ascertained that no one close to us was hurt, we took turns in the bathtub. Our habit hardened.

LISTENER'S REQUEST

Our friend, who liked talk radio, was told by the man at the corner falafel stand in Mahne Yuda that he should never have talked the way he did on the call-in show, that he should make religious, and learn what it is to be Jewish. Our friend replied that talking was his way of coming close to God, that he had every right to speak out against the militias shooting at peasants and uprooting olive trees in front of the army's open eyes, and that this man's religion was censoring his. Later that afternoon, while making love, our friend asked his wife to replace God's name with his own after the *Oh*.

SUSPECTS

At the beginning of the first intifada, our reports on the Army Radio news would announce the deaths of "local inhabitants." When the undercover squads began operating, we reported the deaths of "wanted locals." When it became clear that instances of misidentification were occurring quite regularly, we updated the term to "local inhabitants suspected of being wanted." In those days a long series of investigations into bribery by public officials was unfolding, and since none of these officials was even temporarily removed from his position of power, a directive came down from the legal department, instruct-

ing us to refer to all suspects under police investigation as "apparent suspects," and to the accusations made against them as "apparent suspicions." Therefore, we again updated our terminology and began reporting on the deaths of men "suspected of being apparently local."

[Outreach]

E.T. BLOCK CALL

From 100,000 messages for space aliens received by Team Encounter, a Houston aerospace company. The company periodically beams these "cosmic calls" into space as radio broadcasts and plans to launch them, along with DNA samples from the contributors, on the Humanities First Starship in 2007.

I wish to talk to you. I wish to meet you. I wish to tech you. If you have time travel capabilities come here and take me with you. I have included a sampel of my body so you can trak me. I am NOT AFRADE!

Please don't be hostile because when I am president I will not surrender.

When you receive this, I will probably be dead. I would like you to have this as a keepsake for you and your fellow "whatever you ares."

Jim Christman was in nuclier business and his quote is "Buy low, sell high."

The Cook Family they are the future.

I love everyone and am a very happy dog!

If I die prematurely, my plan is to be frozen in liquid nitrogen at –196°C until future technology can repair and revive my body.

Tweety is a unique bird. Frizzy is nice. Taco Bell is a good fast-food restaurant. Madonna is omnipotent.

I walk upright and travel otherwise in a car.

I have personally had six contacts/sightings of UFOs. I look for the day the U.S. government will come clean on what it knows.

I love spending money and getting money.

Commencing Countdown. Engines On!

—Major Tom

This world isn't such a bad place, we just have to get rid of all the jerks, then it would be perfect.

INFECTED

A mediocre journalist from Jerusalem, whose true, deepest motivation for writing was getting women into bed, stopped writing in Hebrew, which he claimed is an immoral language constructed to serve imperialist powers and promote murder. Since all other languages available to that writer were, he maintained, just as badly infected, or worse, he stopped writing altogether and indulged in the killing of time, known in Hebrew as *burning* time.

THE NIGHT SKY

The night sky over a picnic ground near Kibbutz Qiryat-'Anavim, where our uncle took us, was changed, different from the starlit sky under which he and his comrades had moved in on the site one night, put up fences, built shacks, and took turns patrolling. In his old age, our uncle, whom we loved to visit, collected aerial photographs of the area. With a magnifying glass, and intuition, he pointed out pastures and natural flowerbeds, donkeys, farmers' children, olive groves, and even carrots, onions, and lettuces that grew scattered among the olives. So clear was visibility in the years before industrialization, before armored vehicles began grinding the desert sand, that even in winter it was never cloudy for more than a few days in a row. The sky under which a village was bombed out and later razed was not the same sky over the ground, which was the same, where we had a picnic one dusty day.

TEA OUTDOORS

The fourteen-year-old seniors of the Young Guardian youth movement learned to taste the land by boiling water in an enamel pot with freshly picked za'atar stalks and a lot of sugar. Although a stray member may occasionally have taken some home, in general they picked only as many stalks as were necessary for tea, unlike the indigenous peasant women who fill up their bags and sell it on the street. This herb, they were told, is known scientifically as *thymus vulgaris* (in fact, most species of Israeli flora are known scientifically as *vulgaris*, an indication of so much vulgarity not on the part of the plants but on the part of foreign naturalists who named them), and knowing this they let the teapot boil and poured into little tin cups. They drank carefully, in small sips, like ghosts that haunt the soil, which is soaked with blood, where vines stretch out over ruins and persist like the claims—big sweet green grapes, rich in seeds, tall fig trees—of the farmers we drove away.

PARTICIPATION

In Tel Aviv, a random group of psychology students, who are required to participate in three or four so-called experiments every semester, were asked to imagine the whole city



ırly Buds #1, 2001, *a painting by Judith Belzer. Her work can be seen at Berry-Hill Galleries, Inc., in New York City.*

bare, to strip it down in their mind's eye to what it was, or could be. All the students envisioned a big emptiness. They saw streets and buildings, or wide stretches of sand and low bush and a few streams flowing into the sea; some saw ruins. Not one participant in the experiment mentioned humans.

THE END

Shortly after immigrating, a trader from Warsaw was given a field in the Yehuda Clan district, as a loan and for safekeeping. He planted an apple orchard and came, in thirty years of apple growing, to appreciate pastoral life so much that he said he'd developed a sense of belonging to the land, which actually meant a sense that the land belonged to him. This farmer then sold what he had come to call his field to a developer because, as he put it, "In the end, all must bend before greed."

SURPRISE

In the Yiz'rael valley, formerly known as Marj Ibn-'Amer, where the inhabitants of almost two thirds of the indigenous villages were allowed to keep their houses, though not their land, our friend, whose family was also allowed to stay in their house, told us how, as a youth, he used to go out and search for the sandal Jesus is said to have dropped in mid-leap from Nazareth to Mount Tabor. Our friend then took us to the nearby Museum of Bedouin Heritage, where a black goat-hair tent, a wooden plow, and various artifacts dating from the 1960s and 1970s are exhibited to illustrate for us, we surmised, how our ancient shepherd ancestors had lived. Our friend was surprised to discover his old classmate from the regional high school seated inside the tent, pounding coffee beans with a traditional pestle and mortar. "What are you doing here?" he asked, and his friend replied, "I am the Sheikh on duty."

NOSTALGIC

I was a nostalgic from childhood. In kindergarten I longed for my nanny. In first grade I longed for kindergarten. In high school I longed for primary school (which was a horrible experience), and after joining the army I began yearning for kindergarten again, and even, after starting psychoanalysis, discovered a series of very early memories that were, so I learned, significant not in themselves but in the fact that I had preserved them over so many years, anchors of a deep longing for an early formative age, for the first two years of my life. Having since boarded an airplane and left Israel full of bitter disillusionment and hope for the future, I now yearn for a time not very long ago, but which I have never known, before ever I existed, or, preferably, before we did.

[Drills]

YOU CAN RUN BUT YOU CAN'T HIDE

From Olympic Security English, *by Wang Sheng'an, published by the Chinese People's Public Security University Press. The book is the basis of a three-month English course designed to help Beijing police officers prepare for the 2008 summer Olympics.*

HOW TO STOP ILLEGAL NEWS COVERAGE

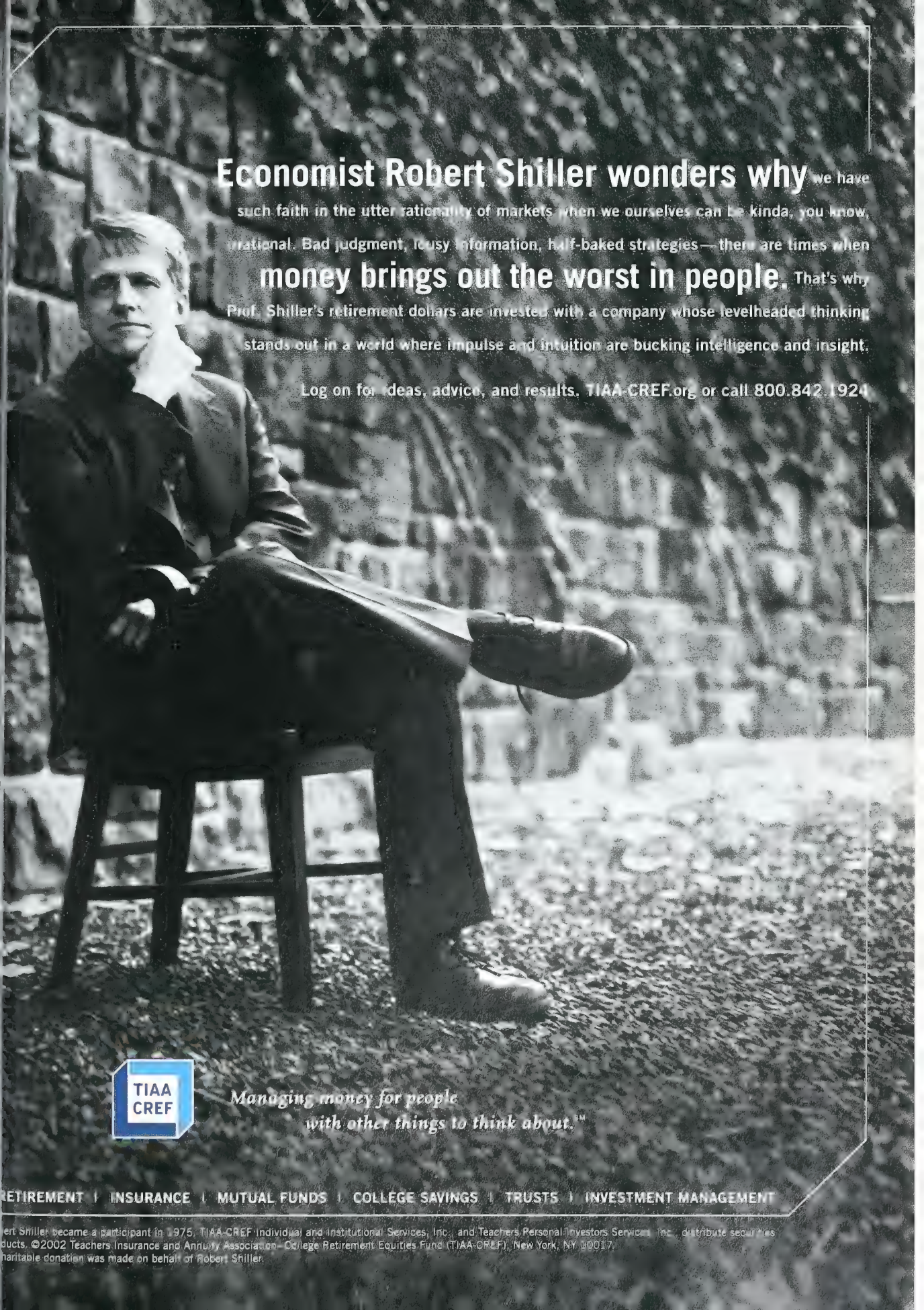
POLICE: Excuse me, sir. Stop, please.
FOREIGNER: Why?
POLICE: Are you gathering news here?
FOREIGNER: Yes.
POLICE: About what?
FOREIGNER: About Falun Gong.
POLICE: Show me your press card and reporter's permit.
FOREIGNER: Here you are.
POLICE: What news are you permitted to cover?
FOREIGNER: The Olympic games.
POLICE: But Falun Gong has nothing to do with the games.
FOREIGNER: What does that matter?
POLICE: It's beyond the permit.
FOREIGNER: What permit?
POLICE: You're a sports reporter. You should only cover the games.
FOREIGNER: But I'm interested in Falun Gong.
POLICE: It's beyond the limit of your coverage, and illegal. As a foreign reporter in China, you should obey China law and do nothing against your status.
FOREIGNER: Oh, I see. May I go now?
POLICE: No. Come with us (to the Administration Division of Entry and Exit of Beijing Municipal Public Security Bureau).
FOREIGNER: What for?
POLICE: To clear up this matter.

HIGHWAY ROBBERY

POLICE: What were the conditions of your release from prison?
FOREIGNER: I escaped from the prison.
POLICE: Where did you go?
FOREIGNER: I went to Afghanistan first.
POLICE: How and when did you come to Beijing?
FOREIGNER: I sneaked into Xinjiang from Afghanistan, and came here to Beijing this summer.
POLICE: What have you been doing in Beijing?
FOREIGNER: I sold mutton cubes with a Xinjiang native, but our utensils were confiscated.
POLICE: What did you do afterward?
FOREIGNER: Nothing.
POLICE: So you fled here and there to commit crimes.
FOREIGNER: That's the only way to stay alive.
POLICE: You should have known that this would end with you in serious trouble.
FOREIGNER: I knew I would come to no good one day.

THE SUSPECT OF BURGLARY

POLICE: Excuse me, are you Gul Aghar?
FOREIGNER: Yes.
POLICE: What's your nationality?
FOREIGNER: Afghan.
POLICE: What's your status of entry?
FOREIGNER: Reporter.
POLICE: The purpose of your entry?
FOREIGNER: To report the live Olympic games.
POLICE: Why did you commit this offense?
FOREIGNER: I got confused temporarily.
POLICE: Please don't try to fool us. You are a professional burglar, judging from the way you operate. We want the truth.
FOREIGNER: I have nothing to tell. Haven't you got evidence?
POLICE: Of course. We have very conclusive evidence.
FOREIGNER: Then show me your evidence.
POLICE: There are cameras fixed in the passageway of the flat. Your actions were recorded. Have a look at your full performance, your clear expressions, clothes, and your acts. Don't you admit those?
FOREIGNER: That's beyond my imagination.
POLICE: Do you confess now?
FOREIGNER: Yes, I do.
POLICE: Do you have a criminal record?
FOREIGNER: No. This is the first time.
POLICE: Stop lying. You are a habitual criminal, judging from the tools and method of operation.
FOREIGNER: I didn't expect so strict precautions here.
POLICE: I tell you, the burglary alarm in the security-guard room rang when you tried to open the door. You had no chance to succeed.
FOREIGNER: I see. I was stupid.
POLICE: Why did you choose this room?
FOREIGNER: To be frank, I didn't intend to steal anything.
POLICE: Then what did you intend to do?
FOREIGNER: I learned that an American lived in this room, so I wanted to take revenge on him.
POLICE: Why?
FOREIGNER: Because my family was killed when the U.S. bombed Afghanistan. I became homeless and I hate Americans.
POLICE: We feel sympathy for your misfortune. But your behavior to deliberately hurt an innocent American is against our law, and you disrupted our social order, especially during


Economist Robert Shiller wonders why we have such faith in the utter rationality of markets when we ourselves can be kinda, you know, irrational. Bad judgment, lousy information, half-baked strategies—there are times when money brings out the worst in people. That's why Prof. Shiller's retirement dollars are invested with a company whose levelheaded thinking stands out in a world where impulse and intuition are bucking intelligence and insight.
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haritable donation was made on behalf of Robert Shiller.

the Olympic games. You caused a disturbance and damaged the reputation of our country, so you should shoulder the criminal responsibilities.

FOREIGNER: I didn't consider that much. And I didn't intend to make trouble for China.

POLICE: You must tell all that you did. Don't make any trouble for yourself.

FOREIGNER: Yes, ma'am.

POLICE: We will stop here today. Go back and think it over.

HANDLING UNEXPECTED INCIDENTS

[*Chinese policemen save a woman's life during an earthquake when they free her from her bathroom tomb.*]

POLICE: You maybe have fractured legs. We'll send you to the hospital right now.

FOREIGNER: Thank you for saving my life.

POLICE: That's my job.

FOREIGNER: I can never forget those Chinese policemen who saved my life.

POLICE: Calm down, and don't talk so much.

FOREIGNER: What happened?

POLICE: It was an earthquake, 7 degrees on the Richter scale, and Tangshan was the epicenter.

FOREIGNER: Did you see my child?

POLICE: Don't worry. Your child has been sent to the hospital with a little bruise.

FOREIGNER: Thank goodness. Thank you all, Chinese police.

POLICE: You are welcome. May you recover soon.

PATTERN DRILLS

Would you be able to come to our office?
Excuse me, would you come to our office?
Sorry to trouble you, could you come to our office?
Do me a favor and come to our office, will you?
Would you mind coming to our office?

I'm afraid we'll have to . . .
- detain you temporarily.
- take you to the police station for questioning.
- confiscate the contraband.
- impound the fake identification.

Don't . . .
- pretend to be innocent.
- try to fool us.
- play any tricks.

It's . . .
- illegal.
- against the law.
- against China law.
- banned.
- prohibited.
- not allowed.
- not permitted.

Please don't . . .
- cross the street here.
- be too familiar with the girl.
- be so rude to that lady.
- take too many liberties with the waitress.
- take pictures.
- take photographs.
- do that.

[Interrogation]

I FOUGHT THE LAW

From the transcript of a forty-five-minute police interrogation of Oliverio Martinez, a farmworker from Camarillo, California, by Sergeant Benjamin Chavez. On November 28, 1997, police stopped Martinez as he was riding his bicycle past the scene of an arrest and grabbed for the field knife on his belt; a scuffle ensued and Martinez was shot five times, leaving him blind and paralyzed. Chavez conducted the subsequent interrogation in an ambulance and an emergency room as Martinez went in and out of consciousness. On October 30, 2001, a federal court ruled that the interrogation had violated Martinez's Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination. On May 27, 2003, the Supreme Court ruled that the police had not in fact violated Martinez's Fifth Amendment rights, since he was never charged with a crime, effectively overturning the long-standing precedent that the Fifth protects both suspects and witnesses during questioning and at trial. The justices remanded the case to a lower court to consider whether Martinez's Fourteenth Amendment right to due process may have been violated, as his treatment was the functional equivalent of torture. Translated from the Spanish by Cal Norman.

BENJAMIN CHAVEZ: Sir, what is your name?

OLIVERIO MARTINEZ: It hurts.

UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Move your feet. Move your feet.

MARTINEZ: I can't. I can't. I can't.

CHAVEZ: What happened? Tell me what happened.

MARTINEZ: I don't know. Ay! I'm dying. Ay! What are you doing to me? No!! [*unintelligible scream*]

CHAVEZ: What happened, sir?

MARTINEZ: I'm choking.

CHAVEZ: Tell me what happened.

MARTINEZ: I don't know. It hurts. I'm choking.

CHAVEZ: Can you hear? Look, I'm Benjamin Chavez, with the police.

MARTINEZ: I'm dying. Please . . .

CHAVEZ: Okay, if you are going to die, tell me what happened.

MARTINEZ: I don't know.

CHAVEZ: What happened with the police?



Expecting to Fly, *by Fred Tomaselli, was on display last summer at the James Cohan Gallery, in New York City.*

MARTINEZ: We fought.
CHAVEZ: Huh? What happened with the police?
MARTINEZ: The police shot me.
CHAVEZ: Why?
MARTINEZ: Because I was fighting with him.
CHAVEZ: Okay, why were you fighting with the police?
MARTINEZ: I'm dying.
CHAVEZ: Okay, yes you are dying, but tell me why you were fighting with the police?
MARTINEZ: I don't know.
CHAVEZ: Did you get his gun? Did you grab the gun of the other policeman?
MARTINEZ: Yes.
CHAVEZ: Yes. Did you want to kill the police or what?
MARTINEZ: No.
CHAVEZ: Did you want to shoot at the police?
MARTINEZ: No.
CHAVEZ: No. Why did you grab the gun of the police?
MARTINEZ: I wanted to shoot.
CHAVEZ: And the gun was not pointed at the police?
MARTINEZ: No. Doctor, please. I want air. I'm dying.
CHAVEZ: Okay, I want to know if you pointed the gun at the police.

MARTINEZ: Yes. I'm dying, please . . .
CHAVEZ: Okay, listen, I want to know what happened, okay?
MARTINEZ: I want them to treat me.
CHAVEZ: Okay, they are going to. Look, when you took the gun from the police . . .
MARTINEZ: I'm dying.
CHAVEZ: Okay, look, what I want to know is if you took the gun.
MARTINEZ: I am not telling you anything until they treat me.
CHAVEZ: Look, don't you want the police to know what happened with you?
MARTINEZ: Oh! Oh! My belly hurts . . .
CHAVEZ: Sir, if you are going to die I don't want the police to say what happened with you. I want to know what happened. Huh? Sir? Sir?
MARTINEZ: I want to be treated.
CHAVEZ: Look, the gun . . . what happened?
MARTINEZ: I pulled the gun.
CHAVEZ: How? Were you fighting with the police?
MARTINEZ: Yes.
CHAVEZ: And you took the gun from his belt?
MARTINEZ: Yes.
CHAVEZ: I can't hear.
MARTINEZ: Yes.
CHAVEZ: What happened when you took it out?
MARTINEZ: I pointed it.
CHAVEZ: At the police?
MARTINEZ: Yes.
CHAVEZ: And what happened after that?
MARTINEZ: They shot me. That's all.
CHAVEZ: Why was the gun pointed at the police?
MARTINEZ: Just so that, that, to stop . . .
CHAVEZ: Okay. Uh, look, I want to know . . .
MARTINEZ: I want air. I want air.
CHAVEZ: Okay, okay, hey, look, were you drinking today?
MARTINEZ: I'm choking.
CHAVEZ: Were you drinking today?
MARTINEZ: Yes.
CHAVEZ: Do you use drugs?
MARTINEZ: Yes.
CHAVEZ: What kind of drugs do you use?
MARTINEZ: It hurts.
CHAVEZ: What kind of drugs do you use?
MARTINEZ: Heroin.
CHAVEZ: When was the last time you used heroin?
MARTINEZ: Tonight. It hurts a lot, oh . . . Please, please it hurts a lot. Please, please, please, please.
CHAVEZ: Hey, sir . . .
MARTINEZ: It hurts.
CHAVEZ: Sir, what were you all doing there in the field?
MARTINEZ: Nothing.
CHAVEZ: Why did you run from the police?
MARTINEZ: I don't want to say any more.
CHAVEZ: No?
MARTINEZ: I want them to treat me, it hurts a lot. Please.
CHAVEZ: You don't want to say what happened?
MARTINEZ: I don't want to die. I don't want to die.
CHAVEZ: Well, if you are going to die, tell me what happened. And right now you think you are going to die?
MARTINEZ: Aren't you going to treat me?
CHAVEZ: Look, do you think you are going to die? That's all I want to know, if you think you are going to die. Right now, do you think you are going to die?
MARTINEZ: My belly hurts, please treat me.
CHAVEZ: Sir?
MARTINEZ: If you treat me, I'll tell you everything. If not, no.
CHAVEZ: Sir, I want to know if you think you are going to die right now.
MARTINEZ: I think so.
CHAVEZ: You think so? Okay, look, the doctors are going to help you with all they can do, okay?
MARTINEZ: Get moving, I'm dying, can't you see? Come on.
CHAVEZ: Uh, right now they are giving you medication.
MARTINEZ: Uuuggghhh . . .

[Memoir]

OAK WOOD IS STRONG

"I Remember," by Wardog, an inmate at the maximum security Corcoran State Prison in Corcoran, California. The essay was published last May in The Beat Within, *a weekly journal of prose and art from juvenile halls and prisons. Wardog has served seven years of a twenty-one-year sentence.*

Only now as I waste away in this unnatural environment of concrete and steel do my childhood memories play back in my mind in a continuous loop. I'm sure most of you long-term prisoners know exactly what I'm talking about. Well, I would like to share some of these memories with you, and please know that I've never spoken a word to anybody about these memories that are more like ghosts haunting my brain.

One of my earliest memories is of removing the wings of a bee that had just stung me and placing it at the entrance of a red-ant colony. The ants, sensing an intruder, immediately began to

attack the bee, swarming it like a finely oiled machine. I must have laid there on my stomach, watching those ants for hours, fascinated, before I finally got up and slapped off the dust from my skinny, bare, sun-bronzed torso.

I remember lighting a bundle of dry grass on fire, then opening up a man-made beehive. The bees did not attack, allowing me to steal a big piece of honeycomb. I picked off the bees that got stuck in the honey, then took a huge bite, chewing on the waxy substance as the prized honey slid down into my belly.

I remember my dad stealing a cow from the neighbors' herd. He led the cow into our garage, and as I secretly peeked in, I saw him take the rope that was around the cow's neck and wrap it tightly around his wrist and hand. Then I saw him bend down and pick up a large hammer that was lying on the floor, and with shocking speed he violently struck the cow on the top of its skull. Well, what happened next surprised both my father and me, for that cow let out the most horrifying groan and began to drag my dad around that garage, all the while screaming. My wide-eyed father regained his footing for a second and delivered another vicious blow, which had pretty much the same results as the first. I don't recall how long this psychotic scene lasted, but after countless blows the concrete began to get soaked with blood, and not all of it belonged to that poor cow. The cow started to stumble and tire, and eventually its nightmare came to an end. Yet even after its tongue hung grotesquely out the side of its mouth, my father continued to hammer it, kick it, scream and rage at it, all the while covered in blood. Man, I remember the hell out of that.

I remember the soles of my feet being so tough and callused from never wearing shoes that I could run hard and fast on any surface. I could even slide to a stop as if I was wearing the thickest boots.

I remember my father never went to a gas station for gas; instead, he kept a piece of water hose in the trunk or truck bed. He would creep up to cars, slide the hose into the gas tank, and siphon out all the gas. It got so that I was always watching the gas gauge of any vehicle we were riding in with dread, and only when it read a full tank did my stomach unknot.

I remember one day being in the bathroom and picking up a hair-care product that belonged to my father. I began applying the liquid to my hair, styling it just like Pops wore his, and as I went to recap the bottle and place it just as I had found it, the bottle slipped from my greasy hands and shattered in the sink. (Back in those days hardly anything was made with plastic.) Well, I cleaned up with lightning speed all the evidence of my crime, then washed my hair as fast as humanly possible, and got my butt away from the house for the rest of the day.

[Game]

HOTEL ON BALTIC, HOURLY RATES

From cards used in Puttanopoly, an Italian board game in which the players are prostitutes trying to survive life on the streets. Translated from the Italian by Stefania Heim.

At your usual spot you find a group of women who refuse to acknowledge that they're on your turf. Catfight and spend five days in the hospital. Lose 5 turns.

A client picks you up, refuses to pay you, puts a gun to your mouth, and hurls you from a moving car. Lose 3 turns.

You are run over by a car that doesn't even stop. You end up with a broken femur. Lose 5 turns.

You get a nasty cold sore on your lip and all your clients avoid you. Lose a turn.

You meet a sadistic client who covers you in bruises. Lose a turn.

The condom breaks. Rush to take the morning-after pill. Lose a turn.

The condom breaks. Go take an AIDS test. Lose a turn.

You get tested and find out you have an STD. Get treated. Lose 2 turns.

You are molested by a band of adolescents. Lose 3 turns.

You can't remember the value of the euro. Lose $100 in the exchange.

You are the object of a voodoo ritual. Lose $1,000.

A lunatic with a machine gun goes nuts in the street, shooting people to pieces. You are hit in the chest. You must get reconstructive plastic surgery. Lose $5,000 and 5 turns.

The police take you to a detention center and hold you there for 60 days. Lose 6 turns.

You bite a policeman during a roundup. He holds you for personal damages. You are deported. Start again without any money.

You are stopped by the police, who send you back to Albania. You lose the game.

They find your skeleton in the woods. You lose all your money and the game.



Outrun Memory, *a graphite drawing by Jenny Scobel, was on display last summer at Thomas Erben Gallery, in New York City.*

When I got home from my day's adventures my stepmom was about to serve dinner. The whole family gathered around the table, and at that moment my father asked who messed with his hair grease. My sisters and stepbrothers all exchanged confused looks, and nobody made a sound until my father's chair was pushed back and he came to a standing position. He began walking around the table smelling each child's head, and when he got to mine I felt his nose touch my head and could have sworn some strands of hair got pulled into his nostrils as he sniffed.

The next thing I heard was his voice calmly saying, "Go to your room," and I knew the game was up. I sat in my room like a man waiting to be executed. A couple hours later the other kids began filtering back to the rooms, and I bombarded them with questions of my fate, yet they all stated, "Dad ain't said nothing."

Well, we began to play our usual nightly games before sleep, but unlike the others my heart was not in it, and I kept expecting the door to fly open and all hell to break loose. Only when I was in bed with my eyelids closing for the night did I finally feel safe and allow the dream world to take me. I don't know when the dream turned ugly, but I dreamt I was being violently yanked out of bed by my arm. Only as I was being pulled down the hallway with the tips of my toes barely skipping along the hardwood floor did I realize it was not a dream at all. My father pulled me out into the back yard, where I immediately saw the silhouette of the giant oak tree that can look so foreboding at night, specially on a windy night, because the wind would whistle through the long crooked limbs, which resembled old bony fingers reaching out for souls.

He marched me right underneath that old tree and ordered me to sit down on the grass. The blades of grass had a fine layer of frost on them, and on any other early morning I would have pretended it was snow. At this moment, however, it only added to my misery, for as soon as my behind sat down on the cold crispy blades of grass the frost quickly melted into the only scrap of material I wore, my underwear. The goose bumps stood at attention, and my tiny teeth began to chatter as I noticed the rope my father was attempting to throw over one of the branches. With each failed attempt

he muttered and cursed under his breath. The few words I caught were, "Little fucker, dumb bastard, teach you." Finally, he managed to get the rope over a branch, and roughly tied one end around my neck. Then he just walked away, and with him went the slack. My fingers instantly went to the rope as it pulled me to my knees, then my feet, and when my feet left the earth's surface so did my rationality. I began to panic, kicking, twisting, and shaking like a dog with his head caught under a fence.

I didn't cry out to my father, because he believed in punishing even more severely those who cry, so I just dangled in the wind trying to pull the unforgiving rope away from my neck as my father tied his end of the rope to the chicken coop, double-checked the knot, then walked back into the house.

I began to cry the cry that only someone who has cried that cry would know. I cried out for my real mother, praying she would sense my need and come rescue me. I cried to God, hoping he would look down from heaven and see this seven-year-old boy who didn't weigh enough to hang to death from a mean-looking tree.

After about an hour of this I realized I wasn't going to die. My main goal became getting more comfortable. I'm not positive, but I think at one point I even giggled at the ridiculous predicament I was in. One thing I do know is as dawn began to break, the birds began to chirp, and the roosters began to crow, I hung there with my little fingers between my jawbone and the rope (that was the least painful position), and everything seemed peaceful. Isn't that peculiar?

Well, the first person to see me was my stepmom's youngest son, Momo—he was four years old and still couldn't speak. He came out on the back porch, pulled the waistband of his underwear down, and began to urinate. When I called his name he looked up and was so frightened he pulled up his underwear before even stopping and ran into the house. (I guess that image didn't help with his speech problem.) My father quickly came out with a knife and cut the rope loose from the chicken coop so that I fell to the ground like a sack of bones.

For the rest of the day I had to sift through a giant pile of ashes that were the remnants of boards my father had burnt. My job was to search for nails and hammer the bent ones straight. Yeah, muthafucker, I remember that.

I remember my older sister Annie telling me to stop putting sugar in the cereal before the milk. She said, "If you put the sugar in first, the milk makes it all go to the bottom of the bowl." Well, I never again put the sugar first, and all my bowls of cereal have been that much sweeter.

I remember wandering into the barn and stumbling across one of my older sisters on her knees in front of our father. When he seen me, he screamed, "Boy get your little ass out of here," and I was gone, because Dad don't use that voice unless he's about to get crazy. I didn't know what I had stumbled across back then, but I'm older now and I know what that scene was all about.

[Tales]

TATTOOS

By Rafael Pérez Estrada, from the Fall/Winter 2003 Jubilat. *Translated from the Spanish by Steven J. Stewart.*

"How can I draw a beautiful woman on your chest," asked the third emperor's impudent Tattoo Master, "when the only woman worthy of you is tattooed on mine?"

On the breast of the geisha Tsieou Kin, an expert hand had drawn a golden bee that sucked from her roselike nipple. Evidently, this caused the downfall of the second governor of the Minamoto family.

In order to engender the perfect child, Madame Tai tattooed an angel over her womb.

The ruthless shogun Ieyasu is credited with this warning: "You can engrave whatever you'd like on the bodies of the geishas, but you must respect the stone of the public statues."

Before leaving for war, the shogun of Nara had his wife's flawless abdomen engraved with the shadow of a terrible dragon. It seems that during the extended Gempei conflict the lady of Nara took pleasure in imagining a samurai who discovered she was unprotected from the rear.

Softly, with the voice of an autumn wind, while hiding distraught behind the pearl screen, the young but widowed empress, when asked by her eunuchs to agree to marry again for the good of the empire, unsteadily replied, "I will agree, but my new husband must wear the serene smile of my dead husband tattooed on his chest."

The Parchment Master of the Great Court was executed in Kyoto in the thirteenth century for producing a malicious tattoo on the chest of the shogun Kamakura, and for inciting the drawing to assassinate, as it did, its owner.

I remember the first night back with my real mother after she removed me and my sisters from that farmhouse. I slept in my mom's bed and she held me as if I were a teddy bear, and I never felt more safe in my life.

We all have memories that make us who we are; those were a couple that make me unique. I see a bee different than anyone else. I see a cow in a different light. And when people say oak wood is strong, I believe that for different reasons.

[Supplication]

THIS IS MY BODY, HAVE SECONDS

The following letter was sent to the pope last October by Lionel Poilâne, a prominent French baker who died in a helicopter crash later that month. Translated from the French by Donovan Hohn.

Most Holy Father,

There is, in French, an old saying which holds that "we are what we eat." This folk wisdom about nourishment—versions of which can be found in all cultures—appears to be commendable and sound. Humans, for whom eating is a matter of survival, have devised, according to their various cultures, ways of preparing and concocting an assortment of foods appealing to body and mind alike. The art of nourishment has nurtured the human spirit and human industry for thousands of years. This ancient pursuit has relieved our pain and hardship, and revealed to us that great joy we French call *la satisfaction gourmande*.

Whereas neither history nor the study of human behavior can demonstrate that the gourmand eats to excess;

Whereas neither religion nor philosophy can demonstrate that, in practice, the gourmand has any effect whatsoever on either human rights or family values;

And, finally, whereas, in his pacifistic works, the gourmand, if he is "good" at what he does, helps quality triumph over quantity;

We humbly beseech you, Most Holy Father, knowing that an outright abolition of the seventh deadly sin would be inconceivable, to modify its French translation.

The seventh deadly sin does not have the same sense in Latin, English, Italian, Spanish, or German that it does in French, and thus its "semantico-theological" significance subjects the French-speaking world to an injustice.

Consider:

—In English, the seventh deadly sin was translated as "gluttony" (*la gourmandise*, of course, has no English equivalent), a term synonymous with the French "*gloutonnerie*" or "*voracité*."

—The Italian "*góla*," which also means gullet, connotes piggishness.

—The Spanish "*gula*" is roughly synonymous with "gluttony."

—In German, the word "*lüsternheit*" signifies the act of eating like an animal that does not know when to stop or with unbridled appetite or like someone who inhales his food.

Now, this entire family of words calling to mind the unbridled appetite of gluttons, of face stuffers, of scarfers, of chowhounds, of epicurean swine, is utterly foreign to French culture and to *la gourmandise*, which remains the admirable activity of the gourmand.

Over the course of hundreds and hundreds of years, *la gourmandise* became such a powerful catalyst of virtue that it imbued its creators with a spiritual state of as high a quality, nearly, as their gourmet creations. By baking bread and breaking bread, gourmands became, as we say in French, "*bon comme le pain*"! Upon consulting the kitchens of the Vatican, I was able to confirm that humility and pleasure are indeed ingredients of simplicity and kindness.

The history of those exceptional wines, such as Châteauneuf-du-Pape or Le Pape Clément, served at your own table, strikingly illustrates this point. These chosen wines of the Vatican require a winemaking expertise of the highest quality. This would seem to provide the basis for the notion of gourmand virtue, because quality is inherently opposed to quantity (and to excess).

The incriminating shadow cast by this condemnation has myriad disgraceful consequences for gourmands, but especially for those directly involved in the creation of gourmet dishes: the mothers and fathers and cooks, and also the fishmongers, the meat roasters, the bakers, the caterers, the cheesemakers, the sauce chefs, the pastry chefs, the sommeliers—all because food has made their lives fruitful and meaningful. The value of their know-how—exhibited in the preparation of meals, of roasts, of sweets and sorbets, madeleines and brioches, of grilled meats, of soufflés, of stews and marinades, pastries and pâtés—is intrinsically above reproach.

The numerous feasts mentioned in the Bible offer further support for our case. Time and time again we discover the abundance, availability, and pleasure of food (as at the miraculous wedding of Cana), which represent nothing less than a flowering, a fulfillment, a rapture.

Finally, Most Holy Father, the speech you gave in June 1999 in Warsaw, during which you

Immigration: The Driving Force Behind Our U.S. Population Growth

We at Negative Population Growth, Inc. (NPG) believe that our country is already vastly overpopulated in terms of the long range carrying capacity of its resources and environment.

We believe, therefore, that U.S. population growth should be halted as soon as possible, and eventually reversed.

But, unless our present massive immigration is drastically reduced, we will never be able to stabilize our population at a sustainable level.

In the decade of the 90s U.S. population grew by an unprecedented 33 million. Immigration, during that decade, accounted for about 60% of that huge increase in our numbers. Projections are that we will grow by at least as much in the current decade. If that happens our population, in the short space of only 20 years, will have increased by a staggering 66 million.

If we allow current rates of fertility and immigration to continue, our U.S. population,now over 288 million, is projected to pass 400 million by 2050, with no end to growth in sight! Such growth would be catastrophic for our environment, for our standard of living, and for the quality of our lives.

We now allow more than 1,000,000 legal immigrants to come here annually. Their numbers are swelled by over 400,000 illegal immigrants who come here each year and remain permanently, adding their numbers to the estimated nine million illegal aliens who are already living here permanently in violation of our laws.

We urgently need to halt **illegal** immigration and reduce annual **legal** immigration to not more than 100,000 a year, including all relatives and refugees. Then, immigration would no longer contribute significantly to our population growth.

Advocates of Massive Immigration Are Wrong!

There are powerful forces that fight not only to keep immigration at the present high level, but to increase it. Among them are employers who want low-wage labor, ethnic groups whose leaders seek greater political power, and some humanitarians who believe in virtually open borders.

They also include pro-growth advocates who believe that an ever-growing labor force, fueled by immigration, is necessary to achieve their goal of an ever-increasing GNP. That goal, in the real world of environmental and resource limits, is a recipe for disaster.

How Can We Best Help Others?

Beyond any question, the United States should maintain the humane policies toward immigrants and refugees that have characterized its past.

But we need to express our compassion in an intelligent way. Our priority should be to improve living conditions in the developing countries, rather than to allow vast numbers of their citizens to settle here.

World population is growing by some 90 million a year, and almost all of that growth occurs in the developing countries. We cannot possibly allow more than a tiny fraction of those millions to come here. What can we do to help all those who have no choice but to remain at home?

One thing is crystal clear. The problems of the underdeveloped countries are beyond solution by emigration. To pretend otherwise is simply self-delusion.

Nothing can permanently improve living conditions in these countries unless they first halt their population growth, the root cause of their poverty and environmental degradation.

Those who assert that eradicating poverty is a prerequisite for halting population growth have the process just backwards. Only after halting their population growth can developing countries even begin to bring their standard of living up to an adequate level.

We should do everything in our power to help those nations that are prepared to make a determined effort to halt, and eventually to reverse, their population growth.

We Need A Sensible U.S. Immigration Policy

We cannot continue to allow our national immigration policy to be dictated by special interest groups who pursue their own agendas without regard for the broad national interest.

Our immigration policy should be an integral part of a national population policy aimed at halting, and then reversing, our population growth, so that U.S. population can eventually be stabilized at a lower, more sustainable level.

As Americans, our first obligation, to ourselves and to our children and grandchildren, is to restore and preserve the land we have inherited. In shaping our immigration policy, our top priority must be our own national interest, and the welfare of present and future generations of Americans.

NPG is a nonprofit, national membership organization established in 1972. Contributions to NPG are tax deductible to the extent the law allows. To become a member, and receive our newsletter, plus all our current and future publications, please send us your check today.

YES! I want to become a member of NPG, and help reduce U.S. immigration to a level compatible with our national interest. I am enclosing my check for annual membership dues.

____$30 ____$50 ____$100 ____Other

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Please Mail to:

Mail to: Negative Population Growth, Inc.
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Nov H-0903

fondly recalled eating cream buns to celebrate the end of your exams, reassures us that this supplication will receive a sympathetic audience.

Therefore, we hereby wish to propose that in the French version of the catechism the word "*gourmandise*" be officially changed to "*gloutonnerie*." Although the word "*intempérance*" conveys the idea of condemnable excess equally well, "*gloutonnerie*" would have the advantage of harmonizing the French with the theological terminology of other languages.

The case against this semantic impropriety calls for your favorable consideration. We respectfully solicit your help, Most Holy Father, in liberating gourmands from the purgatory of verbal ambiguity in which they have suffered for hundreds of years, and from which they have incurred serious harm.

Your humble and devoted servant,
Lionel Poilâne

[Poem]

PRAYER TO THE AARDWOLF

By Christopher Janke, in Verse, *Volume 19, numbers 1 and 2.*

Between my inertia and my unenlightened fingers, between my kneeling for matins and my just-pushing-ahead, beside my pieces of eight, beneath my monad and pickleworm, over the ground of my whelming and scattering, of my abject infinitude, of my owl, my mold, my abbot—my needing of where like a skirt in a storm.

For my ascending and descending, over & above my nature and supernature, ignoring my kernel, my egg, my grackle and troubled living, my savant, my soft answer, my sleep, my wrestling, my out-of-joint, my inert detachment, my skyeyness, my letter to my man on the ground.

o hollow me dear termite or moon or leap into an untying, a cut to the core, o slaw, o nose, o through-and-through, I crouch for your breath and your hair, o thou window once my looking, now my nail, my air.

[Chat]

BEWARE OF DOGG

The following cybersex scenarios appear on the PitchforkMedia Smackdown! message board. They were composed by a poster named Dr. Ninjaforkian and are based on the exploits of J-Dogg, "a highly evolved cybersex denizen."

J-Dogg>Wanna cyber?
DirtyKate>OK, but don't tell anybody ;>)
DirtyKate>Who are you?
J-Dogg>I've got blond hair, blue eyes, I work out a lot.
J-Dogg>And I have a part time job delivering for Papa John's in my Geo Storm.
DirtyKate>You sound sexy. I bet you want me in the back of your car.
J-Dogg>Maybe some other time. You should call up Papa John's and make an order.
DirtyKate>Haha! OK.
DirtyKate>Hello! I'd like an extra EXTRA large pizza just dripping with sauce.
J-Dogg>Well, first they would say, "Hello, this is Papa John's, how may I help you," then they tell you the specials, and then you would make your order. So that's an X>Large. What toppings do you want?
DirtyKate>I want everything, baby!
J-Dogg>Is this a delivery?
DirtyKate>Umm . . . Yes.
DirtyKate>So you're bringing the pizza to my house now? Cause I'm home alone . . . and I think I'll take a shower . . .
J-Dogg>Good. It will take about fifteen minutes to cook, and then I'll drive to your house.
[*pause*]
DirtyKate>I'm almost finished with my shower . . . Hurry up!
J-Dogg>You can't hurry good pizza.
J-Dogg>I'm on my way now though.
[*pause*]
DirtyKate>So you're at my front door now.
J-Dogg>How did you know?
J-Dogg>I knock but you can't hear me cause you're in the shower. So I let myself in, and walk inside. I put the pizza down on your coffee table.
J-Dogg>Are you ready to get nasty, baby? I'm as hot as a pizza oven.
DirtyKate>Oooohh yeah. I step out of the shower and I'm all wet and cold. Warm me up baby.
J-Dogg>So you're still in the bathroom?
DirtyKate>Yeah, I'm wrapping a towel around myself.
J-Dogg>I can no longer resist the pizza. I open



"Chair and Cup," from Bankrupt, a series of photographs of recently vacated offices, by Phillip Toledano. The photo was on display in June at Paul Morris Gallery, in New York City.

the box and unzip my pants with my other hand. As I penetrate the gooey cheese, I moan in ecstacy. The mushrooms and Italian sausage are rough, but the sauce is deliciously soothing. I blow my load in seconds. As you leave the bathroom, I exit through the front door . . .

DirtyKate>What the fuck?
DirtyKate>You perverted piece of shit.
DirtyKate>Fuck.

sexysusan>Ok I'm a japanese schoolgirl, what are you.
J-Dogg>A Rhinoceros. Well, hung like one, thats for sure.
sexysusan>Haha, ok lets go.
sexysusan>I put my hand through your hair, and kiss you on the neck.
J-Dogg>I stomp the ground, and snort, to alert you that you are in my breeding territory.
sexysusan>Ha, ok, you know that turns me on.
sexysusan>I start unbuttoning your shirt.
J-Dogg>Rhinoceroses don't wear shirts.
sexysusan>No, your not really a Rhinoceros silly, it's just part of the game.
J-Dogg>Rhinoceroses don't play games. They fucking charge your ass.
sexysusan>Stop, c'mon be serious.
J-Dogg>It doesn't get any more serious than a Rhinoceros about to charge your ass.
J-Dogg>I stomp my feet, the dust stirs around my tough skinned feet.
sexysusan>Thats it.
J-Dogg>Nostrils flaring, I lower my head. My horn, like some phallic symbol of my potent virility, is the last thing you see as skulls collide and mine remains the victor. You are now a bloody red ragdoll suspended in the air on my mighty horn.
J-Dogg>Goddam am I hard now.

J-Dogg>Wanna cyber?
Partner7>Sure, you into vegetables?
J-Dogg>What like gardening an shit?
Partner7>Yeah, something like that.
J-Dogg>Nuthin turns me on more, check this out.
J-Dogg>You bend over to harvest your radishes.
Partner7>Is that it?
J-Dogg>You water your tomato patch.
J-Dogg>Are you ready for my fresh produce?
Partner7>I was thinking of like, sexual acts INVOLVING vegetables . . . Can you make it a little more sexy for me?

[Activities]

OH CANADA! OH!

From What's the Rush? *a manual promoting abstinence education and distributed to high school teachers by Toronto's Department of Public Health.*

YOU CAN HAVE FUN WITHOUT HAVING SEX!

The following are suggestions TEENS have made for having fun without having sex:

candlelight dinner
walk on the beach
go to the movies
sucking
watch the sunset
snuggle up in front of a fireplace
rubbing
go to the mall
massaging each other
be friends
kissing
looking
mutual masturbation
sitting on the couch together
petting
an unexpected kiss in the moonlight by reflecting waters
skinny-dipping
sit in the back seat of the car
email each other
write poetry to each other under the moon
fingering

J-Dogg>I touch you on your lettuce, you massage my spinach . . . Sexily.
J-Dogg>I ride your buttocks, like they were amber waves of grains.
Partner7>Grain doesn't really turn me on . . . I was thinking more along the lines of carrots and zucchinis.
J-Dogg>My zucchini caresses your carrots.
J-Dogg>Damn .baby your right, this shit is HOT.
Partner7> . . .
Partner7>What the fuck is this madlibs? I'm outta here.
J-Dogg>Yeah, well I already unleashed my cauliflower, all over your olives, and up in your eyes. Now you can't see. Bitch.
Partner7>Whatever.

J-Dogg>Baby, I been havin a tough night so treat me nice aight?
BritneySpears27>Aight.
J-Dogg>Slip out of those pants baby, yeah.
BritneySpears27>I slip out of my pants, just for you, J-Dogg.
J-Dogg>Oh yeah, aight. Aight, I put on my robe and wizard hat.
BritneySpears27>Oh, I like to play dress up.
J-Dogg>Me too baby.
BritneySpears27>I kiss you softly on your chest.
J-Dogg>I cast Lvl. 3 Eroticism. You turn into a real beautiful woman.
BritneySpears27>Hey . . .
J-Dogg>I meditate to regain my mana, before casting Lvl. 8 Cock of the Infinite.
BritneySpears27>Funny I still don't see it.
J-Dogg>I spend my mana reserves to cast Mighty Fuck of the Beyondness.
BritneySpears27>You are the worst cyber partner ever. This is ridiculous.
J-Dogg>Don't fuck with me bitch, I'm the mightiest sorcerer of the lands.
J-Dogg>I steal yo soul and cast Lightning Lvl. 1,000,000. Your body explodes into a fine bloody mist, because you are only a Lvl. 2 Druid.
BritneySpears27>Don't ever message me again you piece of shiat.
J-Dogg>Robots are trying to drill my brain but my lightning shield inflicts DOA attack, leaving the robots as flaming piles of metal.
J-Dogg>King Arthur congratulates me for destroying Dr. Robotnik's evil army of Robot Socialist Republics. The Cold War ends. Reagan steals my accomplishments and makes like it was cause of him.
J-Dogg>You still there baby? I think it's getting hard now.
J-Dogg>Baby?

[Story]

FAMILY STATEMENT

By Alison Bundy, from the Spring 2003 issue of Chicago Review.

When the pater was apprehended muling hooch in his diapers, our reaction was neither shock nor shame, nor even embarrassment. Rather, we were pleased the patriarch had recovered a vestige of his old ambitious spirit, and gratified to find him making creative use of the paraphernalia of his disability. We hope we do not offend when we suggest that, issues of legality aside, many among us would do well to emulate him in this regard. For the pater was nothing, before his fall, if not resourceful.

Subsequent to our delight, however, came a prolonged scuffle in and about the legal system: blandishment of lawyers, bribery of toadies, countless hours spent awaiting hearings that never took place. We were of course alarmed at the pater's immediate situation—narrow cell, forced labor (inappropriate, dangerous even, for one such as he), depleted supply of diapers.The incident in the kitchen, so widely reported, particularly roused our concern. Yes, from the start we have experienced hourly anxiety over our pater's health, for the crumbling edifice of his body requires a degree of attention and care difficult enough to secure in what we have begun more and more to refer to as "the free world."

Inevitably, the pater has dismissed our worries. *What is prison?* he asks as he lies on his bed of straw, and he raises a long hand and sweeps the air down the length of his limbs. And when we look at him dumbly, as in our infant years, he shuts his eyes and whispers the answer: *what is prison but the body, the body.* And we must turn away, that he not see our tears.

This is a—excuse us—we must collect . . .

This is a great country and we are encouraged that so many of its citizens are presently behind bars; indeed when we add to their numbers those who, although now situated differently, were once behind bars, and if we then include their loved ones, and add to that sum the number of people in positions of power who would be behind bars were they not in positions of power, well, when we consider these vast numbers, we feel certain to encounter everywhere we turn an embarrassment of riches in the way of sympathetic understanding.

But sympathetic understanding will not the diapers buy. Daily the pater wanes; daily he regrets his action. *What is hooch-muling?* he asks, raising a long hand and brushing the flies away down the length of his body, and when we look at him dumbly, as in our teenage years, he turns away, to the wall, and mutters the answer: *irresponsibility, fiduciary irresponsibility.* Oh if he had teeth, to hear them grind once more.

And of course we ourselves are no longer young, we have lost teeth, lost employment; our limbs—never as tough as our ancestor's—are weakening and our walkers seem heavier, our prostheses, our eyesight . . .

But enough. We are grateful to so many of you for supporting us in our struggle over the years, and we speak to you today, on the occasion of the pater's 106th birthday, for the final time.

You will have heard of the pelican, that creature ungainly on land but commanding in flight. Mythology tells us the bird allows its children to gorge on its own blood and breast meat, and although science denies this, the image depicts a truth greater than fact.

But we are not the pelican's children. Instead, in a turn no doubt familiar to some of you, we are the pelican, and the pater, our child.

Hear us out.

Without insisting on ornithological analogy, we have alerted the pater to our scheme. (*What are you?* he asks as he writhes on his pallet, raising a long hand and forming a fist, as he punches the air, and when we look at him dumbly, as in our middle years, he meets our stare: *cretins! cretins!*) We have also approached the warden who long ago seemed to tire of our pleas, but like a miracle he finds our idea of interest. Some among you may suspect, when you hear our plan, that he craves notoriety, but why attribute to cynicism what may also be attributed to faith? In any case, we take it as a sign that authority is finally on our side.

And so after these, our last words spoken in the free world, we will enter the pater's cell, metaphorically sealing ourselves off from the light to begin a long demise: we will take neither food nor drink, in the hope that as we wane the pater shall by proximity wax, as we falter he shall thrive, as we subside he shall rage and in that rage be resurrected once more to mule—if not the hooch—the common burden of his days.

For the warden has agreed: if the pater outlasts us he shall be set free.

A storm of controversy no doubt gathers: we will not be present when it breaks. We will be in a quieter place. Please do not mourn us—let us eschew the keening tone of tragedy for the lilting note of joy: we go knowing fully what we do. Our fate awaits us—how many have been able to utter those words with calm?

And please, send no candy, no postcards, no lace doilies kindly tatted, for the reminder—we cannot—though you might, perhaps, prepare—for the pater . . .

Thank you dear friends, supporters. And now the iron bars are opening, they beckon—we bid you not au revoir, but adieu, adieu! ■

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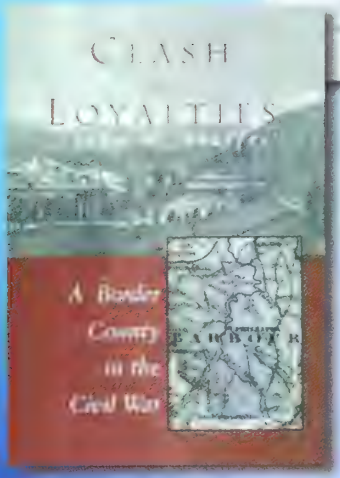
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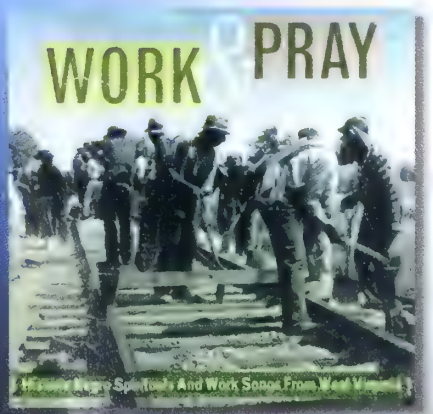
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AGAINST SCHOOL

How public education cripples our kids, and why

By John Taylor Gatto

I taught for thirty years in some of the worst schools in Manhattan, and in some of the best, and during that time I became an expert in boredom. Boredom was everywhere in my world, and if you asked the kids, as I often did, *why* they felt so bored, they always gave the same answers: They said the work was stupid, that it made no sense, that they already knew it. They said they wanted to be doing something real, not just sitting around. They said teachers didn't seem to know much about their subjects and clearly weren't interested in learning more. And the kids were right: their teachers were every bit as bored as they were.

Boredom is the common condition of schoolteachers, and anyone who has spent time in a teachers' lounge can vouch for the low energy, the whining, the dispirited attitudes, to be found there. When asked why *they* feel bored, the teachers tend to blame the kids, as you might expect. Who wouldn't get bored teaching students who are rude and interested only in grades? If even that. Of course, teachers are themselves products of the same twelve-year compulsory school programs that so thoroughly bore their students, and as school personnel they are trapped inside structures even more rigid than those imposed upon the children. Who, then, is to blame?

We all are. My grandfather taught me that. One afternoon when I was seven I complained to him of boredom, and he batted me hard on the head. He told me that I was never to use that term in his presence again, that if I was bored it was my fault and no one else's. The obligation to amuse and instruct myself was entirely my own, and people who didn't know that were childish people, to be avoided if possible. Certainly not to be trusted. That episode cured me of boredom forever, and here and there over the years I was able to pass on the lesson to some remarkable student. For the most part, however, I found it futile to challenge the official notion that boredom and childishness were the natural state of affairs in the classroom. Often I had to defy custom, and even bend the law, to help kids break out of this trap.

John Taylor Gatto is a former New York State and New York City Teacher of the Year and the author, most recently, of The Underground History of American Education. *He was a participant in the* Harper's Magazine *forum "School on a Hill," which appeared in the September 2001 issue.*

DO WE REALLY NEED SCHOOL? SIX CLASSES A DAY, FIVE DAYS A WEEK, NINE MONTHS A YEAR, FOR TWELVE YEARS? IS THIS DEADLY ROUTINE REALLY NECESSARY?

The empire struck back, of course; childish adults regularly conflate o position with disloyalty. I once returned from a medical leave to discover th all evidence of my having been granted the leave had been purposely destroye that my job had been terminated, and that I no longer possessed even teaching license. After nine months of tormented effort I was able to r trieve the license when a school secretary testified to witnessing the plot u fold. In the meantime my family suffered more than I care to remember. F the time I finally retired in 1991, I had more than enough reason to think our schools—with their long-term, cell-block–style, forced confinement of bo students and teachers—as virtual factories of childishness. Yet I honest could not see *why* they had to be that way. My own experience had reveale to me what many other teachers must learn along the way, too, yet keep themselves for fear of reprisal: if we wanted to we could easily and inexpe sively jettison the old, stupid structures and help kids *take* an education rath than merely *receive* a schooling. We could encourage the best qualities of youth fulness—curiosity, adventure, resilience, the capacity for surprising insight– simply by being more flexible about time, texts, and tests, by introducing ki to truly competent adults, and by giving each student what autonomy he she needs in order to take a risk every now and then.

But we don't do that. And the more I asked why not, and persisted thinking about the "problem" of schooling as an engineer might, the mo I missed the point: What if there is no "problem" with our schools? Wh if they are the way they are, so expensively flying in the face of commo sense and long experience in how children learn things, not because th are doing something wrong but because they are doing something right? it possible that George W. Bush accidentally spoke the truth when h said we would "leave no child behind"? Could it be th our schools are designed to make sure not one of them ev really grows up?

Do we really need school? I don't mean education, just force schooling: six classes a day, five days a week, nine months a year, f twelve years. Is this deadly routine really necessary? And if so, for wh Don't hide behind reading, writing, and arithmetic as a rationale, becau 2 million happy homeschoolers have surely put that banal justification rest. Even if they hadn't, a considerable number of well-known Americ never went through the twelve-year wringer our kids currently g through, and they turned out all right. George Washington, Benjam Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln? Someone taught them, be sure, but they were not products of a school *system,* and not one them was ever "graduated" from a secondary school. Throughout most American history, kids generally didn't go to high school, yet the u schooled rose to be admirals, like Farragut; inventors, like Edison; ca tains of industry, like Carnegie and Rockefeller; writers, like Melville a Twain and Conrad; and even scholars, like Margaret Mead. In fact, unt pretty recently people who reached the age of thirteen weren't looke upon as children at all. Ariel Durant, who co-wrote an enormous, and ve good, multivolume history of the world with her husband, Will, was happ ly married at fifteen, and who could reasonably claim that Ariel Dura was an uneducated person? Unschooled, perhaps, but not uneducated.

We have been taught (that is, schooled) in this country to think of "su cess" as synonymous with, or at least dependent upon, "schooling," but hi torically that isn't true in either an intellectual or a financial sense. And ple ty of people throughout the world today find a way to educate themselv without resorting to a system of compulsory secondary schools that all t often resemble prisons. Why, then, do Americans confuse education with ju such a system? What exactly is the purpose of our public schools?

Mass schooling of a compulsory nature really got its teeth into th United States between 1905 and 1915, though it was conceived of muc earlier and pushed for throughout most of the nineteenth century. Th

son given for this enormous upheaval of family life and cultural tradi-
ns was, roughly speaking, threefold:
.) To make good people.
!) To make good citizens.
3) To make each person his or her personal best.
These goals are still trotted out today on a regular basis, and most of us ac-
t them in one form or another as a decent definition of public education's
sion, however short schools actually fall in achieving them. But we are dead
ng. Compounding our error is the fact that the national literature holds
nerous and surprisingly consistent statements of compulsory schooling's true
pose. We have, for example, the great H. L. Mencken, who wrote in *The*
erican Mercury for April 1924 that the aim of public education is not

> o fill the young of the species with knowledge and awaken their intelligence. . . . Nothing could be further from the truth. The aim . . . is simply to reduce as many individuals as possible to the same safe level, to breed and train a standardized citizenry, to put down dissent and originality. That is its aim in the United States . . . and that is its aim everywhere else.

cause of Mencken's reputation as a satirist, we might be tempted to dis-
ss this passage as a bit of hyperbolic sarcasm. His article, however, goes
to trace the template for our own educational system back to the now
nished, though never to be forgotten, military state of Prussia. And

IN 1843, HORACE MANN WROTE A PAEAN TO THE LAND OF FREDERICK THE GREAT AND CALLED FOR ITS SCHOOLING TO BE BROUGHT HERE



though he was certainly aware of the irony that we had recently been at
ar with Germany, the heir to Prussian thought and culture, Mencken
as being perfectly serious here. Our educational system really is Prussian
origin, and that really is cause for concern.

The odd fact of a Prussian provenance for our schools pops up again and
gain once you know to look for it. William James alluded to it many times
the turn of the century. Orestes Brownson, the hero of Christopher Lasch's
991 book, *The True and Only Heaven*, was publicly denouncing the Prus-
anization of American schools back in the 1840s. Horace Mann's "Seventh
nnual Report" to the Massachusetts State Board of Education in 1843 is es-
ntially a paean to the land of Frederick the Great and a call for its school-
g to be brought here. That Prussian culture loomed large in America is hard-
surprising, given our early association with that utopian state. A Prussian
rved as Washington's aide during the Revolutionary War, and so many Ger-
an-speaking people had settled here by 1795 that Congress considered
ublishing a German-language edition of the federal laws. But what shocks

ustrations by Travis Coburn

MODERN, INDUSTRIALIZED, COMPULSORY SCHOOLING WAS TO MAKE A SURGICAL INCISION INTO THE PROSPECTIVE UNITY OF THE UNDERCLASSES

is that we should so eagerly have adopted one of the very worst aspects of Prus
tan culture: an educational system deliberately designed to produce mediocr
intellects, to hamstring the inner life, to deny students a
preciable leadership skills, and to ensure docile and incomple
citizens—all in order to render the populace "manageable."

It was from James Bryant Conant—president of Harvard for twen
years, WWI poison-gas specialist, WWII executive on the atomic-bom
project, high commissioner of the American zone in Germany aft
WWII, and truly one of the most influential figures of the twentieth ce
tury—that I first got wind of the real purposes of American schoolin
Without Conant, we would probably not have the same style and degr
of standardized testing that we enjoy today, nor would we be blessed wi
gargantuan high schools that warehouse 2,000 to 4,000 students at a tim
like the famous Columbine High in Littleton, Colorado. Shortly after
retired from teaching I picked up Conant's 1959 book-length essay, *Th
Child the Parent and the State*, and was more than a little intrigued to s
him mention in passing that the modern schools we attend were the resu
of a "revolution" engineered between 1905 and 1930. A revolution? H
declines to elaborate, but he does direct the curious and the uninforme
to Alexander Inglis's 1918 book, *Principles of Secondary Education*,
which "one saw this revolution through the eyes of a revolutionary."

Inglis, for whom a lecture in education at Harvard is named, makes it pe
fectly clear that compulsory schooling on this continent was intended to
just what it had been for Prussia in the 1820s: a fifth column into the bu
geoning democratic movement that threatened to give the peasants an
the proletarians a voice at the bargaining table. Modern, industrialize
compulsory schooling was to make a sort of surgical incision into the prospe
tive unity of these underclasses. Divide children by subject, by age-gradin
by constant rankings on test
and by many other more sul
tle means, and it was unlike
that the ignorant mass
mankind, separated in chil
hood, would ever re-integra
into a dangerous whole.





Inglis breaks down the pu
pose—the *actual* purpose—
modern schooling into six b
sic functions, any one of whic
is enough to curl the hair
those innocent enough to b
lieve the three traditional goa
listed earlier:

1) The *adjustive* or *adapti*
function. Schools are to estal
lish fixed habits of reaction
authority. This, of course, pr
cludes critical judgment cor
pletely. It also pretty much destroys the idea that useful or interesting mat
rial should be taught, because you can't test for *reflexive* obedience until y
know whether you can make kids learn, and do, foolish and boring things

2) The *integrating* function. This might well be called "the conformity fun
tion," because its intention is to make children as alike as possible. Peop
who conform are predictable, and this is of great use to those who wish
harness and manipulate a large labor force.

3) The *diagnostic and directive* function. School is meant to determi
each student's proper social role. This is done by logging evidence math
matically and anecdotally on cumulative records. As in "your permane
record." Yes, you do have one.

4) The *differentiating* function. Once their social role has been "diag-ɔsed," children are to be sorted by role and trained only so far as their des-ıation in the social machine merits—and not one step further. So much r making kids their personal best.

5) The *selective* function. This refers not to human choice at all but to Dar-n's theory of natural selection as applied to what he called "the favored ces." In short, the idea is to help things along by consciously attempting improve the breeding stock. Schools are meant to tag the unfit—with poor ades, remedial placement, and other punishments—clearly enough that their ers will accept them as inferior and effectively bar them from the repro-ıctive sweepstakes. That's what all those little humiliations from first grade ıward were intended to do: wash the dirt down the drain.

6) The *propaedeutic* function. The societal system implied by these rules ill require an elite group of caretakers. To that end, a small fraction of the ds will quietly be taught how to manage this continuing project, how to atch over and control a population deliberately dumbed down and de-awed in order that government might proceed unchallenged and corpo-tions might never want for obedient labor.

That, unfortunately, is the purpose of mandatory public education in this ɔuntry. And lest you take Inglis for an isolated crank with a rather too ʼnical take on the educational enterprise, you should know that he was ardly alone in championing these ideas. Conant himself, building on the leas of Horace Mann and others, campaigned tirelessly for an American hool system designed along the same lines. Men like George Peabody, ho funded the cause of mandatory schooling throughout the South, surely nderstood that the Prussian system was useful in creating not only a harm-ss electorate and a servile labor force but also a virtual herd of mindless onsumers. In time a great number of industrial titans came to recognize the enormous profits to be had by cultivating and tending just such a herd via public education, among them Andrew Carnegie and John D. Rockefeller.

There you have it. Now you know. We don't need Karl Marx's con-eption of a grand warfare between the classes to see that it is in the interest f complex management, economic or political, to dumb people down, to de-ıoralize them, to divide them from one another, and to discard them if they on't conform. Class may frame the proposition, as when Woodrow Wilson, hen president of Princeton University, said the following to the New York City School Teachers Association in 1909: "We want one class of persons to ıave a liberal education, and we want another class of persons, a very much arger class, of necessity, in every society, to forgo the privileges of a liberal ducation and fit themselves to perform specific difficult manual tasks." But he motives behind the disgusting decisions that bring about these ends need ıot be class-based at all. They can stem purely from fear, or from the by now amiliar belief that "efficiency" is the paramount virtue, rather than love, lib-rty, laughter, or hope. Above all, they can stem from simple greed.

There were vast fortunes to be made, after all, in an economy based on mass ɔroduction and organized to favor the large corporation rather than the small ɔusiness or the family farm. But mass production required mass consumption, ınd at the turn of the twentieth century most Americans considered it both ınnatural and unwise to buy things they didn't actually need. Mandatory schooling was a godsend on that count. School didn't have to train kids in ny direct sense to think they should consume nonstop, because it did some-hing even better: it encouraged them not to think at all. And that left them sitting ducks for another great invention of the modern era—marketing.

Now, you needn't have studied marketing to know that there are two groups ɔf people who can always be convinced to consume more than they need to: ıddicts and children. School has done a pretty good job of turning our chil-dren into addicts, but it has done a spectacular job of turning our children ınto children. Again, this is no accident. Theorists from Plato to Rousseau

SCHOOL DIDN'T HAVE TO TRAIN KIDS TO THINK THEY SHOULD CONSUME NONSTOP; IT SIMPLY TAUGHT THEM NOT TO THINK AT ALL

MANDATORY SCHOOLING'S PURPOSE IS TO TURN KIDS INTO SERVANTS. DON'T LET YOUR OWN HAVE THEIR CHILDHOODS EXTENDED, NOT EVEN FOR A DAY

to our own Dr. Inglis knew that if children could be cloistered with other chil dren, stripped of responsibility and independence, encouraged to develop onl the trivializing emotions of greed, envy, jealousy, and fear, they would gro older but never truly grow up. In the 1934 edition of his once well-know book *Public Education in the United States*, Ellwood P. Cubberley detailed an praised the way the strategy of successive school enlargements had extend ed childhood by two to six years, and forced schooling was at that point sti quite new. This same Cubberley—who was dean of Stanford's School of Ed ucation, a textbook editor at Houghton Mifflin, and Conant's friend and co respondent at Harvard—had written the following in the 1922 edition of hi book *Public School Administration*: "Our schools are . . . factories in which th raw products (children) are to be shaped and fashioned. . . . And it is the busi ness of the school to build its pupils according to the specifications laid down.

It's perfectly obvious from our society today what those specification were. Maturity has by now been banished from nearly every aspect of our lives Easy divorce laws have removed the need to work at relationships; eas credit has removed the need for fiscal self-control; easy entertainment ha removed the need to learn to entertain oneself; easy answers have remove the need to ask questions. We have become a nation of children, happy t surrender our judgments and our wills to political exhortations and commercia blandishments that would insult actual adults. We buy televisions, and the we buy the things we see on the television. We buy computers, and then w buy the things we see on the computer. We buy $150 sneakers whether w need them or not, and when they fall apart too soon we buy another pai We drive SUVs and believe the lie that they constitute a kind of life insur ance, even when we're upside-down in them. And, worst of all, we don't ba an eye when Ari Fleischer tells us to "be careful what you say," even if w remember having been told somewhere back in school tha America is the land of the free. We simply buy that on too. Our schooling, as intended, has seen to it.

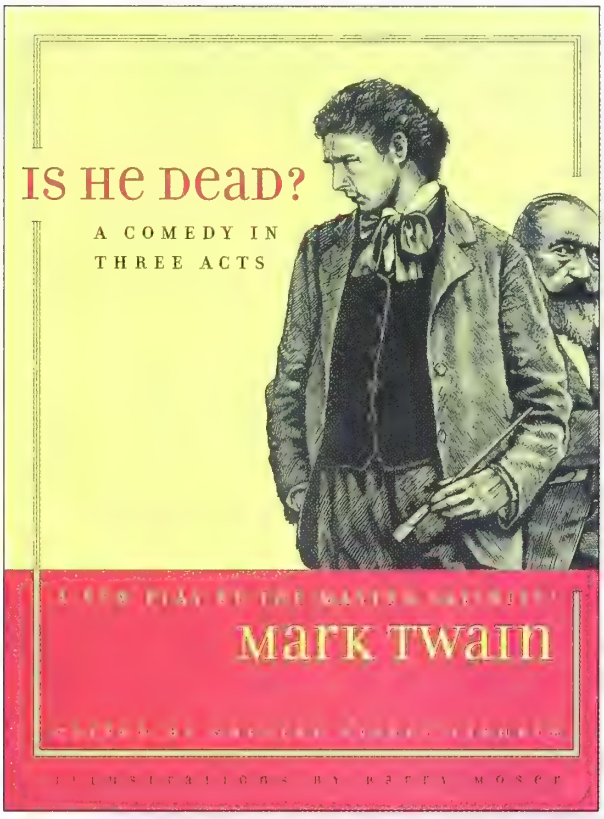
Now for the good news. Once you understand the logic behin modern schooling, its tricks and traps are fairly easy to avoid. Scho trains children to be employees and consumers; teach your own to b leaders and adventurers. School trains children to obey reflexively; teac your own to think critically and independently. Well-schooled kids hav a low threshold for boredom; help your own to develop an inner life s that they'll never be bored. Urge them to take on the serious material, th *grown-up* material, in history, literature, philosophy, music, art, econom ics, theology—all the stuff schoolteachers know well enough to avoi Challenge your kids with plenty of solitude so that they can learn to enjo their own company, to conduct inner dialogues. Well-schooled people ar conditioned to dread being alone, and they seek constant companionshi through the TV, the computer, the cell phone, and through shallo friendships quickly acquired and quickly abandoned. Your children shoul have a more meaningful life, and they can.

First, though, we must wake up to what our schools really are: laborat ries of experimentation on young minds, drill centers for the habits and at titudes that corporate society demands. Mandatory education serves childre only incidentally; its real purpose is to turn them into servants. Don't let you own have their childhoods extended, not even for a day. If David Farragu could take command of a captured British warship as a preteen, if Thoma Edison could publish a broadsheet at the age of twelve, if Ben Frankli could apprentice himself to a printer at the same age (then put himse through a course of study that would choke a Yale senior today), there's n telling what your own kids could do. After a long life, and thirty years in th public school trenches, I've concluded that genius is as common as dir We suppress our genius only because we haven't yet figured out how t manage a population of educated men and women. The solution, I think, i simple and glorious. Let them manage themselves.

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Edited with Foreword, Afterword, and Notes by Shelley Fisher Fishkin. Text Established by The Mark Twain Project, Bancroft Library. Illustrations by Barry Moser

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A MASTERPIECE OF LOATHING

Goya paints a political dynasty

By Evan S. Connell

As in all the turbulent periods which have foreshadowed crucial and violent phases in the history of mankind, many writers and artists tended to translate into their own idiom the repugnance they felt for an established but tottering order from which they wanted to dissociate themselves at all costs.

—Jean François Chabrun

On March 12, 1781, when Francisco Goya was thirty-four years old and worming his way toward royal patronage, Spaniards marched out of Cuzco to exterminate Peruvian Indians. The Inca Tupac Amaru, after seeing his wife, son, uncle, brother-in-law, and cousins executed, had his tongue torn out. Four horses pulled his body apart. Spaniards burned his corpse on the summit of Machu Picchu.

It might be noted that King Charles III didn't order these atrocities. In fact he had little idea what his subjects in the New World were doing. Nevertheless, conquistadors were extensions of Spain, exemplars of zealous Christianity. Goya's subjects would be the decadent inheritors of that murderous imperialism.



It had been a long, dusty, bumpy road from the poor village of Fuendetodos where he was born. His parents moved there from Saragossa because one of his mother's relatives owned a house. Not much of a house. Roughly made of stone, thick walls for protection against blistering summer heat and savage winters. Huge fireplace with stone benches on either side, stone-walled kitchen. Smoky, shadowy rooms. Fuendetodos, meaning the fountain that belongs to everybody, wasn't a place you would care to go to on vacation. Rocky land, little water. The one attraction might be crumbling Roman and Moorish forts surmounting nearby hills. What money the villagers earned went mostly to priests and to the landlord, El Conde de Fuentes.

Just when the family returned to Saragossa is disputed. Scholarly guesses range from 1749 to 1759, so Goya was anywhere from three to thirteen.

José Goya, an impoverished gilder, enrolled his son at a school for the poor. What did the boy learn? Fragments of Latin, several of which became captions for drawings. Some light acquaintance with Virgil's poetry. And ever afterward, as long as he lived, he would trace the

Evan S. Connell is the author of nineteen books, including Mrs. Bridge, Mr. Bridge, Son of the Morning Star, *and* Deus Lo Volt! *His biography of Goya will be published by Counterpoint Press in February*

Neither More nor Less, plate 41 of Los Caprichos, 1799
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sign of the Cross at the beginning of his letters.

We find him enrolled, age fourteen, at the Luzán academy, a fact well established by an 1828 catalogue of the Prado:

> He was a pupil of Don José Luzán in Saragossa, from whom he learnt the principles of Draughtmanship, who made him copy the best prints that he possessed; he was with him for four years and began to paint from his own imagination.

Fictioneers give a tumultuous account of his departure from Saragossa. Various religious brotherhoods marched through the streets during festivals, demonstrations that could become bloody confrontations. Parishioners from Nuestra Señora del Pilar often clashed with parishioners of San Luis, and Goya—champion of El Pilar—would lead the attack. One night three men were stabbed. The Grand Inquisitor obtained a list of those responsible. At the head of that list a notorious ringleader, Goya. Just in time did he learn that the Inquisition was after him, therefore "the turbulent youth resolved on flight."

The facts are less dramatic. While studying at Luzán's academy, he met an older student, Francisco Bayeu, and in 1763 Bayeu moved to Madrid. Goya followed him. After all, Madrid was where things happened, where a man could make a name for himself. Apparently not much happened, so Goya went to Rome. How he got there never has been learned. Most likely he worked his trade, cranking out portraits of shopkeepers, village altarpieces, this or that, whatever would buy a hunk of bread and some cheese.

Almost nothing is known about this Roman holiday, but colorful stories popped up like daisies. He earned his daily bread as an acrobat. Madly in love with a nun, he tried to scale the convent wall. Catherine the Great's ambassador of fered him a job. He carved his name on th dome of St. Peter's.

While in Rome he learned that the Acad emy of Fine Arts at Parma had invited sub missions on that eternally popular theme Hannibal crossing the Alps.

Annibale vincitore che rimira, la prime volt dalle Alpi, l'Italia.

The prize was a five-ounce gold medal Goya submitted a painting and pretende he was Italian, signing it Goja. The judge liked his brushwork and "a warmth of ex pression in Hannibal's eyes," but a touch o levity annoyed them. The prize went to certain Paolo Borroni, just about forgotte these days.

A gold medal would have sent him fly ing straight to Madrid, Caesar with paintbrush, but also-rans don't get muc respect. Goya returned to Saragossa, prob ably in the late summer of 1771. There he ob tained quite a few commissions, notably eleve oil paintings for the Carthusian Monastery o Aula Dei. Things were looking up. Within few years he had become Saragossa' most prosperous artist.

By 1779 Goya was back in Madrid. At las he met the royal family. He kissed their hand and showed four paintings.

Not long after this social triumph he ap plied for a job as Painter to the Court, n doubt anticipating further happy encounter with royalty. Don Manuel de Roda, a Aragonese of some influence, urged tha Goya's petition be granted. The Duke of Losa da replied on behalf of the court that al though Goya was industrious and promisin there seemed no great insistence to the matte or any dearth of capable painters. A friend Bayeu's got the job.

One year later the wheel of fortune stopped a Goya's number: he was elected to membership i the Royal Academy of San Fernando. Those wh mattered were indeed beginning to appreciat him, but Goya had tinkered with the wheel. H now understood that success depended not onl upon vision and skill; one must take into accoun one's superiors. He therefore accompanied hi petition with a work the academics would like *Christ on the Cross*. It wasn't original. He repeat ed a Bayeu study of the Crucifixion that Bayeu ha copied from Anton Mengs. It was somber, as be fitted the subject, yet not disturbing. The Roya Academy liked it.

1783. He was commissioned to paint Coun Floridablanca, next to King Charles the mos powerful man in Spain. Although Floridablan ca charged him to say nothing, Goya wrote t

Crucifixion of Christ, in the Carthusian Monastery Aula Dei, Saragossa, Spain, 1774 © Oronoz Fotógrafos, Madri

hildhood friend in Saragossa, Martín Zapa-
, that he wanted to share the important
ws: "When his lordship came to have lunch
Madrid this afternoon I was with him for
o hours . . ."

In 1786 he was appointed Painter to the
ng, a position worth 15,000 reales, not a for-
ne but not bad. He ordered boots from Eng-
nd. He took French lessons. He complained
at days weren't long enough; he painted him-
f wearing a plug hat fitted with metal candle-
lders to show that he worked at night, and
re we catch a whiff of humbug. He seems to
addressing his public. I work very late, you
derstand, because I am such a popular artist.

Within a decade he cranked out three hun-
ed portraits and his customers were delighted,
ver mind slovenly composition or anything
se. Ah! Look there! He got my sash just right!

During this period Goya's work is inconsis-
nt. One dour critic wrote that it resembled
merican primitives or the portraits on tav-
n signs. He failed most obviously when he
ed to serve popular taste, though he was
od with children. *Don Manuel Osorio de*
ñiga. A fairy-tale little prince dazzled by
e splendor of his clothes, lace collar em-
asizing the delicate childish flesh, eyes
mewhat bewildered. Don Manuel has a
t magpie tethered by a string. Three mur-
rous Goya cats—gray cat, black cat,
indled assassin—crouch together, focused
the magpie. They know they dare not
pounce. The magpie understands.
All's well.

Although Charles III was phenome-
ally ugly the gods are just. To compensate
r nonexistent shoulders and that Bour-
on nose, they awarded him good health
nd considerable intelligence. This might
ound like an unfair exchange after you
ave looked at the wrinkled triangular face,
ut of course he was a monarch with every-
ing that implies.

He is said to have been entirely honest in
is purpose, dedicated to equality as he saw
. He once rebuked the president of the
Council of the Castile for "pretty conversa-
on." He wanted governmental business han-
led without delay, no dawdling: "I also wish
nat if it is possible to bend justice that the
oor get preference."

He liked musical clocks and exotic birds
gilded cages. He had no time for stage
lays or dancing or music and disliked bull-
ghting, but hunting he most dearly loved:
He goes out a-sporting every day of the
ear, rain or blow, whilst at Madrid . . ."
And being who he was he enjoyed his own
preserve, fenced to keep the quarry within, poachers without. This verdant enclave would have sustained hundreds of peasants, but that meant little to Spanish monarchs.

Charles died in 1788 just before a cataclysmic outburst of rage in France, and when the first thoughts about human equality seeped through the Pyrenees, he did what he could to suppress them. Still, he is regarded as the best of the Spanish Bourbons, qualified praise in light of what came after. We are told that if compared with his ministers, Charles seemed ordinary; if compared with his son Charles IV, and with his grandson Ferdinand VII, he was brushed with genius. One chronicler of those days remarked that a fool succeeded him and a knave succeeded the fool. By eighteenth-century standards he was humane, yet he felt more strongly about animals than about humans.



Don Manuel Osorio de Zuñiga, c. 1788–89 © Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City/Bridgeman Art Library

Now he stands as Goya perceived him: an antique flintlock nearly two feet long, tricorn hat resembling a menacing black kite or a stealth bomber, high-button boots, blue sash. He looks friendly and satisfied, as well he should because in those days the empire wasn't threatened. There might be discontent in France, but for those born to noble households in Spain life was secure and agreeable.

While Charles III lay in the so-called rotting room at the Escorial, Madrileños prepared for the coronation of his son Charles IV. The Place de l'Arméria became a garden with triumphal arches, illuminated at night by thousand-pot candles. Glass lanterns, torches, candles everywhere. The Ministry of the Gobernacion called upon Goya for pictures. The Duke of Hijar commissioned Goya portraits of the royal couple. The Duke and Duchess of Osuna wanted individual portraits of Their Majesties to be displayed in oval frames outside the Osuna palace. Guests at their party would dance all night in the Temple of Minerva, which is to say, their salon. Guests of the Duke and Duchess of Alba didn't stop at dawn; they continued dancing while the sun rose, thereby scoring a point on the Osunas.

Goya was so busy that his studio is said to have resembled a factory or a printing shop where images of Charles and his nymphomaniac wife, Maria Luisa, were pulled out like pages still damp from the press.

July 14, 1789. French revolutionaries took the Bastille. Spaniards didn't get excited. Everybody knew the French cared about little except dressmaking and pastry.

Two months later young Charles and his wife ceremoniously entered Madrid.

After settling himself on the throne, Charles restored bullfighting, which Spaniards interpreted as a good sign, and he appointed Goya official Painter to the Chamber (*Pintor de Cámara*). This brought a salary increase and fringe benefits such as a more intimate relationship with His Majesty. While sitting for a portrait, Charles inquired about Goya's birthplace, sought his opinion of the political climate in Aragon, chatted amiably. When he saw the finished work, he placed both hands on the artist's shoulders and they half embraced.

Goya wrote to Zapater: "I am delighted to please him so much. . . . You can imagine the importance of this."

March 1793. France declared war on Spain, avowing its determination to liberate oppressed Spaniards. Spain announced that it would defend the principle of monarchy against Republicanism.

Spain won a few battles in Catalonia but overwhelming victory seemed out of the question. Charles decided to negotiate, anything to get rid of the French. So there went half of the exotic Caribbean island called Santo Domingo—today known as Haiti and the Dominican Republic—where French is spoken at the west end, Spanish at the east end. However, things could have been worse, such was the prevailing sentiment. The abominable French went home and Charles pinned another title on his youthful prime minister, Manuel Godoy: Prince of Peace.

Six years later Prince of Peace Godoy commanded Spanish forces during the slightly comic War of the Oranges. What was it all about,





Manuel Godoy, Duke of Alcudia, 1801–08 © Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid, Bridgeman Art Library; Duchess of Alba, 1797 © Archivo Iconográfico, S.A./CORBIS

gland and Portugal were in business together
cause Englishmen had grown very fond of Por-
guese wine. This irritated Spain, which at the
ne was allied with Napoleon. But Spain didn't
nt Napoleon to cross the Pyrenees because—
ll, who could be sure
nat Napoleon might
? And a daughter of
narles and María Luisa
d married the King of
rtugal, which meant
ey would be attacking
eir own child. You see
e possibilities.
England didn't want to
t mixed up in it, so Por-
gal sued for peace a cou-
e of weeks after Span-
h troops crossed the
rder. Their Majesties
harles and María Luisa
tended a festival in
adajoz where the victo-
ous Prince of Peace
ain was honored. He,
return, handed María
uisa an orange branch
erated during the siege
a provincial town
lled Yelvas.



Goya painted Godoy
1801, thirty-four years old, beefily handsome
a bespangled uniform. He loiters on an ersatz
ttlefield, one arm resting on what might pos-
bly be a sofa in Goya's studio while he reads a
ilitary dispatch. Plumed hat on the ground.
aber at his side. The saber was a gift from
harles, which Godoy would lose some years
ter during his flight to Aranjuez. The overcast
y is murkily blue. Day is ending, the battle
on. Or perhaps it's dawn. Spanish troops in
ne background prepare themselves. No matter.
oya didn't include an orange branch but did
ow a couple of Portuguese flags, which Godoy
ould add to his coat of arms.
Between his meaty thighs a walking stick
ith a knobby handle stands erect.
Goya historian Janis Tomlinson comments
hat although the walking stick between his legs
invites an interpretation not at all in keeping
ith the official nature of the portrait, it might
lso be approached from a purely formal vantage
oint." It interrupts our line of sight, thus calling
ttention to the dispatch in his hand, "which
mplicitly mitigates Godoy's hubris by referring to
is role as minister of the king's will."
Myself, I think Goya had a different idea. I
uspect he was alluding to the prime minister's
ndiscriminate lust.
Lady Elizabeth Holland, who met Godoy about this time, described him as large, coarse, with ruddy skin and "a heavy, sleepy voluptuous eye, not unlike Ld. Amherst."

What is unmistakable from looking at this large, coarse man with a voluptuous eye is that he enjoyed women. One biographer remarked that he could be generous with his affections, dividing them among María Luisa, by whom he had royal infantes; his wife, the Countess of Chinchón, by whom he hoped to have nobles; and his longtime mistress, Josefa Tudó, by whom he had bastards.

Clearly his face is that of a licentious man. Overweight, true, but if he spent a few months at the gym he would be in good shape. It's no surprise that he attracted women. There on the faux battlefield he looks relaxed, amiable, good company at the local cantina. He is said to have behaved almost deferentially toward Goya. By now the artist was almost totally deaf and Godoy learned to communicate with him through sign language. The cause of Goya's deafness remains a mystery. In 1792 he was visiting a friend in Cádiz when he got sick. Whatever is known about this illness has been analyzed by physicians and historians, but there's little agreement except that he was permanently deafened. For the rest of his life he could hear nothing except a buzzing noise.

Queen María Luisa liked Goya. Sometimes she invited him to breakfast. This was flattering. Anybody would be flattered. Otherwise we don't know if he enjoyed the Queen's hospitality.

Manuel Godoy on the Battlefield, 1801 © Archivo Iconografico, S.A./CORBIS

The portrait of Charles, Maria Luisa, their children, and relatives is immense: nine feet high, eleven feet across. Did he or didn't he care for the subjects? It depends upon the viewer. It also depends upon the age in which each lives. The effect it must have had on nineteenth-century group photographs seems unnatural to us, but of course they themselves didn't see it that way.

Some critics think Goya never meant to caricature King Charles and his family. Look, we are told, at this pictorial symphony of orange, blue, yellow, gray-gold, silver, and white. And would Goya, however temperamental, risk angering his patron?

These thirteen arresting, disquieting figures have been called insects pinned to a background. Elie Faure, whose ponderous *History of Art* appeared in 1924, saw a collection of monsters brutalized by devout practices, by accumulated imperfections, furtive orgies, fear. Of all the great Spaniards who were subtle and savage, he remarks, Goya was the most subtle, the most savage.

María Luisa dominates, on that ravaged face a look of gastric malevolence. Goya painted this corpulent, scheming, lascivious woman larger than life. In fact, she was small, with short legs. Her parted lips pretend to smile but who is persuaded? That smile could erupt into a barnyard cackle. She had lost all her teeth and was fitted with plates by three dentists who served the court. The plates didn't function very well; she disliked people glancing at her while he ate. She watches us through the meaningless brown eyes of a horse, in her stylish coiffure a jeweled arrow. Goya subsequently painted two heads, one of them with María Luisa's arrow, admiring themselves in a mirror. *Quite tall!* he painted on the back of the mirror. What's gone on?

To the Queen's left, a little boy thought to be Godoy's child, Francisco de Paula.

To her right, María Isabella, who may also have been Godoy's child.

In the background with a black stain on her temple and a demented expression stands the spinster sister of Charles, Doña María Josefa, who would die before the painting was finished. You might think a vandal struck the canvas but the stain is deliberate, a lunar, which the French call a *mouche*, a cosmetic device intended to emphasize by contrast the woman's white skin, a descendant of the mole, which fashionable ladies have employed for a long time. A black dot came to seem inadequate so it grew into a manufactured patch that could be applied to the face here or there, as the lady chose. In 1800, when Goya did this huge painting, the lunar was going out of style.

The Queen doesn't have one. Her face is turned slightly aside, perhaps because Goya thought it strengthened the composition. Or maybe the Queen wanted to distinguish herself from her decrepit sister-in-law, a relic of days gone by.

In front of Doña María Josefa, a voluptuous young creature whose face is turned fully aside, María Antonina, a daughter of the Queen of Naples, betrothed to Ferdinand. Her face is averted because she doesn't yet belong to the imperial family. They might not have been affianced; in other words, Ferdinand might marry somebody else, which explains why Goya painted an anonymous woman.

Directly behind Charles stands the epileptic feeblemmided brother, Don Antonio Pascual, gazing at nothing. Beside Don Antonio, the King's eldest daughter, Doña Carlota Joaquina, married to the King of Portugal, Joao VI. We see only her profile. She is said to have been deformed as the result of a hunting accident and more oversexed than her mother. At the extreme right, the Infanta María Luisa Josefina holding her baby. And if one notes a similarity throughout this gathering, there's a reason. Spanish royalty intermarried—uncles, nieces, cousins—to make sure those titles, estates, and heaps of doubloons remained in the family vault.

Now, what about Charles? Despite the imperial blue sash and a bank of medals on his sagging chest, His Majesty played second violin to his wife. He resembles his uncle, the Infante Don Luis, a plump George Washington. He is said to have been rather sluggish, though now and again he would explode. He enjoyed wrestling with grooms in the stable, but if one of them happened to throw him he might hit the man. Unlike his father, who collected ornate clocks, Charles IV collected watches. And because he thought they should be kept warm in order to work properly, he assigned a valet to wear those he himself wasn't wearing. Years later this eccentricity would degenerate into obsession: his majordomo was instructed to carry six watches and must not announce supper until all six had chimed.

Charles IV wasn't a complex man, not a subtle man, and he puzzled foreign dignitaries. A French ambassador reported that distinction of birth meant nothing to him. "The Medinacelis, the Albuquerques, the Altamires, the Osimas, all these grandees who take such pride in their origins, mean no more to him than his grooms, he has the same way of speaking to anyone."

He enjoyed painting, as did the Queen. We are told she wasn't bad, though her work ha



een lost or is secluded in private collections. Charles offered several of their paintings to the Royal Academy. What the Academicians said ehind closed doors isn't known.

If Charles at the easel is unexpected, consid- r his passion for the violin. One biographer as- erts that he handled it reasonably well. Noth- ng substantiates this. On the contrary, when ie chose to join a quartet, as now and again he lid, a court musician planted behind a screen lrowned out the royal scraping. Charles must iave assumed that he and the professional were ewarding the audience with a duet. Once he layed for Goya, who mentioned this in a letter o his friend Zapater, though without com- nent. Goya, of course, was deaf. The Marx rothers would have loved it.

In 1967 Goya's huge picture was cleaned. From the grime of almost two centuries emerged a painting of Lot with his daughters. Undoubtedly it hung on the wall behind the royal family in 1800; nevertheless, the King and Queen commissioned no more work from Goya. They may have disliked the implication.

Everybody wants to pass judgment on this painting.

The mystic poet Paul Claudel saw it in Geneva not long after the Spanish Civil War and deplored Goya's focus on ugly realities. Claudel detested the "verminous" world of Bosch and Brueghel, but thought Goya worse, more degenerate, "seeking to avoid the eyes and the image of God."

Novelist Hemingway called it a masterpiece of loathing.

Biographer Charles Poore in 1938 asked how Goya could paint them as he did and escape strangulation. The answer he provides is that Goya avoided the example of Velázquez, "who gave all his Philips their look of poached nobility." It's a felicitous remark, but if Charles IV doesn't look poached, no Spanish sovereign ever did.

Portrait of the Family of Charles IV, 1800–01 © Scala/Art Resource, New York City

Anthony Hull saw the imminent decline of Spain mirrored in the static blue eyes of Charles, in the weak mouth, puffy cheeks, in the large, fat body and torpid head.

Charles at fifty-three, sluggish, pneumatic, jewels glittering on his chest like fireworks or the Great Square of Pegasus—brutally described by Gautier as a neighborhood baker who won the lottery. How did María Luisa, with her foxy intellect, overlook what we find so evident?

Hugh Stokes, whose book appeared in 1914, offers this explanation: "It has often been said that Goya caricatured his sitters. On the contrary he painted them according to the Spanish manner, which is disconcerting but truthful. The portraits of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are statements as matter-of-fact as a lawyer's bill."

In 1799, on the eighteenth day of the second month of the Republican calendar—18 Brumaire—Napoleon ousted the Directory, proclaiming himself First Consul of the Republic.

Soon he declared himself Emperor.

And with most of Europe intimidated, he peered over the mountains at Spain, which controlled access to the Mediterranean by way of Gibraltar, to say nothing of exotic New World colonies bulging with Indian silver and gold.

What about the Spanish government? Historian F. D. Klingender describes the triumvirate as a half-wit King who renounced the cares of state for the satisfaction of hunting, an intelligent Queen unscrupulous in the exercise of unlimited control over the King, and a playboy elevated to the dignity of prime minister "these were the guardians of the divine right o



kings at a time when the principle of legitima cy was challenged by an ex-corporal dethron ing half the monarchs of Europe."

At Fontainebleau in 1807, Napoleon sug gested that Portugal might be carved up like chateaubriand. France would be entitled to on third. Spain assuredly deserved one third. Anc of course, Prime Minister Godoy—that saga cious, astute, most excellent, most perspica cious statesman—Minister Godoy withou question deserved one third of Portugal. H should become Prince of Algarve.

Godoy must have been ecstatic. What h didn't know was that Ferdinand, urged an abetted by conservatives, was plotting to seiz the throne. Not only would Godoy be kille Ferdinand intended to murder his own parents

This unsigned note was inserted amon prayer books on the King's faldstool: *Prince Fer dinand prepares a movement in the palace. Th Crown is imperiled. Queen María Luisa runs gre risk of death by poison . . .*

Shakespeare would have snapped it up.

Martin Hume's early history of Spain gives

Folly of the Bulls, from the Follies series, c. 1815–24. On loan the Hamburg Kunsthalle, Hamburg/Bridgeman Art Libra

ore theatrical account of this dastardly busi-
ss. October 29, 1807. Charles discovered a
te on his dressing table: *Haste, haste, haste!*
ie mysterious note went on to reveal that
rdinand was planning a coup. Her Majesty
uld be poisoned. The Crown was imperiled.
eps must be taken at once to foil the plot.
What should be done? Charles consulted his
fe. They went unannounced to Ferdinand's
artment and found him working on some pa-
rs. Ferdinand tried to hide them, but the
ng seized these documents, which "proved to
in the highest degree compromising."
Charles immediately wrote to Napoleon:

Monsieur mon frère. . . . I have found with a horror, which makes me shudder, that the most terrible spirit of intrigue has penetrated into the heart of my own palace. Alas! My dear son, the heir of my throne, has formed a horrible plot to dethrone me, and has gone to the length of attempting the life of his mother. A plan so terrible . . .

The Duke of Bejar, holding a candelabra to luminate the corridors, led a procession rough the Escorial. After him a platoon of ie royal guard in blue-and-red uniforms, fol-wed by the Prince: "a stout, well-built, fresh-oloured young man of 23, of singularly sinis-r aspect." Ferdinand was a prisoner after his terrogation on the charge of treason.

According to the Treaty of Fontainebleau, 0,000 French troops had been allowed to en-r Spain whence they should proceed west-ard to occupy Portugal. But here came al-ost 100,000 Frenchmen, and instead of roceeding westward to Portugal they set up amp at strategic locations below the Pyre-ees. Could this be the vanguard of an occupy-ng army? Certainly not. They were observers.

What next? French troops eized Pamplona and Bar-elona. The royal couple anicked. They decided to oard ship at Cádiz and es-ape to the Americas. Fer-inand's spies reported that Godoy's mistress Josefa Tudó vas packing her belongings, vhich could only mean that he and Godoy were plan-ning to sail away with Charles and María Luisa.

March 17, 1808. At Aran-uez a few leagues south of Madrid the great escape col-apsed, halted by Ferdinand's upporters bellowing for the ead of El Choricero, Godoy he Sausage Man, so called ecause he came from Es-tremadura, where a great many pigs are raised.

Godoy tried to hide in a rolled-up carpet. Or he hid in the palace attic for thirty-six hours and when he surrendered, half dead of thirst, they tore off his clothes before dragging him to Ferdinand. Hume's account is specific. When the mob broke into his bedroom, Godoy threw on a dressing gown and escaped "by a secret door to a lumber-room above, where he lay hidden under a roll of matting . . ."

One version states that he was hiding in a pile of furniture and when he crawled out a horse stepped on his face, bloodying his nose. If a horse steps on your face, you get more than a bloody nose. Anyway, the mob beat him nearly to death and Ferdinand jailed him. Their Majesties were "physically prevented from leaving Aranjuez." Otherwise they seem to have been treated with respect. Ferdinand let his parents know that he alone would be able to control the people and demanded that his father abdicate. King Charles, broken in spirit, signed a decree making Ferdinand the sovereign. It's said that he agreed to such humiliation because he wanted to save Godoy.

Contrary to what we might expect, vainglorious Ferdinand entered the capital modestly, as though to demonstrate that he would be a different sort of king. Madrileños loved it. Women tossed flowers at him. Men threw down their capes for his horse to step upon. He advanced slowly, with dignity. The dawn of a new day after all the corruption, stupidity, and squalor. Spaniards called him El Deseado. The Desired One.

The Royal Academy asked Goya to paint Ferdinand. Fine, said Goya.



King Ferdinand was busy, what with one thing and another, but two sittings were arranged, forty-five minutes each. Goya asked Ferdinand to pose again, but one day after that second session Napoleon requested the honor of King Ferdinand's presence at the château of Marracq near Bayonne.

Whether he was frightened by the thought of defying Napoleon or too stupid to guess what lay ahead, Ferdinand set out for Bayonne. At Vitoria a crowd of citizens implored him to stop and cut the traces of his coach. One of Napoleon's agents reassured him: "I will

ortrait of Fernando VII, 1814 © Scala/Art Resource, New York City

let myself be beheaded if the Emperor has not recognized Your Majesty as King of Spain and the Indies a quarter of an hour after your arrival at Bayonne."

The military garrison at Irun, last stop, promised him an escort to safety. No, said Ferdinand.

April 20, 1808. Ferdinand crossed the Bidassoa River. Nobody welcomed him. A league or so deeper into France he met three Spanish grandees whom he had sent to inform the Emperor of his arrival. They told him that Napoleon had announced in their presence that Spain never again would have a Bourbon monarch. By this time, possibly, Ferdinand understood. It didn't matter; he had ventured into Napoleon's sticky web. He seems to have realized that he couldn't escape, so he continued toward Bayonne.

Luring the deposed King Charles and María Luisa to France was easy. Napoleon's deputy Joachim Murat, acting on orders, dispatched Godoy to Bayonne. He then assured the royal couple that Napoleon would be delighted to see them. Charles wrote to his imbecilic brother, Antonio, that abdication had been forced upon him, and he was going to visit their good friend and ally Napoleon.

So there at the château they gathered: Charles, María Luisa, Ferdinand, Prime Minister Godoy.

And there Ferdinand learned that he must give up the throne to his father or be charged with treason. He replied that Spaniards wanted him, not his father. Charles threatened to strike his son with a riding crop, and may have actually done so. María Luisa—wearing a yellow crepe gown borrowed from Empress Josephine, a wreath of red and yellow roses on her gray head—called her son a bastard. Napoleon ordered Ferdinand out of the room.

At last, seeing French muskets everywhere, Ferdinand signed papers of abdication; whereupon the resurrected King Charles delivered the Spanish throne to France.

Biographer Jean François Chabrun expressed it like this: "Napoleon could have had few scruples with regard to the royal family and precious little respect for a nation which allowed itself to be led and represented by such people. 'Spain can no longer be saved except by Napoleon,' he dictated to Charles IV, and Charles IV duly appended his royal signature."

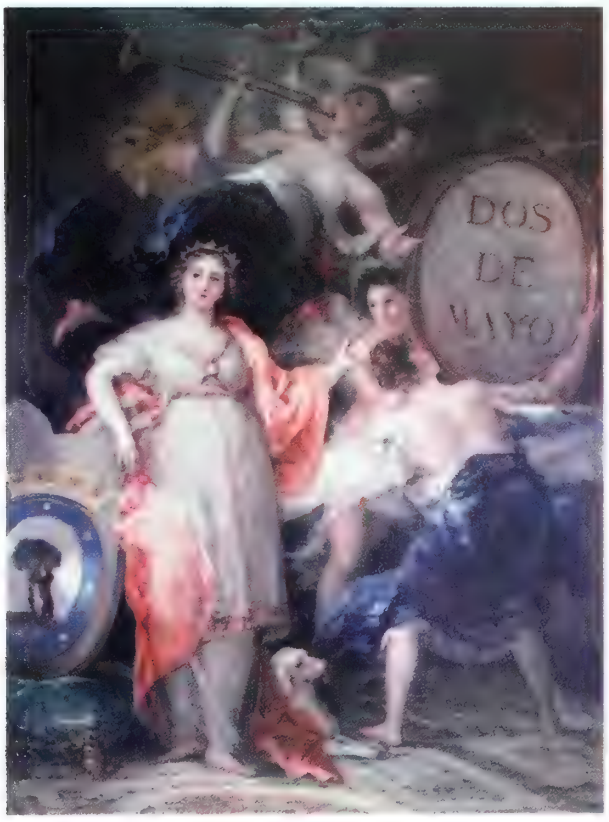
Napoleon let it be understood that his brother Joseph, King of Naples, might consent to govern, should that be what the citizens wanted. Before long, to nobody's surprise, here came a delegation from Madrid with news that Spain would feel honored to have Joseph Bonaparte wear the crown.

Cities rise and fall, emperors come and go, our man continued working at his trade.

Not long after Madrid capitulated he painted a knife grinder whetting a blade on a mill stone. One critic finds a certain restlessness in this picture, maybe a projection of Goya himself, an awareness of the distance now separating the artist from the social class to which he was born, seeing a reflection of his father. The knife grinder stares at us without expression, all the same you know he would enjoy carving up a French soldier.

Next, a giant allegory of Madrid meant to hang in City Hall. Goya represented Madrid as a woman gesturing toward a medallion supported by winged spirits. At her feet a placid white dog, supposedly a greyhound, though this greyhound is not in a rush to go anywhere and probably couldn't. Four-footed subjects bored him, which might explain why his animals seem to have been assembled rather than created. Bulls, horses in the ring, yes. And he painted the most malevolent cats on earth. But these are exceptions.

Inside the medallion he painted Joseph Bonaparte—based on a print borrowed from a Peruvian, Don Tadeo Bravo de Rivero, who had been living in Madrid quite a while and was at this time an official of Joseph's government. Which is to say Goya collaborated, though it might be explained, excused, justified, whatever



Allegory of the City of Madrid, 1810 © Private Collection/Bridgeman Art Library



Several years before French arrived, he l painted Rivero and er he had done some rk in Rivero's man-n, so they were old ac-aintances. Explana-n aside, what seems vious is that he want-to ingratiate himself h Joseph.

The medallion didn't ch please Joseph, who ferred the frigid neo-ssic style of Gerard vid. He didn't praise oya nor did he com-ssion anything.

And very soon Joseph d to leave town be-use here came an glish-Portuguese army l by Wellington. He caped a few hours be-re the Iron Duke ar-ed. Just about every-dy was glad to see ellington, but that cture of Joseph in City Hall was embarrassing. implied that civic officials had been cooperat-g with the Bonapartes. What to do? They raped Joseph off the medallion and substituted liberal password: *Constitución*.

Wellington didn't spend much time in adrid; he retired to Portugal for the winter. So ere came Joseph, escorted by French bayonets. ow what about that picture in City Hall?

Out went *Constitución*, replaced by another ortrait of Joseph. This time the artist was one Goya's pupils, Dionisio Gómez.

A few months later Joseph again was oust-l. Ferdinand, beloved Ferdinand, was return-ig. Joseph was scraped off, replaced by *Con-itución*.

That should have been the final word, what ith Ferdinand enthroned for good. Not so. erdinand, no liberal, hated the word *Constitu-ón*. He ordered it scraped off and a portrait of imself substituted. Nobody knows who did his, but it was such a poor job that in 1826 the ivic elders hired a court painter, Vicente ópez, to have another go at Ferdinand.

This, of course, concluded the business. Vrong. Ferdinand went to his reward, what-ver it may have been, in 1833. He has been escribed as "uxorious and susceptible" be-ause he married four times. Only one wife urvived his embrace. María Antonia of Sicily ied in 1806, María Isabel of Portugal in 818, María Amalia of Saxony in 1829. They might have lived longer had they married Henry VIII. Anyway, we are told that after María Amalia's death Ferdinand spent hours gazing at a portrait of his niece, María Cristina of Naples. She became his last wife and survived him by forty-five years, probably amazed at her good luck.

That uxorious face on the battered medallion was scraped off after his death, replaced by *Constitución*. At last, the final word. No.

Ferriz and Foxa—not a duo of concert pianists but historians—told the authorities in 1872 that Goya's original work might be exposed if the subsequent daubing and lettering could be removed. A certain Palmaroli got the job. Down he went, cautiously, through the layers. When he hit bottom very little Goya could be found. Now what? Here was an empty space that must be filled. One couldn't have the robust lady of Madrid gesture at nothing. Foxa pointed out that Spaniards always react to something or other and it would be a serious mistake to excite them. Thus, following much consultation, authorities decided to paint on the medallion three words forever associated with Goya and the spirit of Spain: *Dos de Mayo*, commemorating that violent day when Madrileños rose up against the French.

There ought to be a moral in this twisted tale. If so, nobody knows what it is.

After all that scraping, painting, scraping, repainting, there shouldn't be enough left of

he 2nd of May 1808 in Madrid, the Charge of the Mamelukes,
814 © Archivo Iconográfico, S.A./CORBIS

the original work to attract scholars. Nevertheless they contemplate, speculate, dissect, evaluate. One rebukes Goya for having rendered space with excessive simplicity, for disposing figures in a single place parallel to the surface, omitting oblique lines of escape, ad infinitum. Beyond such learned analysis, what the Madrid allegory reveals about Goya is a determination to survive. He agreed to paint Joseph. He may have felt, as many Spaniards did, that Joseph was a decent sort. Still, anybody named Bonaparte was the enemy. Goya had traveled quite a distance from Fuendetodos, but in his mind there were leagues and leagues to go. Kings succeed one another, good, bad, mediocre. It might be necessary to humor such men, which doesn't guarantee allegiance.

May 12, 1814. A royal proclamation in the *Gaceta de Madrid* stated that anyone who spoke or acted in support of the constitution would be executed. Ferdinand entered the city one day after this decree was published. He meant to put things right *toute de suite*. He restored the Holy Office and otherwise let it be understood who was in charge. Spaniards had brought him back in a frenzy of patriotism, some of it feigned, much of it genuine, hoping and half-believing that he would reign wisely, judiciously. Instead, as Hume wrote: "chains, exile, and death to those who had fought hardest, and struggled most, to shake off the yoke of the foreigner."

He guessed or suspected—advisers may have told him—that resurrecting the Inquisition might cause trouble. Conservatives would approve, while fear of torture and death would silence liberals; but progressive ideas were seeping through Madrid and beginning to affec the provinces.



His decree pointed out that because of th Holy Office, Spain had not been contaminated b errors that created such turmoil in other countrie

That may be true. One usually can mak such an argument. Barcelona under Franco i the early 1950s was not contaminated by erro law and order prevailed; from which you ma conclude that a fascist government is bes Some people think so. It depends on your va nes. You might conclude that Ferdinand acte on behalf of Spain in the name of national se curity when he restored the Inquisition.

A British tourist, Charles Vaughan watched the Holy Office at work. What both ered him most wasn't the brutal death but th ceremony. Priests and monks holding up eff gies of the Virgin and of Christ crucifie walked alongside the condemned man. Aft he had been seated on a chair, the rope th bound his arms was wrapped around his bod An old Capuchin then pressed a crucifix to h lips. Not many years earlier an English clerg man had inscribed on his tombstone: *Ubi saev indignatio cor ulterius lacerare nequit*. In oth words, here lies Jonathan Swift where savag indignation can no longer lacerate the hear Mr. Vaughan, less corrosive, could do no mo than call what he had witnessed "the most di gusting thing I ever saw." It brings to min André Malraux's comment that the sacred an dreadful are powerfully united in Christian who for two thousand years have worshiped man put to torture.

Francis Galton in *Hereditary Genius* wro that Spain emptied itself of intellectuals at th rate of one thousand annually between 14 and 1781. During that period, on average, o hundred were executed and nine hundred i prisoned. Altogether: 32,000 burnt, 17,0 burnt in effigy, 291,000 condemned to impr onment or otherwise punished. "It is impossib that any nation could stand a policy like th without paying a heavy penalty in deterior tion of its breed."

During Goya's lifetime the Holy Offi wasn't what it used to be, though with Deseado enthroned the ghost of days past b gan to stir. His Majesty announced that eve heretic would have his tongue bored throu with a red-hot iron. And once he said to Goy "You deserve to be garroted, but you are a gre artist so we forgive you."

The man from Fuendetodos took notic Plate 79 of *Desastres* shows the fair maid of Li erty flat on her back, bosom exposed. Ghost figures play about the corpse while monks c her grave.

Truth has died. *Murió la Verdad.*

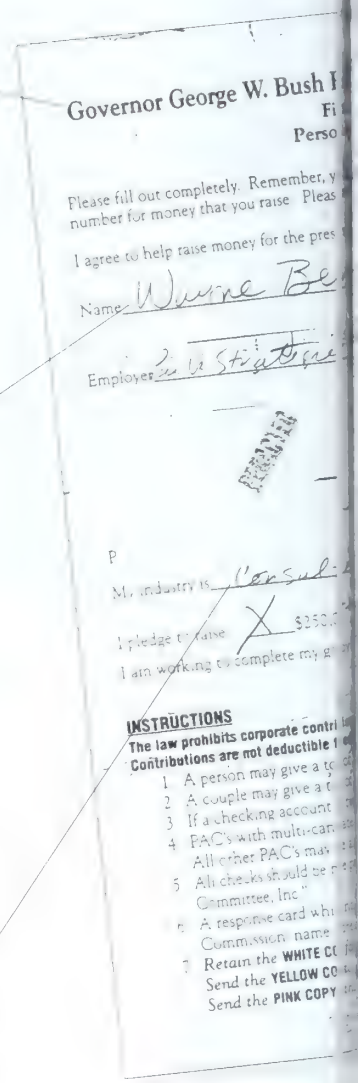


The Burial of the Sardine (Corpus Christi Festival on Ash Wednesday), c. 1812–19
© Academia Real de Bellas Artes de San Fernando, Madrid/Bridgeman Art Library

O PI(

On the frontiers of fund-raisin

The fund-raising machine of George W. Bush has done for politics what Henry Ford's assembly line did for manufacturing. Bush's 2000 primary campaign took in a record $101 million, and officials project that his 2004 campaign will raise $170 million—more, even adjusted for inflation, than was raised by all five Republican campaigns between 1980 and 1996 combined. Central to Bush's success have been his "Pioneers," supporters who each pledged to raise at least $100,000 in hard money for his primary bid. This form, filled out by one such Pioneer, was obtained, along with others, by Texans for Public Justice (TPJ) through a lawsuit challenging the new federal campaign-finance law. TPJ also discovered that the Pioneers were far more numerous than was previously known. Instead of 226, as the campaign first disclosed, there had been at least 538: enough, if each fulfilled their pledge, to account for more than half of Bush's war chest. The Pioneer program is aptly named, for it has tackled the old problem of influence-peddling with new efficiency, scope, and zeal.

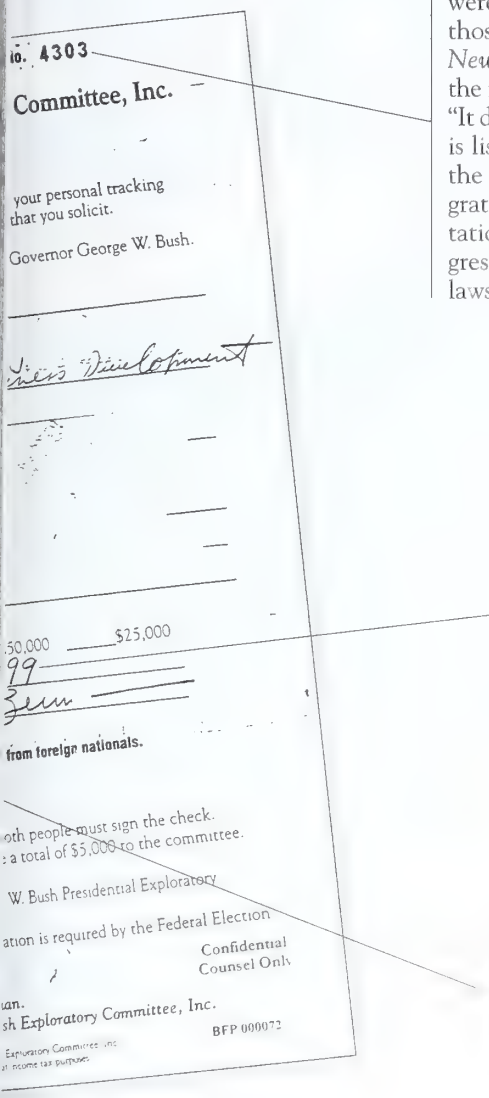

Governor George W. Bush
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Who are the Pioneers? Wayne Berman, a former Commerce Department appointee under the first President Bush, has since worked as a lobbyist; at least forty-seven other Pioneers for 2000 were lobbyists as well, including Randy DeLay, brother of House leader Tom, and Haley Barbour, the former GOP chair. Three of the Pioneers were U.S. Representatives, and three were governors, including the current Homeland Security chief, Tom Ridge. A full third of the total—more than 170 Pioneers—were business owners, presidents, or CEOs, including those of Enron, Dynegy, Staples, Shell, Tenet Healthcare, and Occidental Chemical. Individuals in 2000 could not, by law, give more than $1,000 directly to Bush. Instead, the Pioneers magnified their influence by recruiting others to give through them, an old practice called "bundling" that the Bush team has honed to a science.

Through bundling, each Pioneer is able not only to demonstrate his or her own worth to Bush but to create a constituency of smaller givers. Although the law does not require bundlers to reveal whom they tapped for donations, we might surmise that Berman, for example, found contributors among his many "consulting" clients, which include the Carlyle Group, AOL Time Warner, and the Florida sugar company Flo-Sun. Or he might have reached out to his generous neighbors: in Washington's 20008 zip code, where Berman and his wife (herself a Pioneer) own a 13,000-square-foot mansion, residents contribute 100 times more to campaigns per capita than the national average. Of course, bundled donations can also help curry favor with the bundler himself. This might help to explain why, for example, the employees of Charles Cawley—a Pioneer and the CEO of credit-card issuer MBNA—together gave Bush more than $240,000.

ERS!

Watzman and Micah L. Sifry



Perhaps the greatest innovation of the Pioneer program is its use of tracking numbers, which donors are instructed to write on their checks. Like Amway salesmen, Pioneers for the 2000 election were credited not just for their own fund-raising efforts but for those of others whom they recruited. In a memo obtained by *Newsweek*, Edison Electric Institute chief Tom Kuhn explained the importance of the tracking system to other energy executives: "It does insure that our industry is credited, and that your progress is listed among the other business/industry sectors." Kuhn and the sixty-seven other Pioneers from the industry were no doubt gratified to see Bush develop his energy policy in close consultation with their lobbyists. Although it has yet to pass Congress, MBNA's pet project, a bill to make personal-bankruptcy laws more draconian, has also enjoyed Bush's strong support.

Berman indicates that he will raise the cash he is promising (note the casual "++" he has written next to "$250,000") by December 1999. But he had reportedly stopped fund-raising by that October, after former Connecticut treasurer Paul Silvester was convicted of taking kickbacks from money managers. Silvester testified that he had invested $50 million of state money in the Carlyle Group—a deal for which Berman got a $900,000 "finder's fee"—because he was seeking a job with Berman. (He did get the job, though Berman has denied wrongdoing.) Of more than 200 Pioneers it first researched, TPJ found twenty-six who had been involved in some scandal related to campaign finance. Other Pioneers—the CEOs of Enron, Dynegy, Tenet—have resigned in disgrace due to corporate malfeasance. But unlike Clinton and Gore, whose sloppy fund-raising errors in 1996 led to intensive inquiries, Bush's disciplined team appears to mind the letter, if not the spirit, of the campaign-finance laws. Berman has been reenlisted as a fund-raiser for 2004.

Fund-raising for the president, Berman said in May, is "about the little people, because you're limited to hard-money contributions." In the most recent elections, the "little people" who gave $1,000 or more to campaigns of either party totaled less than 0.1 percent of the U.S. population; surveys of donors show them to be, on average, far wealthier, more conservative, less racially and ethnically diverse, and more likely to be male than the rest of the population. And now that the McCain-Feingold law, which became effective last year, has doubled the cap on individual hard-money donations from $1,000 to $2,000, the Bush campaign is poised for even further advancement. For 2004 it has created a new category above the Pioneers, for those who raise more than $200,000: the "Rangers." The term would suggest that the Pioneers, who in 2000 opened new frontiers in plutocracy, have decided to settle there for good.

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Sifry is Public Campaign's senior analyst and of the Iraq War Reader (Touchstone)

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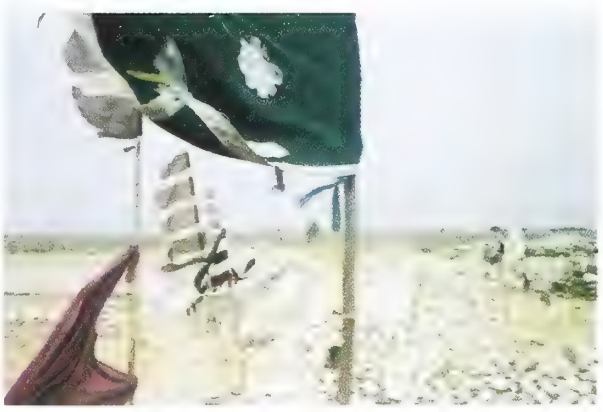
WHERE THE TALIBAN ROAM

Dodging the jihad in Pakistan's tribal lands

By Eliza Griswold

As long as there is purdah . . . the Mullahs and other evil-disposed factions will hatch all manner of intrigues and villainies behind it, and we can never really know what goes on or prevent it. . . .
—British Commissioner Richard Bruce, on his ill-fated 1894 mission in Waziristan

Jolting through a dry riverbed road in a curtained jeep last year, I squinted through three layers of veils, looking for signs of Ibrahim the Snatcher, the local *badmash*. It is said that Ibrahim and his gang sometimes kidnap an entire carful of people for ransom. Although my companions and I had just successfully, and illegally, passed through the six armed checkpoints maintained by the Pakistani government along its tribal borderlands, the real danger seemed ahead of us. A year earlier, on my first visit here, the locals had claimed to like Americans and treated us as honored guests. I wondered how they would receive us now after a year of U.S. bombings just across the border. Had our relatively worldly Wazir hostesses misjudged the extent of their neighbors' tolerance this time, not to mention that of the rapidly retrenching local Taliban?



Among the fierce tribal territories that stretch for a thousand miles along the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan, Waziristan is the most rebellious and remote. On paper, the 4,473-square-mile region—almost the size of Connecticut, with about a quarter of the population—has been part of Pakistan since 1947. But the Wazirs are first and foremost ethnic Pashtuns, and for the most part practice *purdah*—a systemic cultural isolationism that shuns outsiders. Geography favors their isolation. To the west, high crags inlaid with caves (Tora Bora is just across the border) give way to the hard-packed desiccated plains of eastern Waziristan, similar to the flatlands of northern Iraq in summer. Although outsiders are not welcome, tradition also stipulates that once there, if peaceable, they be treated well; along with *purdah*, Wazirs also follow *pashtunwali*—an ancient tribal code under which the requirement of hospitality is second only to that of revenge. Since the United States went to war in Afghanistan in 2001, Waziristan has become a destination for Al Qaeda and Taliban fighters not only because they are fellow Pashtuns and Sunni Muslims but also because these men are engaged in a fight against *feranghis* (foreigners), whose presence threatens the *purdah* by which Wazirs have kept their realm "pure and veiled" since 600 B.C. In the interim, Wazirs have successfully resisted the authority of Alexander the Great and the British Empire, among others. Between 1936 and 1947 alone, the British lost at least 800 soldiers at the hands of the Wazirs, finally abandoning the region altogether.

In 2001 the day U.S. air strikes began, I had found myself in Janikhel [JOHN-ee-hell], one of Waziristan's thousands of uncharted villages, invited, then carefully smuggled there—along with American photographer

Eliza Griswold lives in New York City.

Photographs by Alyssa Banta

Alyssa Banta—by twenty-two-year-old Uzma, who had made Alyssa's acquaintance while buying contraband Oil of Olay in Peshawar's smuggler's market. It was early October, and Alyssa and I were among the glut of journalists gathered in Peshawar to await the U.S. attack on Afghanistan. The border itself was effectively off-limits, since the Pakistani government had recently added its own *purdah* by declaring non-residents' travel to the tribal lands illegal. And on this day especially, the locals did not look too kindly on visitors from America.

But Uzma didn't care. She was tired, she said, of the foreign media making claims about a world they'd never seen. "Of course we can go to my village," she said. "Why not, it's *my* village. If my father says yes, then no one can stop us." Privilege, it must be said, had much to do with Uzma's boldness, if not her sentiments. Her dutiful father is a deputy inspector general of Pakistan's police, her family the richest in the village, one of the few that spends most of the year in Peshawar. Uzma's family, descended from khans, has been wealthy for several generations. Her great-grandfather, a tribal *malik* (elder), was awarded a salary as a liaison to the British government. To his descendants he imparted a belief in both the necessity of education and high-paying jobs such as government posts and medicine (Uzma's aunt is the first woman doctor in Waziristan).

It is in part perhaps because of the influence of Uzma's family that on our first visit *pashtunwali* won the day and her village had welcomed us, most claiming to like Americans in general, one neighbor citing our citizens' "independence" for special praise. Still, many in the circle of women that quickly formed around us cast a furious eye at Uzma, our only translator. But even criticisms were couched in a jovial, teasing tone, as if it were understood that we had no personal responsibility for U.S. actions.

In any case, it was clear that our disguises weren't working. Although our veils and *salwar kameez* had been provided and vetted by Uzma and her mother, alone together here women may reveal their faces and hair, and both of mine are far too pale for comfort. Above us, invisible F-16s could be heard strafing the clear sky from east to west, crossing from Pakistan to Afghanistan, where many of the village men had already gone to fight alongside the Taliban. Those that remained gathered in the rutted alleys and along the main dirt track leading out of town, shooting pirated Kalashnikovs at the sky to protest the use of their airspace.

Tensions naturally have increased by the time of our return visit, so our veils have been multiplied and the car itself curtained. We have been driving for the past five hours, accompanying Uzma and her family on one of their semiannual trips from their marble home in Peshawar back to Janikhel. Before us, scree fields stretch flat and colorless for a hundred miles before rising into the 8,000-foot Wazir hills along the Afghan border. In the front seat: Uzma's twelve-year-old brother, Momin; Barkatullah, the guard; and Inamullah, the driver. In the back, Alyssa and I sit with Uzma and her mother, Tehmina.



This trip is Uzma's last before she marries her cousin Ilyas Wazir, an her mother, with her fat man's laug and a box of marzipan at her feet, indulgent. She has always don things for her five children that th Wazirs frown upon, such as educatin her daughters despite death threa from her husband's family. "Whe she was a child, I fed Uzma orang in secret," she says, chuckling behin the large black sunglasses she uses t hold her veil in place. "Fruit was t special for girls." Her wrists chim with gold bangles, and on her lap sh holds a plastic pocketbook full of r pees to hand out as *zakat* (alms) t the village poor, which is pret much everyone besides Uzma's im mediate family and that of her fianc and her cousin Khalid.

Under layers of synthetic veil even my eyelids are sweating. I hav never seen any other Pashtun woma veiled to this extent, but Uzma an her mother assure me it is the safe way. Even in late afternoon it's st over a hundred degrees and we mu reach the village before dark. W should have more guards but th would require Uzma to call ahea which she doesn't want to d in case the villagers say no our visit. "*Insha'allah*, it's be ter to surprise them," she sa unconvincingly.

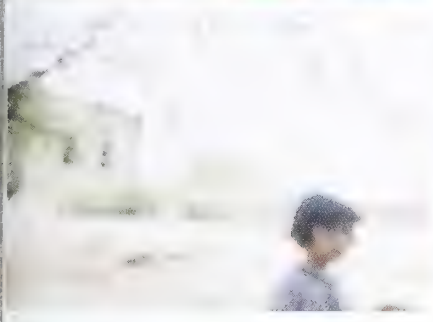
In Bannu, the last town w pass through before the trib territory begins, we sit stalle by donkey carts while men pe into the curtained car. Joh Walker Lindh attended th Madrassah-I-Arabia here. H teacher, Mufti Iltimas, says th Lindh left because he couldn stand the summer heat. Du ing the Soviet invasion Afghanistan in the 198 Waziristan became home to least ninety *madrasas* (Islam schools), many preaching th radical Deobandi strain of lam for which the Taliban a known. Now, according to i formers paid by the Unit States, at least 800 Al Qae and ex-Taliban soldiers are hiding the tribal land, reportedly traveling pickup trucks with local guides. "Th pretend to be Islamic preachers Afghan refugees," a Wazir official t

Illustration by Mike Reay

: *Guardian*, "but of course we know
:y are Arabs and Chechens; they
· Al Qaeda." Although the visitors
generally seen as nothing but trou-
·, under *pashtunwali* the Wazirs are









)nor-bound to provide all of them
th refuge.

Since Waziristan has become the
cus of the effort to root out the re-
on's Al Qaeda operatives, Uzma's
ther, a tribal *malik*, has struggled in
s role as a loyal Wazir. He speaks
the tribesmen daily from Pesh-
var on one of the three village
hones located in the houses of
ree powerful elders. When he can,
e gives police jobs to the village
en, which they sometimes don't
cept because they don't like to
ear the required Western-style
nts. The villagers belong to the
an of Ediakhel [EE-dee-ah-hell],
ne of 300 Wazir subtribes. They
ed to be seminomadic farmers (and
ill subsist on nuts, apples, toma-
es, corn, dates, wild honey, and
garcane when the arid land al-
ws). Now heroin supports most of
ne tribal economy, though the trade
as suffered because of increased
rder control after September 11.
ot all tribesmen are involved in
ne drug trade, but those who are—
ne most notorious being the neigh-
ring tribe of Afridis—are formida-

ble smugglers, trafficking hashish, opium, and heroin around the world. Uzma's father is convinced that education is the answer, though he smiles while explaining local defiance in the face of such suggestions. "Ask a Wazir politely to go to hell, he'll go," he says. "But push him to go to heaven, and he'll fight you to the death."

The Wazirs are among the fiercest of the sixty tribes that make up the world's 25 million Pashtuns, who are split almost evenly between Afghanistan and Pakistan. With their green eyes, brown skin, and aquiline features, Pashtuns share the blood of every invader since the Persians—including the Greeks, Turks, and Mongols. Legend has it they can trace their Semitic ancestry to King Saul. Saul's descendant Qais (later known as Pashtun), who traveled to Medina, was blessed by the Prophet before returning to the Peshawar Valley. Qais's fourth son, Karlanri, is said to be the father of the Wazirs.

Soon the lawn-mower whine of a Suzuki motorcycle whizzes past us. Astride it: a bearded man in sunglasses, a bandolier slung over his chest. "That's Atlas, the hero of the village," Uzma says. "He's the compounder. He mixes medicines and acts as the doctor, and he takes good care of our people." We follow him up the road. This glimpse of his back is the closest we'll get to him, because later, in the village, he refuses to meet us, because, he says, we are women (the village women whisper that it is really because he feels stupid that he cannot speak our language). Waziristan is rife with tribal fighting, and this stretch of road is supposed to be closed because of banditry, but Atlas refuses to relinquish the shortcut from Bannu to Janikhel. Yesterday, we are told, he single-handedly opened the road, saying, "I don't care if I die," before shouldering his gun and mounting his motorcycle.

North and South Waziristan, along with five other tribal areas—Bajaur, Mohmand, Khyber, Orakzai, and Kurram—make up the 10,000 square miles of tribal lands along the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan. North Waziristan was the last of the tribal areas to allow both Pakistani and U.S. authorities to search for Al Qaeda. Although the other tribal areas are also known for their drug smuggling and weapons trafficking, Waziristan's brand of brigandage is the most infamous. When there is no outside enemy the Wazirs of South Waziristan and the Mahsuds of North Waziristan fight each other and their neighboring Pashtuns over the proverbial *zar, zan*, and *zanim* (land, women, and gold)—and, lately, electricity.

Between our visits, the Pakistani army had entered the territory for the first time in the nation's history and began working with reportedly more than 1,000 American and British troops to root out Al Qaeda and Taliban fighters. The Wazirs are not only hostile to the presence of "foreign invaders"; locals who help them have been killed as traitors to the Pashtuns. Last year, after more than ten U.S.-led operations, anti-American sentiment was rising sharply. The number of cross-border raids against U.S. forces has never been higher, and at least nine U.S. soldiers have been killed along the Wazir border. According to the U.S. Defense

Department, the official death toll remains classified.

Five months before our return to Janikhel, U.S. forces targeted two Waziristan *madrasas*, prompting thousands of students across Pakistan's North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) to demonstrate repeatedly against U.S. operations there. After the first raid—a joint U.S. and Pakistani attempt to capture high-profile Taliban commander Jalaluddin Haqqani—the school where U.S. troops were billeted in North Waziristan came under missile attack for the first of five times. The presence of Americans on their soil enrages the Wazirs. A group called the Mujahedeen of North Waziristan has circulated a pamphlet: "Wake up, because the hypocrite ruler [Musharraf] has challenged faith and honor by bringing American commandos to Miran Shah [North Waziristan's capital]." Reportedly, several tribesmen have been killed for giving information to the FBI, and tribal leaders have announced fines of 50,000,000 rupees ($830,000) and the demolition of homes for those who help Americans.

Just before dark we turn off the makeshift road and jounce toward Janikhel, which looks like a child's dripped sand castle surrounded by scrubby acacia trees and twenty-foot crenellated mud walls. We drive past the first of two tiny mosques and pull into the narrow track of open sewer that serves as a path between the village's hundred homes. Next to the main mosque is a large whitewashed building with green doors and shutters: the *chowk*, where men spend their days lying on *charpais* (wooden beds) in the cool of a shaded room. Tribal men's clothes are predominantly white, and remain relatively pristine because the men don't work. Most days they gather at the *chowk* to discuss the price of rifle cartridges, guns at their feet.

Our Jeep can just squeeze through the narrow track. There are no other vehicles here. In each house lives a family of eight or so. In some, one son has gone to Dubai to work and send money home. Money is relatively new to most tribesmen. "The world seems different here now," Barkatullah, the guard, says as we snake past the dark houses. "We kill people for very small things. When there was no money here, there used to be a lot of love between people." The headlights catch the eyes of the pack of village dogs, already released for the night patrol. Finally we pull up to the corrugated tin gates of Uzma's compound, where a hollow-eyed heroin addict is waiting for us. A servant, he arrived last year with his family from nearby Bannu, seeking refuge from a blood feud, and Uzma's father put him to work.

As soon as we are inside the gate, a succession of stout and wrinkled women enter slowly behind us, easing themselves onto wooden *charpais* on the veranda. With most of their work done for the day, the village wives, all cousins, are permitted to visit Tehmina. At their ankles are barefoot children with the reddish hair caused by malnutrition, which has existed here for centuries. The children's limbs are covered with pustules the size of quarters—summer pox, an ancient plague, I'm told, which no one knows how to cure. While the women talk, the children pick lice from their mothers' hair. Little boys do nothing all day but play cricket. Girls make mud figurines. Most schools are ghost schools, which means that a tribal *malik* offers the Pakistani government land for a school and the government pays, say, his son, a teacher's salary, but the school never opens. Taliban *madrasas* have become the only form of education.

Tehmina drags bags of clothes onto the veranda, and the women swarm around the piles and argue. Her cast-off city clothes stand out among the smocked tribal dresses. Last year's gifts of high-heeled flip-flops are still popular under the women's patchwork frocks. Among the faces I recognize from the year before is that of Ghuta, which means the fat one, and of Ghunga, a deaf-mute. Ghuta's hair has turned white. I guess that she's seventy but learn later that she's in her fifties. She clasps a withered hand to my shoulder and smiles gruffly. Ghunga pulls at my hair, raises her eyebrows, and smiles. Yes, I nod, m hair has grown. She pokes at Uz ma's nose and grimaces. No, Uzma nose isn't pierced yet, though her fi ancé has given her a diamond sh should be wearing there. The rest c the women, who surely recognize u from last year, make no effort t greet us.

In Waziristan, even at night, th plain's heat makes it difficult t move. We lounge with the wome on the low-lying *charpais*, th house's only furniture. In the mids of gossip about who is using to much of the scant electricity—a pi rated line runs from Bannu—the ask about us. Uzma begins to spi our story. This year, because of th war, we need to be more fully ex plained. I am from Dubai, marrie and converting to Islam, but do no yet pray five times a day. (Alyssa supposedly, has her period, so sh doesn't need to pray either.) It's no really clear how much of this the believe. Anyone with white skin i *Angrez*—English. But *Angrez*, Amer ican, and CIA are interchangeable There is only one thing worse NGO. The tribespeople believe tha nongovernmental organizations ar the most insidious aliens becaus they're out to change the Pashtu way of life. Wazirs essentially suspec every foreigner of being a Christia missionary. To date, there have bee two NGO visitors. One, it is said made a disparaging remark abou men dancing with men.

In the semi-darkness, a turbaned man dressed entirely in white arrive at the gate. The women stop the chatter and cover their heads. Sinc they're all related to him, they don need to cover their faces. The man Nakum, the village busybody. He ad monishes Tehmina, insisting tha she needs more guards to protect us.

"Aren't my guests safe here?" sh asks, hands on hips.

"They're our guests, but you'v brought them here and it's your re sponsibility to protect them," h warns before stooping back throug the small door in the gate. Tehmin looks worried. *Pashtunwali* mandate that the entire village must protec its guests, especially since we ar women. Nakum's warning mean

at something else is afoot, some-
ing unusual. I ask Uzma once the
sitors have left, but she says, "It's
thing, *insha'allah*."

Before bed, we climb into the
atchtower to look at the village be-
w. The moon is almost full and the
inarets of the two small mosques
ine in its light, as does a murky
stern where the children bathe and



etch water. Fluorescent green light
pills into the courtyards of the few
ouses with electricity. It's about
10:00 P.M. People will rise
for prayers before dawn.

Since the Pashtuns didn't write
until A.D. 1500, all early records
were made by those who attempted
o conquer them. Herodotus first
writes of the fearsome people of the
Peshawar Valley during Darius' ex-
peditions around 600 B.C. Three
hundred years later, Alexander the
Great crossed the frontier through
the Khyber Pass. After his death,
Alexander's empire fell to ruin
among rival Greek kings, whose
coins still litter the valley. From 264
to 227 B.C. a king named Asoka
spread Buddhism throughout the
Peshawar Valley, but his empire was
obliterated by petty wars that raged
for the next 800 years. It is likely
that no region in the world has
known so much war.

In A.D. 998, Mahmud of Ghazni, an Afghan king known as the "Idol-breaker," began the first Islamic crusade to make inroads among the tribesmen. Over the next several hundred years, the tribesmen increasingly warded off invaders in the name of Islam. Both the Mongols and the Sikhs were unable to vanquish the area's guerrilla fighters.

In 1849 the British attempted to pacify the frontier. Bribery, road-building, battles—the British tried everything, but to no avail. In 1893, when British envoy Sir Mortimer Durand divided Afghanistan from what is now Pakistan, the emir of Afghanistan, Abd-ur-Rahman, warned the British about dividing the Pashtuns. "You will always be engaged in fighting or other trouble with them, and they will always go on plundering. . . . [I]f at any time a foreign enemy appears on the borders . . . these frontier tribes will be your worst enemies."

But the British paid no heed. The line was drawn, and they continued to be plagued by not only tribal warfare but also the larger insurrections led by a series of Muslim holy men, one of the first being Mullah Powindah in the 1890s in South Waziristan. In North Waziristan the Faqir of Ipi led highly successful raids against the British during the 1930s, eventually commanding a *lashkar* (fighting force) of more than 2,000 men. A charismatic and militant leader, the Faqir kept nimbly to the caves along the Afghan border and was never caught. Today people travel from all over Waziristan to pray at his grave.

When Pakistan was created in 1947, the Pashtuns of the frontier made a bid for an independent "Pashtunistan." Despite support for this plan by Gandhi and Indian prime minister Nehru, Pashtun lands were designated a semi-autonomous region of Pakistan, after which its officers did little there but maintain the British policy of giving money to pacify the people via local *maliks* (in North Waziristan today, those payments amount to about $80,000 a year, which accounts for a substantial portion of the tribal economy).

The *madrasas* of the Afghan Taliban flourished during the Soviet invasion, and their radical influence on the already conservative tribal areas has been growing since the late 1990s. In the first days of September 2001, just before the eleventh, when the U.N. tried to send fifteen experts to the Afghan border to monitor pre-existing antiterrorism sanctions, two pro-Taliban parties established a 4,000-member *lashkar* to stop them.

A mile from Janikhel, the lime-green roof of the local *madrasa* rises in the midst of a hundred villages. Because of their grip on the little education there is here, the Talibs are respected and feared by the local people. When their version of Islamic law is broken—a woman dances at a wedding or someone uses a VCR—the Talibs arrive and demand payment of a fine. "It's cheaper to pay them than to let them sit around," Ilyas's brother, Shaweb, says. He is studying to be a doctor in Peshawar. "If you don't pay, they come back every day and you have to feed them lunch because they're guests."

In Uzma's watchtower, empty syringes lie piled by the gun sights. The hollow-eyed guard sleeps up



here. He's supposed to be kicking his drug habit (one of the conditions Uzma's father has put on his gift of refuge). When I point them out, Uzma just stares into the distance. "They could be for medicine," she says. Uzma had completed her second year of medical school before dropping out. "We're caught in between two worlds," she explains. "We're not perfect Muslims and we're not totally modern." She says she wants to bring more schools to Waziristan ("which I will, *insha'allah*, when I'm married"). Still, she cannot stand the idea of government soldiers infiltrating her land. "We all hate terrorism," she says. "But they're targeting the wrong people. I swear, if I had a gun, I'd fight the government soldiers myself." She looks down at the village's mud walls and wonders aloud what it will be like to live in California with Ilyas. Ilyas comes from one of the wealthiest families in all of Peshawar. In California, as an engineering graduate student, he is delivering pizzas. "That's not a good job, is it?" asks Uzma. She knows that in America she, too, will have to work, "but not that hard," she says hopefully.

Life in the village is built on a complex pattern of visits. I gather bits of information from what the women say to one another and what they don't say. When I ask about their children or husbands, the women listen carefully to the answers others give, as if the speaker should beware of revealing too many secrets to outsiders. If they knew how much Uzma was actually telling us, she could be exiled, as her female cousin was for watching television alone with a male cousin at night. (He was killed; she reportedly escaped after being gang-raped.)

We leave Janikhel to be lunch guests at Machikhel, Uzma's grandmother's village, a ten-minute drive down a dirt road. We pile into the one-room house, which smells of dung and Kiwi shoe polish. Twenty children crush in to sit on the floor while Tehmina distributes a dollar's worth of rupees to every woman. "We're so glad to see you," each tells her, to which Tehmina replies, "Pray for me and my family." In English, she says to us, "They come for the money." She may be indulgent, but she is no pushover. When one woman laments that she can't afford gold earrings like Tehmina's, Tehmina retorts that she should be thinking about feeding her children, not gold. After Tehmina has handed out the whole stack of rupees, her cousin Useeno apologizes. She can't offer us lunch after all. The village elders forbid it unless Tehmina pays fifty rupees for the chicken. If we pay fo food, then Useeno will not be con sidered to be giving us respect Tehmina is stunned.

"We're bound to say no, or we' have to pay 25,000 rupees," Useen explains, claiming that the villag elders are angry at Atlas—that's wh we are outcasts. I doubt this is th sole reason.

"We won't die without havin lunch, but you've proven how selfis you are," Barkatullah says as he pick up his gun and storms out of th room to the *chowk*. Tehmina reache into her purse and pays for lunch While the chicken boils, we wande around the village under the relent less sun. A teenage girl follows u saying that recently "Arab" men ar rived in the village and offered t build a mosque. The village accept ed. No one knows who the men are A hawk-faced woman comes out of musky room and takes our hand "I'm sorry I'm late to meet you," sh says. "I gave birth last night." Sh pulls us inside to see the baby, h eyes already lined with kohl to war off evil spirits. How many childre does she have now? "Two," she say "Three if you count the girl."

During lunch Useeno tells Tehm na of the misfortunes that have be fallen the village in the past yea During the war with America, hun dreds of men from the surroundin villages went to Afghanistan afte the local *madrasa* broadcast the ca to jihad via its loudspeakers. Al though jihads are nothing new here the tribal move to join them is Useeno stands in the doorway wit her arms crossed to make it clea that she is not eating with us.

"The only man who went fro our village came back after only tw months," she says. "He said, 'It's use less to fight against other Muslims.' This is a major point of concern whether or not the war was legit mate jihad. It seems that the loca mullahs said little about the Muslim of Afghanistan's Northern Alliance Instead, they focused on the figh against infidels. Fighting against oth er Muslims negates the principle o jihad, so when many of the tribes men discovered the true nature o the fight, it is said they felt betrayed

'My grandson wanted to go, but I uldn't let him," says Useeno. "I told n it's not real jihad. You won't be a rtyr because you're killing other slims. So he didn't go."

In the nearby village of Khwalarkhel, she tells us, three Taliban dows received their husbands me "in clothes full of blood"—a rtyr's death. Then, as if guessing r thoughts, she warns us how fool- visiting such a Taliban strongld would be.

Lunch over, we drive for twenty nutes, scanning the horizon for e widows' village. Barkatullah ows its whereabouts vaguely beuse he attended the men's funer-. He says he never used to support e local Taliban. "Because we're uslim brothers, we do what they y. We know they're using Islam." fter some scrutiny, we can just ake out crenellations on the crest a hill. Tehmina clutches at her som. This trip is a little more than e anticipated. Barkatullah exains, "The Talibs hate America d believe that America is against r religion and trying to change ." He explains that the mullahs me to power here because there as no law to stop them. "This war ill never end," he says, squinting ward the village. "Hundreds of aeda fighters passed through this ay. Most stayed in this village."

The high wooden doors of the vilge are locked. An armed sentry eaks to Barkatullah and looks toard the car. The gates creak open, nd we are led to a building that oks like a lighthouse made of mud. side sit three women. "We've nevr seen a war like this before," says war Bibi, the widow of Mohammad alan, one of the Taliban fighters om the village killed in December 001 at Khost, they say by an Amerian bomb. "Now none of us can eave the Islamic brotherhood," she dds, rocking a crate hanging from he ceiling that serves as a crib. Anther of her children chases a chickn around the tiny room, where a rowd of women has now gathered. ach sold her wedding jewelry to aise money for the Taliban.

"This war will go on forever," Itwar Bibi continues, smiling politely. "The next generation is already preparing to fight. But what is the result? Muslims are killing one another." She says she learned that this isn't real jihad via a radio broadcast by the Pakistani government after her husband had left the village, but, she claims, her husband didn't know that he would be fighting other Muslims. "Still, my husband is a *shaheed* [martyr] because he *thought* he was fighting against non-Muslims," she concludes. We leave the village and later learn that during our visit all the men were armed and hiding in the guardhouse. They'd thought we were Pakistani government officials come to take the children to school in Bannu.

Halfway down the hill, on our way to the martyrs' graves, the Jeep blows a tire. Neither the driver nor Barkatullah knows how to use a jack. Alyssa and I climb down and begin to rock the car chassis, veils aflutter. We are underneath the Jeep when the driver shouts. In the distance, over the flat scree plain, a column of what looks like smoke is rising: dust kicked up by an approaching car. We veil ourselves.



Barkatullah chuckles. A black Datsun pulls up and stops before us, five dark-turbaned men inside: Taliban. One climbs down to help us, and the truck rattles away. He is young and doesn't seem to know what to do with the tire either, but after a fair amount of clanking we're on our way. The martyrs' graves stand apart from the others: three cairns of white stones with striped green flags snapping in the wind, denoting membership in Maulana Fazlur Rehman's Jamiat Ulema-I-Islam fighters, the most pro-Taliban group. By the grave, boxes of salt show that the martyrs were also *Hafiz-e-Quran*, which means they'd learned the Koran by heart twice, the first time for the Arabic, the second for the meaning.

As we make the hour-long journey back to Janikhel, we drop off the young Talib and pick up a five-year-old boy who has been walking for two hours to a little house where he buys his father's heroin. He clutches a handful of rupees. Barkatullah holds the boy on his lap, shaking his head over him.

That evening, as Uzma and her mother offer evening prayers on the veranda, her little brother, Momin, comes skulking through the green gate, very pale. He's been playing cricket, and the cuffs of his white *salwar kameez* are gray with dust. He perches on the edge of my *charpai* and says in English, "The Taliban know you're here and they're coming to get you tonight."

"How do they know we're Americans, or even here at all?"

"I dunno." He frowns and shuffles

his deck of cards, the Statue of Liberty [illegible] Street in New York City. Apparently the [illegible] Talibs plan to crawl over the compound wall and kidnap me—the [illegible] nothing to be done. We cannot leave the village at night or travel through the miles of wasteland back to Bannu. Ghuta arrives without a word, a Kalashnikov strapped over her ample bosom. She has asked permission to spend the night with us, since we have only two guards—Barkatullah and the heroin addict, perched in the watchtower with his empty syringes. Outside the compound walls, the pack of village dogs has been released for the night. As we pull the *charpais* into the center of the courtyard to attempt sleep, I listen for their growls.

I try to tuck my white limbs under the veil I'm using as a sheet. The fleas are merciless. There is so much moonlight I can almost see them jump. I scan the compound's twenty-foot mud walls. Whimpering, Momin has tucked himself under his mother's veil. Ghuta does not lie down. She murmurs, almost chants, to Uzma and her mother, and warns Uzma not to translate what she is saying, out of loyalty to her Wazir people. Uzma translates anyway.

According to Ghuta, since the war with the United States ended, the surrounding villages and the local *madrasa* have served as pipelines to send ex-fighters to Saudi Arabia. Ghuta says the Taliban are regrouping there, as Saudis come to Waziristan with money and passports for those loyal to their cause. It used to be that Wazirs would dream of going to America, because it was the land of opportunity. Now that land is Saudi Arabia. "If America tries to come here," Ghuta says, "hundreds of villages will band together with the Taliban, though we're not with them now." She cradles the weapon in her lap. "We will not give the Americans a single piece of land."

"I'm so sick of the Taliban using Islam," Uzma says to me in English, propping herself on her elbows. When Taliban casualties first came over the border to Peshawar's five hospitals, Uzma and her mother took food and money to the wounded. (From my own visits I remember the smell of rot in the hallways.) But the Talibs refused her. One Talib said, "Thank you, sister, no. You didn't help us before, when we were fighting America over the border. We won't die now without your 500 rupees. If you really want to help us, give us your sons." Angered, she lectured him on the true nature of Islam, but he told her to shut up, leaving her with a shame she can't shake. She knows she follows an Islam she believes in, but the Talibs' rabid zeal makes her doubt her own devotion. Now she wonders if the mullahs are right about the U.S. crusade.

The night passes without incident. But the next morning, Momin's rumor proves to be true. Ghunga, the deaf-mute, comes wheeling through the compound's gate, gesticulating madly. She makes her brown eyes wide, presses her thumb to her chin in imitation of a man's beard, then fires an air machine gun. "The Taliban have arrived," explains Uzma. "She's seen them. They've got guns, and they're going to kill you and take me." She looks more excited than worried, which is both heartening and disturbing.

It seems that three Datsuns full of black-turbaned Talibs have just arrived at the *chowk* next to the mosque in the village center. They've demanded that the village hand us over, "just for a week or so." Tehmina had sent the Jeep and driver out on errands, but apparently both are being held hostage. "We need that Jeep," she says, "but they can keep the driver." We laugh nervously. It occurs to me that this could just be a village ruse to send us on our way. Then Momin sneaks to the *chowk* to see them, reporting back their words: "Give us the Christian." I turn to Alyssa, terrified. She is dark-haired and golden-skinned, with a face that could pass for Mexican or Arab or any number of other ethnicities. I am not so fortunate.

We rifle through our bags to see what might give us away. I tuck my notes in my underwear. The Talibs aren't known to be rapists, and, in any case, the Afghan refugee boys who fled to Pakistan say that they prefer boys. In the sink, we burn the photocopies of our passports. Uzma watches as we light match after match. I can almost hear her wondering if we really are CIA after all. As a gesture of respect, we are told the Talibs had gone to the *chowk* instead of appearing armed at a house of women. But now they are coming to the house. Apparently the tea Talib who helped us change our tires told them that we were CIA agents using an X-ray camera to see the martyrs' corpses. But it turns out that Atlas refuses to hand us over, and the Talibs won't come to the house—if indeed we are CIA, they think that we may be able to see *them*, Uzma says. She laughs at the idea that the Talibs are afraid of us, but looks a bit stunned: could it be that we are not who we say we are?

Finally, our Jeep is returned, and word comes from the *chowk*: we must leave by sundown. The Taliban claim they've aimed missiles at Uzma's house. A warning shot alone, Ghuta explains, would put the entire village at risk: "If the Taliban should fire on you, just as a tease, without hitting you, it's called a *bayizatee*, an insult for which our men must fight." We veil ourselves and climb into the car. "At least I learned how to change a tire," says Tehmina, with her deep, belly laugh, picking a piece of marzipan from a box in her lap.

A week after we left Waziristan, the frontier police stopped a pickup truck full of armed men at a checkpoint outside of Janikhel. After a skirmish with local tribesmen, the police were forced to free the men, who they believed to be Chechen Al Qaeda. As punishment the Pakistani army rolled nine-pound guns into Janikhel the next day. Against their will, villagers marked the houses of local Taliban collaborators with red paint, so that they could be destroyed. Ghuta's house was among them. That house is gone now.

Two months later, for the first time in thirty years, NWFP elections brought into power the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal, a pro–Bin Laden, anti-United States religious coalition which vehemently opposes the invasion of Iraq. There also have been ill

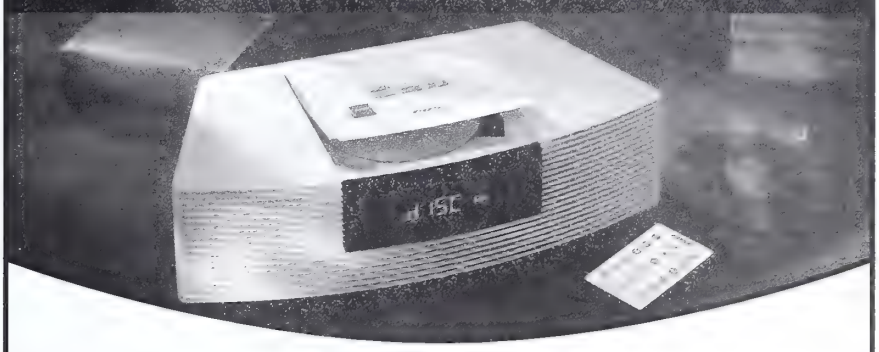
ligence reports of a "huge quantity weapons" being smuggled into rth and South Waziristan, slated, it assumed, for waging a war against nerican forces across the Afghan rder. In January, after an American ldier was shot by a tribal border out, the United States retaliated by opping a 500-pound bomb on a aziristan *madrasa*, killing two Wazir outs, members of the paramilitary bal force supposedly working with e 82nd Airborne. Their brother outs fasted in protest. Now U.S. oops on the Waziristan border have portedly hired eighty Wazirs as ards. Taliban and Al Qaeda resisnce in the area continually plagues e 9,000 U.S. soldiers stationed there. orth Waziristan's capital is only thirmiles from Khost, one of the worst ockets of fighting still left in southastern Afghanistan. In the past year least twenty U.S. soldiers have been lled along that border, and at least even tribesmen have been killed in rant bombings.

When the United States invaded aq in March, the tribesmen threatned to raise a force of more than 1,000 ghters to launch cross-border attacks, nd apparently they did just that, givn the increase of such attacks last pring. In response, a joint U.S. and alian force has launched Operation ragon Fury to prevent, according to ne U.S. Defense Department, "the emergence of terrorism" along the fghan border, where the Pashtuns age jihad not only for their own eople but for the Iraqis now as well. ast year, Uzma had claimed that if he United States went to war in Iraq, he would know that the mullahs were ight: America had indeed launched a ihad against all Muslims. This year he is living in California with Ilyas, regnant. When their son is born this all, he will be an American. ■

Answers to the August Quiz, "Labor Pains"

1 Cobblers; 2 Females; 3 World War ; 4 All three; 5 Zero; 6 The strike; 7 Grover Cleveland; 8 Ronald Reagan; 9 Joe Hill; 10 U.S. president; 11 *New York Tribune;* 12 half . . . half; 13 W.E.B. DuBois; 14 Convicts.

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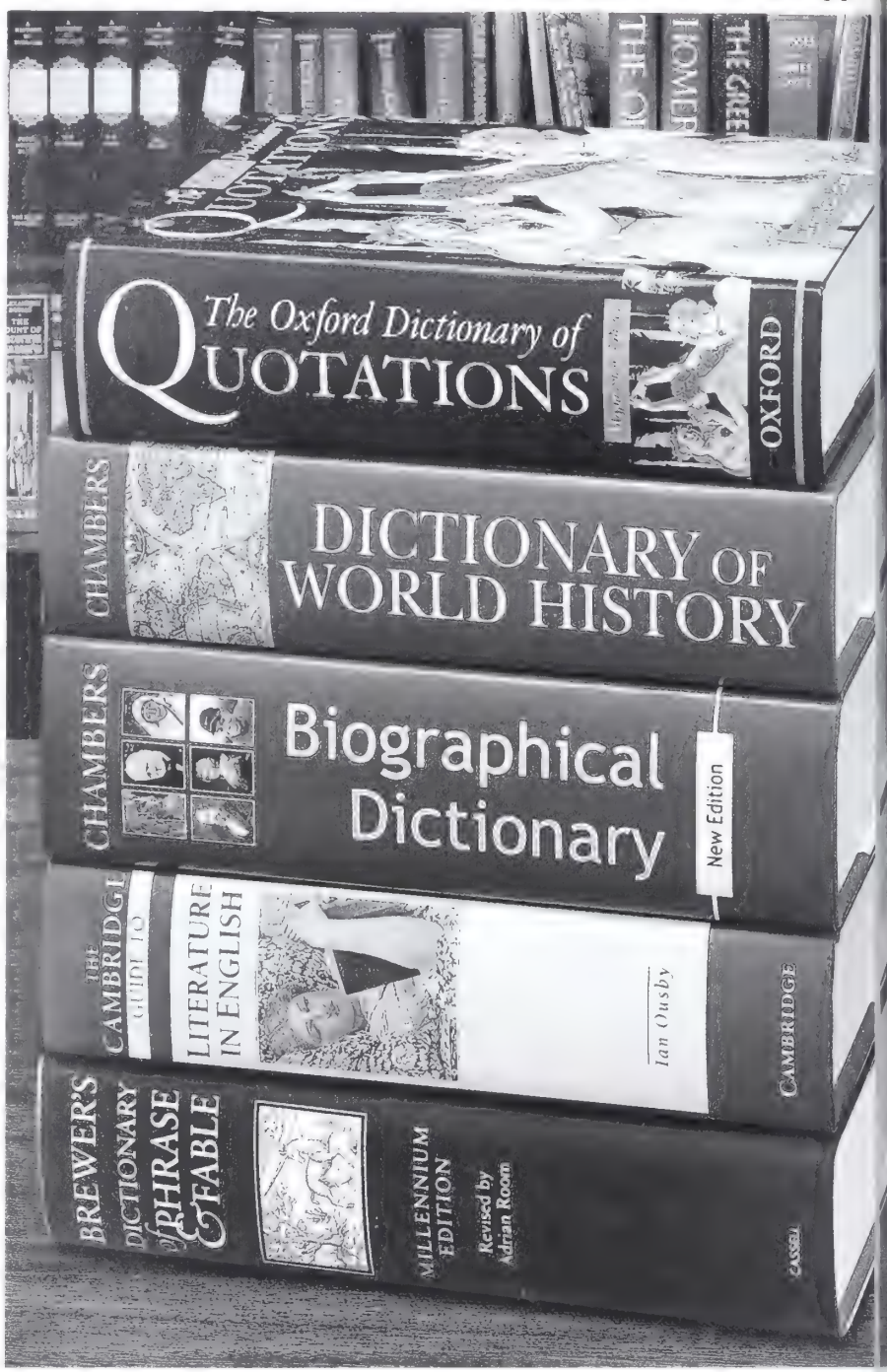
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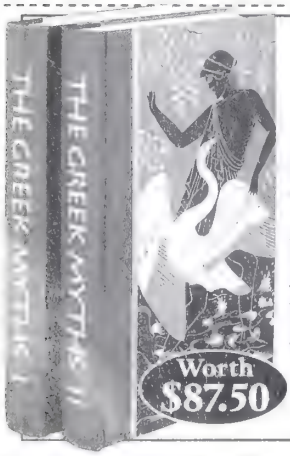
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EIX

AS THOUGH TRUTH WERE A FOOL

Innovations in government fabrication

By Wayne Biddle

Clover Adams's grave is as distant as could be from the old high-mindedness of Lafayette Square, which is as long gone as she from a capital mired at the moment in lies. To find it you wind through neighborhoods that are terra incognita for white people, finally arriving at a bucolic cemetery just within District lines that only rich or powerful families from a far less cynical era could have desired and afforded. Her inscriptionless resting place—Henry's in there, too, but he commissioned Stanford White to design it for her—is famously enigmatic, with a Saint-Gaudens funerary sculpture that still perplexes. This vivacious woman was a horrific suicide, guidebooks say, but her otherwise fact-obsessed husband left a gap of cosmic dimensions in his autobiographical masterwork right where every reader wants to learn exactly what happened.

Wayne Biddle lives and writes in the Washington, D.C., area. His last letter from Washington, "Home Fires Burning," appeared in the June issue.

Getting to know exactly what happens tends to occur well after the fact in Washington, home of the whopper. Whether because so much of the government operates under legalized secrecy or because the news business is a business or because the citizens are exhausted from keeping their own heads above water, catastrophes like war, technological breakdown, and financial ruin are illuminated only in retrospect, when the field is strewn with debris. Surprised when there are no bad weapons. Shocked when the shuttle disintegrates. Dumbfounded when [your company's name here] goes belly up. *The living remain'd and suffer'd.* Not that there is a shortage of real-time participants who know what's happening. The federal payroll is stuffed with political *nipoti* of major or minor stripe, who are your next-door neighbors in any zip code. That black Excursion with Virginia tags always hogging two parking spots at the corner of Kalorama and Twenty-third, with several bravos inside? Not a group grope but the secretary of defense's household guard. Congress's workaday toil consists largely in calling forth the associates of one condottiere or another—the "buffoons and men of talent," as Jacob Burckhardt called them when chronicling the tyrannies of fourteenth-century Italy. The more "sensitive" their knowledge, the more assuredly the hearings will be closed-door.



The doors on Capitol Hill spend a lot of time closed. In the first half of this year, there were at least sixty-two locked hearings in the House and Senate. The pretextual magic words "national security" alone work like "Shut, Sesame," only Ali Baba never gets a chance to load his three asses with

Illustration by Steve Brodner

gold. Appropriations-bill markups are [illegible] supposedly to shield members from the leverage of special interests, but the lobbyists always [illegible] anyway—only the lay public, who vote but do not govern, stay ignorant. And Congress is the easiest branch of government to gather facts from. The other [illegible] nearly riveted, with the judiciary essentially off-limits and the executive protected by "privilege" that would cost taxpayers millions to surmount even in the hands of a fair-minded independent counsel. The resultant information vacuum is a cinch to fill with lies, if not the bare-assed type then at least the kind Churchill called "terminological inexactitude."

Nations go to war for agonizingly long periods on the basis of lies, as World War I and every other conflict of the twentieth century, and maybe every other century, amply demonstrated. Technology and business are harder to sustain on this basis, because nature itself must be fooled in the first case and the supply of suckers is finite in the second. When the director of NASA's Ames Research Center said that he thought, *Oh, my God! This is something. This isn't just a light bounce* upon watching a 1.7-pound chunk of foam fired from an air cannon hit a mock-up shuttle wing at 331 miles per hour, one might wonder about his Louis Renaultian shock, given the years that university-trained engineers spend studying formulas like $\frac{1}{2}mv^2$ for the energy of a moving object.

Since American businessmen embraced advertisers during the 1920s to make the cash registers ring when their products would not, a huge tolerance for fibs has built up in the consumer public, but all the slogans in the world cannot keep a flawed machine from mangling its operators. NASA apparently understood what it was up against when it selected one of the last of the great Oklahoma balls-for-brains jock-cavs, former air force general Thomas P. Stafford—cited in the *Guinness Book of World Records* for the highest reentry speed on any manned spaceflight (during Apollo X)—to oversee the return to orbit of its technocratic legions under the motto "Find it, fix it, and fly it," which lacks only one more pertinent Anglo-Saxon alliterative element.

"They'll blow down some apartment buildings," Stafford used to drawl with a straight face about the 40-kiloton warheads on the navy's Poseidon submarine missiles (the Hiroshima bomb was about 12.5), at a time when the air force was shopping its 300-kiloton MX around Congress. Indeed they would. So, by Washington standards, he is an honest elder statesman who could be called out of retirement. As Lyndon Johnson intuited better than anyone since Old Hickory, there can be a kind of knee-slapping, tall-tale thrust to this, tapping into the Paul Bunyan tradition of American entertainment. Saddam'll unleash his chemicals in forty-five minutes! They'll climb out of the shuttle while it's up there and fix that busted wing! The sum of AOL and Time Warner'll be bigger than the parts! Arabs'll knock down the World Trade Center! *Whoa.* Part of the difficulty here is that truth is always stranger than fiction, which leaves plenty of room for both when a president starts speechifying about terrorism or tax cuts.

In a city used to playing fast and loose, there are decent livings to be made both by lying and by uncovering lies. Until the Republicans took over Congress in 1995, oversight subcommittees could be counted on to ferret out what was known around town as "waste, fraud, and abuse," using subpoena power if necessary to reel in the big fish. Such investigations were often politically motivated, of course, but under the aegis of a tough chairman they could rake real muck. Epitomized by Michigan Democrat John Dingell's House Energy and Commerce panel, whose pit bulls were led by staffer Peter Stockton, these groups put reams of sensitive documents and testimony on the public record and into the hands of journalists.

"We used to say that in order to get advanced in the air force, they had to lie to Dingell," says the impish Stockton, now relegated to plowing the same ground for a downtown non profit. Officers would testify game about one military-industrial progra or another, get caught out in a fals hood by sharply prepared legislati staff, and within months be elevat to the next higher rank. They we just "perfecting the mission," as Stoc ton puts it. This is not a world for t faint of heart: "To get anything out an intelligence agency, you really ha to beat shit and be ugly about it," adds, his normally jovial bearded fa hardening noticeably. "Committ staff expertise today is no good. Th don't pre-interview witnesses. T Senate Intelligence Committee h *no* investigators."

Dingell's and Stockton's reputati as Carnivora seems almost quaint a time when congressional oversight anemic even as a *post hoc* exercise. "T good guys need someplace to go" wh they decide to blow the whistle, laments, noting the current paucity safe havens on Capitol Hill, "or e they get depressed and become part the problem." He fondly quotes A miral Hyman Rickover, whose dem as lord of the nuclear-submarine na Stockton and Dingell helped hast by revealing the old salt's fondness hotel shower curtains and other ba sheesh: "You sin against God, He'll f give you. You sin against the burea cracy, it never forgives."

Unlike several other powerful co mittee chairmen of long tenure w left Congress after the Republic takeover, Representative Dingell stay on as a minority crew member of t ship he once commanded. He is awa to say the least, that it is politically i possible from his new position to sta hard-hitting inquiries that challen anything perceived as Republican t utory. "Tremendous skill" is required the part of staff, he says with respe but he can no longer handpick the of course, and the ones who do g hired now tend to be "in-and-out looking for other jobs." This is perh a smaller pill to swallow, however, th the one he took in a meeting with t vice president and CIA director duri the administration's effort to secu votes for the invasion of Iraq. "On th WMDs, I said, 'Show me your inf mation, I've got the same security cle ance you've got.' And all they said w 'Trust us, we know what's going on

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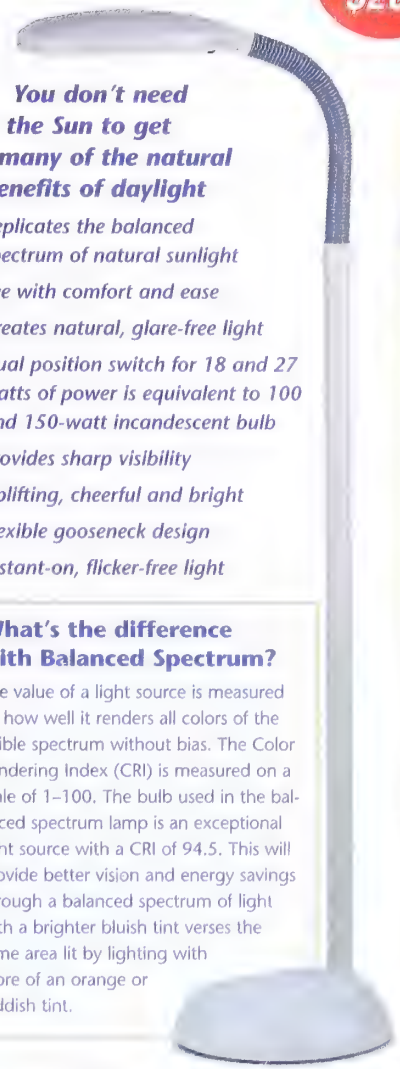

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COMING THIS FALL

THE POLITICS OF WAR



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WALTER KARP

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—Christopher Hitchens, *Newsday*

"Eloquent, even elegiac ... and we close [*The Politics of War*] with a sigh for 'that old America that was free and is now dead.'"

—*The Washington Post*

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It is fair and reasonable to assume that in Washington only a horse's bottom would either demand or reciprocate trust in such a situation, and that Representative Dingell is not a horse's bottom. Maybe those who withhold knowledge they don't actually possess can be excused for acting unvirtuously, but it would take Socrates himself to sort out this conundrum along the Potomac.

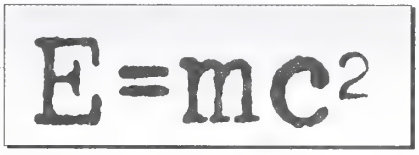
Summer's heat and humidity descended overnight this year after an interminably rainy spring that alone might account for much of the capital's testiness. There is far more to do after work here than there was a generation ago, when a few *ancien régime* French restaurants offered the only diversion from Senate bean soup. Georgetown, Dupont Circle, and Adams Morgan now hold their own as social destinations. The prosperous young people who throng to these quarters on a summer evening show no signs—buttons, leaflets, petitions, contraventional attire—of political involvement, only the bare navels, arty little tattoos, and clean haircuts of the matrix. It is entirely possible that the gray area between non-fiction and non-fact is irrelevant to them, that all the corked bats, baloney newspaper articles, and forked-tongued chief executives quite some time ago achieved the pixel count of normal life. When lying becomes ubiquitous, the evolutionary adaptation would be toward either inanity or suspicion. The electorate is already divided evenly along these lines.

If Clover Adams and other inhabitants of Rock Creek Cemetery were brought back to this vale of tears, what a perfect advisory council they would make: Alice Montague Warfield, mother of the Duchess of Windsor; David Burns, who sold his farm to the government in 1791 to form part of downtown D.C.; Charles Corby, the baker who created Wonderbread; Julius Garfinckel, the department-store founder; Charles Francis Jenkins, one of the inventors of television; Crosby S. Noyes, editor of the *Washington Evening Star*; Rosalie Mackenzie Poe, Edgar Allan's sister; Harlan Fiske Stone, chief justice of the Supreme Court; sundry Civil War generals; ar for good measure, Upton Sincla They could convene regularly in t grove of yews surrounding the Ada monument, perhaps issuing colc coded threat warnings on the status truth, like the ones for terrorism and mospheric ozone.

The Washington novel call *Democracy* that Clover's husband pu lished anonymously in 1880, five ye before she killed herself at forty-two quaffing some of the potassium cyan she kept as an amateur photograph portrays enough graft, rigged electio and betrayal of public trust to sugg that the American intelligentsia ev then had abandoned hope. "I do mu regret that I have not yet one hu dred years to live," says the wick Bulgarian minister Baron Jacobi. "T United States will then be more c rupt than Rome under Caligula; m corrupt than the Church under Leo more corrupt than France under t Regent!" The senators and sociali discomfited at their Sunday-even salon by this outburst respond by ga ering around the piano for a hym "Who, then, is right?" sighs M Lightfoot Lee, mistress of the sal and probably a composite of Clo and Henry. "Half of our wise men clare that the world is going straig to perdition; the other half that i fast becoming perfect. Both cann be right. There is only one thing in ... that I must and will have befor die. I must know whether Americ right or wrong."

Neither Mrs. nor Mr. Adams e acquired this knowledge, of cour though the latter left an exquis record of the failure of his education charitable explanation for why placed that great blank in the mid of it regarding his wife's suicide is t no words would have expressed his l thus a void was the most accur statement he was capable of. The v is there, too, in Saint-Gaudens's s ue, which Henry instructed should be a portrait of his dead wife but a r resentation of "the acceptance, in lectually, of the inevitable." Inevita we will know for certain about the l weapons and the broken shuttle a the wrecked corporations and the r and it would be nice if that happe before we're all dead.

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THE MOMENT THEY WERE WAITING FOR

By Ken Kalfus

His crime was unspeakably foul; his guilt was unquestionably manifest; he offered no tremor of remorse. In a trial that conformed to every legal norm, Lester Ganz was convicted and sentenced to die.

The murderer had glared defiance at the judge and jury. He turned to stare down the courtroom spectators, one by one. Even his lawyer, a future suicide, cringed from Ganz's regard. They all feared Ganz as a creature dredged up from the underworld, vile and malignant. Before the sentence was issued, the judge reminded the courtroom of the murder's heartbreaking particulars; Ganz snickered. Yet once the judge pronounced the punishment, Ganz's bravado was shattered. The killer sharply sucked in his breath and left his mouth open. He seemed surprised, especially on hearing the appointed date of his execution. The young prison warden, who was located in the second row of spectators, took note of his response. He would recall it later, in the grotesque aftermath.

The execution had been set for within two months, and the city was inflamed by anticipation. Even those citizens who claimed indifference counted down the weeks. Every day of the final week seemed to exist only in relation to the designated day, a Tuesday. The warden observed that a mysterious process had taken place since Ganz's sentence was read. The murderer had been severed from the murder; the public imagination had surged forward to the death chamber, carrying with it an undertow of sympathy. The newspapers lingered over the procedure by which the lethal injection would be administered. Readers shivered as if their own arms lay within the needle's predetermined course.

The warden, who would be presiding over his first execution, had previously entertained no qualms about capital punishment. Now he steeled himself by recalling the viciousness of the murder. He studied the coroner's report. He reminded himself that he was no more than an instrument of the public will.

Ganz's imagination worked no less vividly than the public's. Alone in his cell, he too counted the days, amazed as each sparked out. He had never loved life and had seemed to seek annihilation since his first holdup, but now he was consumed by the concrete image of himself being strapped to the gurney at a known, fixed moment in the future. Every intervening second represented a quantifiable fraction of his existence. Ganz lay on his bunk, his face drained of color, his eyes glassy. As the final moments of his life passed like sand uselessly through his fi gers, Ganz could hardly complete thought. He became powerfu aware of what other men knew or dimly or imperfectly or tried to f get: that their motion through ti was relentless.

The warden accompanied pris guards and other visitors to the c to ensure that every formality w observed. As the execution a proached, Ganz showed little awa ness of his surroundings. When did take notice, it was only to scru nize the warden: his pressed suit, unlined face, his clear eyes, his ture. And then Ganz would close eyes, drawing within himself as had been doing for weeks now, communication, perhaps, with wh ever spirits had led him to evil in first place. The warden wished t the hours would somehow hu themselves to the appointed date.

The date arrived. The executi was scheduled for nine in the mo ing, suggesting that it was merely ordinary day's first item of busin but the prison was lit all nig humming in preparation. A l meal was brought and refused; t transaction was given grave ceren ny by the draped food cart, the p ished hoods over the serving dish and the curious, lingering delive man who had won the task from s co-workers in an impromptu raf The prisoner was taken from

Ken Kalfus is the author of two collections of stories and, most recently, a novel. The

. The warden expected that ten-
ı would have further dulled
ız's senses; this morning, howev-
he was alert and still vital and
gerous, though bound in the grip
arge armed men. He struggled
inst each inevitable step. At the
rance to the death chamber,
ere lawyers and officials were
hered around the apparatus, he
tted a low growl. Facing the last
ı he would ever see, he fixed his
s on the warden's, holding them
ın implacable embrace. At that
ment the warden believed that
nz knew him like no other hu-
n being. The warden looked
ıy, aware of his own cowardice.
Ganz was fastened to the gurney,
straps and other constraints of
ich he had already imagined. Just
he needle was inserted, he swore—
vas an oath of nearly heroic coarse-
s—and he muttered something ad-
ional under his breath. The warden,
nding at his side, thought he heard
urst of tortured syllables from some
eign, malevolent language. The
ech carried the urgency of a promise.

other with somber handshakes and regret that even these gestures excessively honored that morning's nastiness. At the same time they felt swindled, for the murderer's punishment was concluded and couldn't compensate for his crime's enduring wrong. The newspapers published extras that seemed anticlimactic and sold poorly. The warden went to his office fatigued from sleeplessness and stress. Outside his window the overcast sky was oddly lit, taking on a yellowish tint, and gusts swirled rubbish in the exercise yard. Men and women went about their business with their heads down, eager for this day to pass into oblivion.

The horrific new era dawned the following day, a Wednesday. With the execution finally behind him, it should have been an uneventful morning, but the warden rose from sleep murmuring certain words and numbers: a month, a day of the month, and a year sometime in the future. He didn't recall a relevant dream, and the memory of the date remained intact, unlike the memory of a dream. He shaved and dressed, puzzled. The year was so remote that it suggested a fantastically new world, but his murmurs had not been accompanied by a vision of scientific marvels or social revolution. Although he didn't speak of it with anyone, in the course of the day he several times stopped what he was doing, looked up from his desk, and silently mouthed the date to make sure that he still remembered it.

Others did the same. By the end of the week it was known that everyone in the city had awakened that morning with some future date on their lips. It was inevitable that they would compare the dates; when patients in the city hospital revealed that theirs were proximate, and then died on them, the city's residents realized that they had been granted knowledge of their own death dates.

Skepticism was voiced about the phenomenon, with the mayor scorning mass hallucination and hysteria, and no one except the warden connected it immediately to the execution of Lester Ganz. Despite the official ridicule, husbands, wives, lovers, and friends rushed to announce their date and then stepped away to consider what each other's meant for them personally. In the next few weeks, as the mortally ill continued to pass away on schedule and healthy citizens perished in unforeseen but punctual accidents, the city came to understand that it had been set apart from the rest of humanity. It had been cursed. Once the association with Ganz was made, his body was disinterred and incinerated in an ad hoc midnight ceremony attended by clergy, but this had no practical effect.

The warden's own death was put well into the next century, a distant point in time, it seemed, when he would be ninety-three years of age. His fiancée revealed that hers would come soon, just four years hence—in childbirth? she wondered, having always been apprehensive about it. She broke off the engagement and forswore having children. Avoiding a bereavement that would complicate the long decades to follow, the warden was secretly relieved. Four years later the woman died of an illness unrelated to



nd then, finally, exactly as the judge
ıd foretold, Lester Ganz was dead.
The body was promptly taken
vay. The officials who had attended
ıe execution took leave of one an-

wn, by Odd Nerdrum. Courtesy Forum Gallery, New York City

pregnancy; it was an affliction, in fact, [illegible] associated with spinsterhood.

The city's inhabitants had known they were mortal, but awareness of the dates their mortality would take effect enshrouded them in perpetual mourning for themselves and their loved ones. Even those promised extended life spans considered their grasp on existence only tenuous. A few individuals responded with the determination to occupy their meticulously allotted years with purposeful activity, making lists of what they expected to accomplish and when. Like other people, however, they were eventually overcome by lassitude, as if the moment they had been waiting for was already at hand. In their hours of greatest pleasure, sharing a good meal with friends or playing catch with their children on a hazy summer morning, no one could escape the thought: *this too shall pass*.

Attempts to thwart Ganz's curse always failed. Those who sought to take their own lives ahead of time survived their razor blades and their nooses and their dives off cliffs, only to be badly hurt and to succumb to their injuries on the correct date anyway. Even when a person believed he had devised foolproof means of premature self-destruction, he was somehow waylaid or injured before it could be accomplished.

Suicide was more successfully pursued by individuals who waited until their appointed date and accomplished it early in the day, consoled that they had at least chosen their own means of departure. They were seen to have kept their composure. Others had not, their mental health undermined by the accelerating approach of their death date until they reached that day in a fury of suicidal madness: the foreknowledge itself was the cause of death. In truth, it was impossible to tell these two classes of suicide apart. The awareness of one's death date superseded every other cause of neurosis and psychosis.

So that a pall would not be cast over their classrooms (for Ganz's curse had not spared the city's children), schoolteachers invented a calendar that comprised ten-day weeks and forty-five- and forty-six-day renamed months and 730-day renumbered years. The city eventually adopted the calendar for its public business, and newspapers jettisoned conventional Gregorian dates from their front pages. None of this erased Ganz's malediction. The rest of the world continued to call the days, months, and years by their fatal names, and the city could not wall off its knowledge of them; no individual could forget the simple fact of his death date. Some residents fled in the desperate hope that absence from the city would invalidate the prophecy, but fate caught up with them in Marseilles barrooms, Rangoon infirmaries, and Argentine train wrecks.

In the city birthdays were hardly observed, but the anniversary of one's future death—which elsewhere passed every year unremarked—became the occasion for lavish social events. Prayers and elegies gave the affairs a certain gravity, yet congratulations were made and presents were exchanged. One customary gift was a watch whose hands proceeded counterclockwise. The usual humorous birthday comments about aging and the accumulation of years—a bit derisive, a bit nervous—were replaced by similarly unfunny, self-conscious comments about their dwindling. The honoree would smile blankly and attend the festivities with an air of distraction, aware that he was not entirely relevant to them. The following morning he would wake surprised by life, unsure of his surroundings, imagining the odor of sulfur in his nostrils.

People planned their lives according to their deaths. Men and women searched for mates with congruent life expectancies, and one occasionally found another who would perish on the same date—together, they assumed romantically. Individuals were now able to more rigorously organize their finances, their retirements, and the purchase of goods that they knew would expire at a certain rate, like refrigerators and bananas. Sinners gave themselves just enough time to repent and alter course. No one died without the last-minute opportunity to confess his love (though many did not). The city became an unruly place as its inhabitants calculated and recalculated their choices within their precisely known quantity of remaining life.

Their predictions, which were accurate as if their deaths had already happened in the known past, raised doubts about the reality of time as a physical phenomenon. Time was now reckoned as elusive and illusory, something experienced psychologically, measurable but closed to empirical investigation. Some people believed that every event in the city's history took place at once, in a single, eternal, unchanging moment, which was only *perceived* as plural. The ball was pitched in the same *now* as the one in which the ball was hit. A lover's first kiss occurred simultaneously with his last betrayal. In the blighted quadrant of the universe residents were guaranteed a static immortality.

Nevertheless, not a day went by in which someone did not try to defy the prophecy that had issued from his own lips. Men and women in good health arrived at their death dates with the determination not to leave their homes. Occupying their last days in their living-room easy chairs, they were killed by stroke, house fires, food poisoning, and, in one instance, a falling meteorite. The thieving, corpulent mayor swore that he would not be taken and spent the day in his chambers surrounded by guards and a large ticking pendulum clock. He sweltered at his desk, pretending to study official documents. He had already filed for his seventh reelection campaign. At five minutes before midnight, one of the guards rushed past the others and stabbed him in the heart with a dagger.

The renegade guard, who had learned about his death date on his employment application, knew that he himself would perish that night: this certainty had given him the courage to strike against civic corruption. In the melee, he was shot to death by the other bodyguards. A minute later the mayor's second intended assassin burst through the skylight, dangling from a rope, surprised by the carnage.

)w. The bodyguards fired on him
'ell.
ıs for the warden, his long life
oddly uneventful, hollow be-
en the firm walls of its birth and
th dates. No further executions
e ordered by the city's courts, for
vas presumed that the deaths of
ital criminals had already been
ınged. The warden married a
nan whose life would last nearly
ong as his, and they had chil-
n who, like everyone else born
er Ganz's execution, grew up
hout the foreknowledge of their
ıth date. His children knew
ut the curse, of course, but for
m it was some kind of mythic
traction, a certain philosophical
ıce toward the future, essentially
rbid. The warden's decline was a
dual one; after his eighteenth year,
was almost constantly aware of
ne pain or discomfort. The re-
ining thirteen years were like a
rched desert that he was forced
cross on his knees. In that inter-
he had many occasions to think
the murderer Lester Ganz and the
l legacy he had left the city. Or
chaps the legacy wasn't entirely
l, the warden concluded, or per-
ps it was no more evil than the
ıer physical constants of exis-
ıce that govern our lives.

After the old warden passed away,
ew men and women subject to the
rse were still left, but they too
nt to their graves (which had
en excavated in advance), and by
at time the city had long discon-
ıued its quixotic use of the 730-
y calendar. Yellowed and torn
pies were collected as folk-art sou-
nirs, their purposes vaguely re-
lled as superstitious. A graduate
ıdent at the state university wrote
paper that went unpublished. The
e-insurance industry gradually re-
ored itself. Once the mechanisms
the anniversary-gift watches fell
art, no one knew that they had
ıce run backward. Even before the
st children of the cursed genera-
on had expired, the city's people
ıd returned to normal life, selling
ıd buying, teaching and learning,
lling and birthing, hating and lov-
g, as if the days of their deaths
uld not be imagined at all. ■

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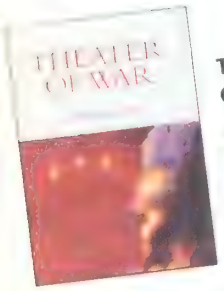
NOTES FOR "DRESSED TO THE NINES":

Puzzle editing by Dan Asimov.

Anagrams are indicated with an asterisk (*).

ANSWERS: 1. snowdrift[4]; 2. he(art-bur[rev.])n; 3. s(unf*)lower; 4. presea-son, two mngs.; 5. B(ill-B.O.)ard; 6. Euc(L.)idean*; 7. tes-si-tur-a (rev.); 8. chev(a)lie*-r; 9. r(H)apsodic*; 10. ex-P(l.)et-I've; 11. I'll-e.g.-[B]ible; 12. alchemist*; 13. sur(homophone)-passes; 14. [Mi]c[key]-le(Ava-G.)es; 15. (b)itchiness; 16. he'll-H.(ole)S.; 17. relocated, two mngs.; 18. big-a-mis(t.)s; 19. wineglass*; 20. bellicose*; 21. state-less; 22. sla(lomi*)ng; 23. dis-Mantle, pun; 24. delegated, hidden; 25. quicklime; 26. Rep.-lic(at)e; 27. C.A.T.-AMA-ran; 28. stag-na-tes (rev.); 29. spe(arm-I)nt; 30. man-I-cured; 31. beans-talk; 32. leg-1-slate; 33. admira(B)I-e[xercises]; 34. se(quit)urs*; 35. p(a-rent)age; 36. [numbe]r-educible; 37. equations*; 38. d.-en(ounce)d; 39. longitude*; 40. decade-N.C.E.; 41. tattooing, hidden.

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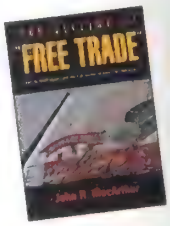


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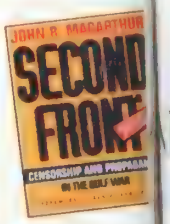
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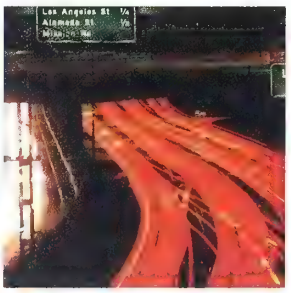
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EW BOOKS

y John Leonard







f Joan Didion, the geomancer of deracination, can be said to have any roots at all, then she has re-ned to them in WHERE I WAS)M (Knopf, $23), a book of lamen-ons devoted to California "dream-e": to crossing stories and origin -hs like the Donner Party and the st Bowl; to railroads, oil companies, biz, and aerospace; to immigration, entee ownership, water rights, and ense contracts; to novelists like nk Norris and Jack London, losophers like Josiah Royce, and nters like Thomas Kinkade; to free-ys, strip malls, and meth labs; to n Francisco's Bohemian Club and kewood's Spur Posse; to those rth-graders who tied with isiana's in 1994 for the worst scores standardized ding tests; and to se state legisla-s who, as of 1995, re spending more ney on Califor-'s prisons than on colleges.



Didions have ed in that state, th a ranchero se of entitlement, since the mid-e of the nineteenth century, when an's great-great-great-grandmother ught a corn-bread recipe and a pota-masher across the plains from kansas to the Sierra. As a nine-year-d Girl Scout, Joan sang songs in the room of a Sacramento insane asy-m. As a trapped teenager, she spent her summers reading Eugene O'Neill and dreaming about Bennington (though she graduated instead from Berkeley, just like her melancholy father). As a first novelist, in 1963 with *Run River*, she blamed outsiders and newcomers for paving her childhood paradise; eleven books and forty years later, she has now decided that selling their future to the highest bidder was already a habit among the earliest Californians, including her own family. If the whole state has turned into "an entirely dependent colony of the invisible empire" of corporate and political greed, Didions are complicit.

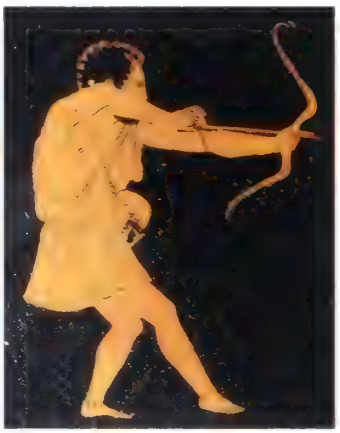
Bad news, though not as dire as what she told us in her last book, *Political Fictions*, about the abduction of democracy by the best candidates big money can buy. And how odd that bad news can be so much fun to read. Her essays are as sinewy as her novels, written in the same ice-pick/laser-beam prose, with the same liturgical/fatidic tendencies toward haiku. My only gripe with *Where I Was From* is that it omits so much she has written elsewhere about California. Ideally, there should be a Library of America Golden State Didion, including everything she's said about Death Valley and Big Sur, Hollywood and Alcatraz, mall culture and Manson groupies, junk bonds and Stealth bombers, poker parlors and cyclotrons, the horses that caught fire and were shot on the beach, the birds that exploded in Malibu's air, and all the bloody butter on her crust of dread.

But true dread is northerly, across the Oregon state line, in Elinor Langer's meticulous report on A HUNDRED LITTLE HITLERS: THE DEATH OF A BLACK MAN, THE TRIAL OF A WHITE RACIST, AND THE RISE OF THE NEO-NAZI MOVEMENT IN AMERICA (Metropolitan Books, $26). More than an account of the beating to death with a baseball bat of an Ethiopian emigrant, Mulugeta Seraw, by skinheads on a Portland street in the early morning of November 12, 1988, *A Hundred Little Hitlers* wants us to know many things we didn't—about Oregon, a very white state that

right: Photograph of palm trees © The Brett Weston Archive/CORBIS; greeting card from California, c. 1938 ake County Museum/CORBIS; photograph of a Los Angeles highway © Bilderberg/Photonica 2003; *tom*: Photograph of the parking lot of a suburban mall, c. 1965 © Hulton | Archive by Getty Images

has always wanted to stay that way; about the dress-up subcultures of skinheads, punk rockers, neo-Nazis with tattooed swastikas, and Klansmen into that hooded look; about what doesn't get testified to in court when everybody is anxious to perform execrations, absolutions, and exorcisms instead of justice; and about the damage done to civil liberties by the so-called good guys, with their patchwork-quilt conspiracy theories designed to cover all the angles of big-time fund-raising.

After talking to everyone and reading everything and rethinking what she's sure of versus what can't be known, Langer demonstrates that Seraw's death was manslaughter, not murder; random, not deliberate; delinquent, not racist. Which is not to say that she isn't worried about white supremacists, who may number as many as 200,000 in this country—her book is the scariest CAT scan we have on these brain tumors. But she is not persuaded that Tom Metzger, his son, John, and their White Aryan Resistance, 1,500 miles away from Portland, should have been tried for civil liability on the theory that their "agents" incited Portland's skinheads (echoes of RICO, as well as of military tribunals). And she is properly skeptical about the discrepancy between $100,000 for Seraw's family compared with the $20 million the Southern Poverty Law Center raised by using the case as a scarecrow to hustle contributions.



Anne Garrels, who seems otherwise to be a perfectly nice person, leaves husband, home, town, and country to look for dread on distant shores. Chechnya wasn't enough for National Public Radio's senior foreign correspondent. Nor were Bosnia, Kosovo, Israel, and Afghanistan. She had to go to Iraq for Operation Shock and Awe.

(Farrar, Straus and Giroux, $22) is her breezy account of what she saw, unembedded, and what she didn't, either because her handlers wouldn't let her or because, like those infamous weapons of mass destruction, there was nothing to see. "Naked" refers not to fifty-something hanky-panky but to her spying on the war in the dark, and talking into the satellite telephone she wasn't supposed to have, from her room in the Palestine Hotel before we started shooting at the journalists in the Palestine Hotel.

Garrels wants us to know that those television pictures of a bronze Saddam being toppled by a joyous citizenry were more or less staged and not exactly indicative. She is eager to inform us that journalists abroad can't do their jobs without the help of local people like her Iraqi driver, Amer. We are also impressed, in spite of the breeziness, by her courage, resourcefulness, and smarts. We are thus reminded that most reporters are a lot better than Jayson Blair.

In case we thought that dread was something distinctively modern, Adrienne Mayor reminds us in

SCORPION BOM
AND CHEMICAL
ANCIENT WORLD (Overlook Press, $27.95) that serpent venom, toxic honey, monkshood, black hellebore, deadly nightshade, yew berries, frog toxin, rhododendron sap, stingray spine, jellyfish, dung beetles, and bug guts (not to mention rabies, anthrax, smallpox, curare, and bubonic plague) have, from antique times, been smeared on arrows, spears, swords, and blowgun darts, or shot out of catapults during sieges, or used to poison crops and wells, by everybody from Alexander the Great to the Holy Crusaders, including Hittites, Scythians, Spartans, Trojans, Romans, Persians, Hindus, Muslims, and Marcus Aurelius. Perhaps most worrisome in this dispatch from the dead zone is the news that temples may be repositories of bioweapons waiting for their n ment—even the Ark of the Coven may have harbored plague germs. I most encouraging is Mayor's obser tion that, from the beginning, in ev culture ethical questions have be raised. Classical literature views w alarm not only chemical and biolo cal warfare but preemptive strikes a collateral damage as well. The st of Hercules and how he died is a t rible caution.

After so much violence, deserve some saving gra Part fiction and part auto ography, revery, prophecy, and ho to manual, Maxine Hong Kingsto

THE FIFTH BOOK OF PEA

(Knopf, $26) is all about burn books and building communiti According to legend, the first th Chinese books of peace w burned. So was the fourth, a nov in-progress by Kingston, in the O land fire that destroyed her hom "I held in my hands the edge pages, like silvery vanes of feath like white eyelashes. . . . I placed palm on this ghost of my book, my hand sank through it"—bombs continued to fall on Iraq ter the first Persian Gulf War and Kingston's dead father, whose o books of poems had likewise gone in smoke, flew over the Ameri like an angry god.

And so Kingston will have to ate a fifth book, a sanctuary or a h mitage, out of jade hearts and "pe tactics," dream jewels and drag oracle bones and turtle shells, Ta jokes and Anton Chekhov. Wher er we are in this fifth book—in C fornia or Hawaii or France or Ch with Maxine's alter ego, Wittn Ah Sing, or her mother, Brave chid, or among the Vietnam ve ans whose "talkstories" the nove helps to turn into unspeakable a Kingston is a lotus, a flowering of vine intellect, and a bodhisatt sticking around, one birth shor nirvana, to ease our sufferi Against war and destruction, in astonishing gift of eyelashes, fea ers, and ghosts, she bravely propo "A poem. A parade. A commun A vow. A moral principle. C peaceful moment."

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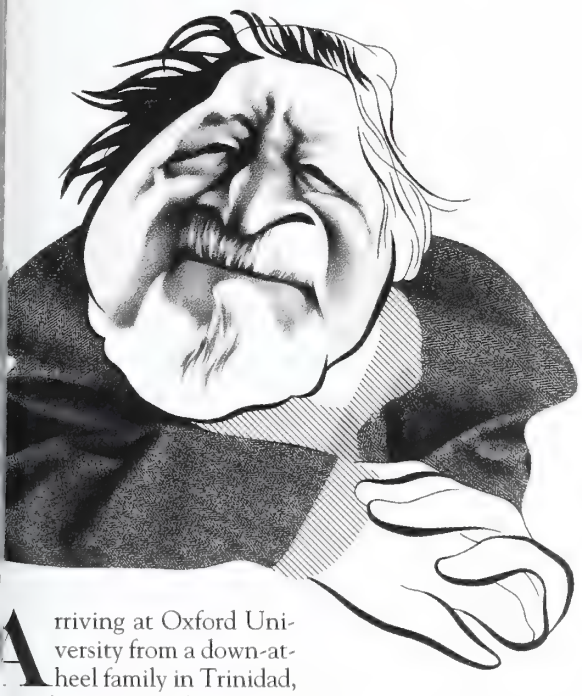
MIND SO FINE

he contradictions of V. S. Naipaul

y Terry Eagleton

ussed in this essay:

rary Occasions: Essays, by V. S. Naipaul. Edited by Pankaj Mishra. Knopf, 2003. 206 pages. $24.
paul's Strangers, by Dagmar Barnouw. Indiana University Press, 2003. 200 pages. $22.95.



Arriving at Oxford University from a down-at-heel family in Trinidad, e eighteen-year-old V. S. Naipaul ote: "Gone are the days of the aris-crats. Nearly everyone comes to Ox-d on a state grant. The standard of e place naturally goes down." It was though Dick Cheney were to com-ain that there were too few Trot-yists in his golf club. My own entry to the dreaming spires, a decade or later, was unfortunate for just the op-site reason: the place was positive-swarming with patricians, almost all whom seemed to be called Nigel. owering in stature as a result of gen-erations of fine breeding, they brayed rather than spoke, elbowed the townspeople off the thin medieval pavements, and joked about letting loose their hounds on "oiks" (working-class undergraduates) like myself. As a stunted North-of-England plebeian, I found myself ducking servilely between their legs like Gulliver in Brobdingnag. It was the kind of place in which one would as soon have worn a pink tutu as sported jeans. Naipaul would have been in his element.

Most of that was to change as the demotic sixties hit their stride. Previously, working-class students would disappear for three days or so into some private room before emerging mysteriously bereft of their Glaswegian or West Country accents. Now everyone was speaking through their noses like John Lennon, distressing their vowels, and meticulously inserting the odd glottal stop into their speech. The patricians were still in evidence, but rumor had it that there were plans for confining them to a special reservation in Magdalen College deer park, where they would be publicly fed three times a day.

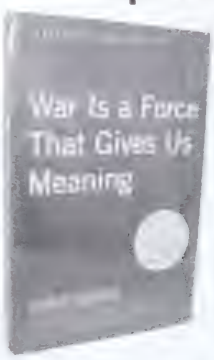
Arriving in England only to become *plus anglais que les Anglais* is a familiar émigré tale. V. S. Naipaul, who came to the country in 1950 and has made it his home ever since, is one of the latest in a venerable line of literary refugees, several of them among the most eminent figures in modern "English" literature. There was Joseph Conrad, the Pole who commended the chuckleheaded values of the British merchant navy; Henry James, the American who attended English country-house parties as devotedly as Madonna drops in on fashion shows; T. S. Eliot, who looked and sounded like a rather dotty Anglican vicar. Eliot famously remarked of his compatriot James that "he had a mind so fine that no idea could violate it," which was a backhanded way of congratulating him on being a kosher Englishman, since the English have customs and pieties rather than fancy theories. It was self-congratulation too: it takes one expertly disguised expatriate to know another.

George Bernard Shaw recognized immediately that his fellow Dubliner Oscar Wilde had appointed himself Irish jester to the English court, a role he shared with Shaw and which would later be inherited by Brendan Behan. Shaw was also aware of how dangerous as well as exhilarating this bit part was. The English relished Wilde's mimicry of them but also suspected that imitation was the sincerest form of mockery. (It was Naipaul who was later to put into currency the phrase "mimic men," the title of one of his more lugubrious novels.) Wilde's use of the English language was a shade too polished and perfect; the genuine English aristocrat of the Victorian era said things like "huntin'" and "shootin'," too indolent to labor over his consonants. And indeed, without Farquhar, Steele, Sheridan, Goldsmith, Shaw, Wilde, and O'Casey, there would have been precious little English stage comedy to boast of. Who better placed to write comedy than those who know the natives' language and conventions from the inside, yet are also foreign enough to cast a sardonic eye on their sanctities? The Irish did not only have to send the British their rents and cattle; they also had to write most of their great literature for them.

In Ireland, as in Naipaul's Trinidad,

rry Eagleton is Professor of Cultural heory and John Rylands Fellow at the niversity of Manchester. He is the author more than thirty books, including Sweet olence: The Idea of the Tragic.

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one of the most revered of all native [illegible] The mountains in Ireland, somewhat unusually, are ringed around the coast, as though divinely arranged to keep the natives in; but writers could usually rely on being driven out by church and state to Boston or Birmingham. Although Naipaul found himself hemmed in by an ocean rather than a mountain range, crossing it proved to be a one-way passage, as it did for James Joyce. Like Naipaul, Joyce abandoned his country early but never ceased to revisit it in imagination; having escaped in reality, both men could then find their way back in fantasy. Joyce once remarked that it was this freedom from English social and literary convention that lay at the root of his talent. Deprived of a stable tradition, the colonial writer has to pillage, to parody, to make it up as he or she goes along, so that exile and experiment go together like Laurel and Hardy. It is not surprising that Ireland was the only region of the British Isles early last century to produce a flourishing indigenous modernism. Otherwise, Britain had to import its modernism, along with its Ford cars and chinoiserie.

Naipaul is not nearly as avant-garde a writer as Joyce (who is?), but he has been both blessed and afflicted by a similarly skewed relationship to the metropolis. Joyce leapt over the imperial capital of London into the arms of the continentals, with whom Ireland had enjoyed a fruitful cultural relationship ever since the monastic émigrés of the Middle Ages. (His fellow Dubliner Samuel Beckett was to do much the same some years later.) As a Trinidadian, however, Naipaul had no such organic affinity to continental Europe; it was England or nothing.

In the litany of literary refugees, Wilde, Shaw, and Joyce stand out in one notable way. They are the only ones who were adamantly on the political left—though "Stalinist" might describe Shaw more accurately than "socialist," and Joyce's radical sympathies were short-lived. The others were either studiously "unpolitical," or ensconced somewhere on the political right. For many—Conrad, Pound, Yeats, Eliot, Lewis—the right imagination was an unpleasantly embattled one, rather than the moderate Burke [illegible] Toryism of many of the English [illegible] tives. If you think too much about co[illegible] servatism, you cannot really be an E[illegible] lish conservative, and other min[illegible] men recognized as much. The [illegible] silience of this brand of conservati[illegible] lies in its distaste for the political in [illegible] vor of the customary, instinctual, a[illegible] spontaneous. When Naipaul disov[illegible] politics by informing us, in his acc[illegible] tance speech for the Nobel Prize, t[illegible] he has "no guiding political idea" a[illegible] cherishes his "intuition alone," he[illegible] telling us his politics. It is, presu[illegible] ably, pure intuition that leads him[illegible] conclude *An Area of Darkness* with [illegible] declaration that the Indians have [illegible] sense of history and their country "[illegible] never cease to require the arbitrat[illegible] of a conqueror."

There is, then, a well-attested affi[illegible] ity in British culture between the ér[illegible] gré and the conservative intellec[illegible] al—not only in the literary field but[illegible] the way from Wittgenstein and Na[illegible] er to Popper and Gombrich. Like C[illegible] rad, some of these luminaries were[illegible] flight from political turbulence at [illegible] heart of Europe and turned to wh[illegible] seemed a more sedate, traditiona[illegible] milieu in the United Kingdom. O[illegible] ers, such as James and Eliot, were [illegible] lured by what felt like a more "org[illegible] ic" social order—mannered, devic[illegible] and stratified—in which their thou[illegible] could flourish more vigorously tha[illegible] would in an autocratic culture or i[illegible] brashly explicit one like the Uni[illegible] States. And émigrés do not kick a h[illegible] in the lifeboat they are clamber[illegible] aboard; they compensate for their [illegible] sider status by becoming honorary [illegible] tocrats—but aristocrats of wit and s[illegible] rather than of blood and prope[illegible] From Wilde to Tom Stoppard, Err[illegible] Gellner to Isaiah Berlin, expatria[illegible] intent on out-Englishing the Eng[illegible] have resorted to humor, satire, anc[illegible] acerbic vein of wit. In doing so, t[illegible] become spiritually superior to [illegible] philistine middle classes who wan[illegible] ship them back home.

Naipaul's conservatism [illegible] been lambasted often enou[illegible] notably by post-colonial c[illegible] ics, though his opinion of this schol[illegible] of thought is not, one imagines, [illegible] that different from what Clint Ea[illegible]

d's would be if he ever got wind of Dagmar Barnouw's *Naipaul's ngers* is a bravely unfashionable at- pt to rescue the writer from those accuse him of racism, chauvin- and snobbery; and, although some ht consider this as easy as defend- George Bush from the charge of ng parochial, the book yields some irably sensitive readings of paul's prose, despite being extrav- ntly uncritical of its revered sub- . Its pages are everywhere redolent he smell of incense.

Barnouw does aim a few well- eted shots at the postcolonial ro- nticizing of "the other," recording paul's distaste for, in the words of ther critic, "privileged people who sentimental about primitivism in Third World." Anyone suffering n this widespread affliction could tainly do worse than read a few of ipaul's books, even if the cure might n out to be more nauseating than the ease. This, after all, is the man whose cular pronouncements include the gment that nothing was ever cre- d in the West Indies; that the West lians never seriously doubted the tue of the imperialist culture to ich they aspired; and that the eth- situation of African Americans nnot be the subject of serious liter- ire. If Naipaul is understandably ir- ated by well-heeled sentimentalists, s partly because they dispute his inuation that when it comes to onialism, the natives were at least much to blame as their masters.

If you do not wish to provoke your mpatriots to helpless fury, it is prob- ly advisable not to open your ac- unt of the Caribbean, *The Middle ssage*, with the sentence: "There was ch a crowd of immigrant-type West dians on the boat-train platform at aterloo that I was glad I was travel- g first class to the West Indies." Boa sta, in Brazil near the border with itish Guiana, is a "preposterous city" he Waugh-like epithet is significant), hich probably means, among other ings, that they did not bring Naipaul s coffee quickly enough. It is hard to now, muses Naipaul, what the uianese are thinking—just as it is rd to know what he himself is think- g when churning out an obtuse cliché ch as that. Like the equally dyspep- tic traveler Paul Theroux, Sir Vidia seems to find most of the people he meets in his wanderings so disagree- able that one wonders why he doesn't just stay at home.

Perhaps traveling is a way of staying faithful to having grown up nowhere in particular; you can feel homeless anywhere at all. Like Gulliver, Naipaul finds the same pettiness, corruption, and betrayal everywhere he goes. India, he announces in *An Area of Darkness*, "invited conquest" and has nothing to contribute to the world. It is a country "with an infinite capacity for being plundered," which is rather like claiming that Ethiopian children have an infinite capacity for starving to death. The Taj Mahal, he reflects, might as well be transported slab by slab to the United States, since in India it is sheerly wasteful. No doubt some enterprising Texan will take the hint. In Naipaul's own contemptuous imagery, India comes down to the starving child defecating by the wayside and the mangy dog waiting to eat up the excrement.

These and similarly insulting fatuities are the language of a writer who detests political generalities, works by innocent intuition alone, and is celebrated by Barnouw, among others, for the delicate particularity of his perceptions. The portrayal of the Muslim world in *Among the Believers* would make the book enjoyable bedtime reading for Richard Perle. With their Jamesian sense of nuanced judgment and fine discrimination, novels such as *Guerrillas* and *In a Free State* appear to view all colonial emancipation as self-interested, self-deluding fantasy. Naipaul has only to sniff an ideal to detect in it the stirrings of self-aggrandizement. He complains of his people having been stripped of history, but does just the same himself in order to avoid the discomforting truth that colonialism may have had a hand in their present plight.

Few writers have a shrewder understanding of what has been called colonial cringe, and few are more adept at analyzing the self-serving myths of the powerless. In my own country of Ireland, it has not been unknown for some dejected soul to down one pint of Guinness too many out of sheer depression over the Gaelic defeat

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at the battle of Kinsale in 1601, or for [illegible] justice of the eighteenth-century Penal Laws, to find it hard to struggle out of bed in the morning. Colonial peoples can indeed be marked by shame and fantasy, self-loathing and self-deception, pious rhetoric and sentimental bluster. But some of them can also laugh about the fact; and there is a difference between recognizing this syndrome and asserting, as some in Ireland have, that the Irish themselves were largely responsible for the Great Famine. This is just another version of the [illegible] tives are being castigated.

The colonial who rebukes his compatriots had better be careful that his complaints are not just another symptom of the whining he condemns in them. Naipaul sees with brutal realism how the dispossessed can sometimes collude in their own subjugation, but he does not dwell at length on the moral obscenity of the subjugation itself. Instead, he believes that all causes, including the idea of justice, are corrupting, that every man is an island, and that pity and compassion for a colonial people will not do because they baselessly encourage hope.

Rare is the writer as exquisitely talented as he who is so long on observation and so short on sympathy. Naipaul does not seem to know the meaning of geniality, which may well be the ultimate judgment of the colonial system under which he grew up. In *An Area of Darkness*, we learn at one point that Naipaul's female companion has suddenly fainted at his side—a surprising revelation, since he had not previously bothered to mention her presence at all. What champions like Barnouw would no doubt call steelily disenchanted realism is in fact the lopsided antirealism of one who can hardly bring himself to acknowledge the realities of love and courage. When he writes of how the powerless lie about themselves and to themselves, he cannot resist ruining the point by adding "since it is their only resource," which is itself a sort of lie.

Literary Occasions gathers together some of Naipaul's essays about writing, mixing autobiographical pieces, prefaces to his own novels, and his Nobel Prize speech with articles on Conrad, Kipling, Nirad Chaudhuri, and other Indian writers. The volume charts the extraordinary spiral of displacements that make up Naipaul's career. It is a life in which one fantasy gives way to another, one fiction is concealed within a second, one potential homecoming turns out to be yet another assignation with strangeness.

Born into an Indian community in Trinidad, the grandchild of indentured immigrant laborers, Naipaul came from an island that [illegible] marooned between the Caribbean and South America—and an ethnic background that was even more so. Trinidadian Indians still had a smattering of their indigenous culture but one that was already on the wane, so Naipaul claims, when he was a child. He could understand Hindi but not speak it. His community, at home neither in the West nor in the East, held itself aloof from the racially mixed life of the street and knew nothing of Muslims. Naipaul would eventually come to see his own detached, passive, observerlike status as a kind of Hindu trait; it certainly proved easily translatable later on into the sardonic, *de haut en bas* judgments of the English gentleman. In both cases, there is an apartness, a quick sense of caste, and a horror of uncleanness.

This insider/outsider status within Trinidad, which the colonial relation to Britain simply wrote large, was a social one too: the Naipaul family was lower middle class, furnished with some rudimentary culture but socially impoverished. Naipaul senior, an odd-job man turned journalist and short-story writer, tried to raise himself a little by writing, only to look in the mirror one morning and fail to see his face reflected there. He had merged back into the anonymous masses and suffered a mental breakdown.

Along with the émigré, the lower middle class occupies an honorable niche among the architects of English literature. It was from this Janus-faced social stratum ("contradiction incarnate," Marx called it) that the major realist novel of the nineteenth century was produc[ed]. The Brontë sisters were the child[ren] of a poor Anglican parson; Geo[rge] Eliot was the daughter of a prov[in]cial farm bailiff; Charles Dick[ens] was the son of an impecunious ci[vil] service clerk; Thomas Hardy's fat[her] was a small-time West Coun[try] builder. Squeezed precariously [be]tween the social establishment [and] the impoverished plebs, this gr[oup] lived out the conflict between a[spi]ration and frustration, individ[ual] ambition and communal loya[lty] which also marks the work of [so] many colonial authors.

If the émigré is literally forei[gn] the lower middle class are inter[nal] migrants. They are inside and o[ut]side conventional society at [the] same time, peevish, resentful, [and] pathologically insecure, yet powe[red] by a formidable drive for cultivat[ion] and respectability. The impulse [to] belong, and the urge to break aw[ay] fight it out in the Brontës as they [do] in Naipaul's Mr. Biswas, a portrai[t of] his self-divided father. The colo[nial] writer's talent, which allows him [to] portray his own people, is also w[hat] cuts him adrift from them. To w[rite] about your people is already to w[rite] your way out of them. The act [of] portraying from the inside is also [an] escapably one of alienation; in p[os]sessing yourself in the act of auth[or]ship, you come to dispossess your[self] of your place.

Childhood for most of us is a t[ime] when one has no idea what [on] earth is going on, but for [the] young Naipaul this state of ignora[nce] was painfully compounded. His [own] experience was profoundly strang[e] him, as though the usual human [fac]ulties for orienting and identifying [one] simply crumbled. Not knowing [oth]ers, in a fractured, unstable soc[iety] cobbled provisionally together and [cut] loose from history, he could k[now] nothing of himself. Trinidad w[as] "borrowed culture," a belated soc[iety] with "that feeling of having ente[red] the cinema long after the film has st[art]ed." Racism permeated the place [like] an invisible gas. The novels he [ad]voured as a boy were an imported pr[od]uct, the fruit of an organized me[tro]politan knowledge that Naipaul lac[ked]

reft of this coveted knowledge, rly efforts at fiction were thrown on pure impressions. He knew ng of his own Hindu communi- cept for what he learned from his r's stories, so that even experi- close to hand had to be mediat- rough art. As for historical mem- hat fizzled out around the time of randparents. The past, like the of India, was a dream. Within the al, "real-life" India of Nehru and dhi there was a more elusive, -fictional India from which his y obscurely stemmed. He hailed a half-remembered subcontinent, when he later visited the place it ed out to be not, as he had ex- ed, the whole of which his child- l community was a fragment but a ary, separate, derelict nation, just life at home.

ter, in a repetition of Trinidad, England he knew would be main- xford and literary London. (He n undergraduate at Oxford's Uni- ty College, whose tradition of dis- uished overseas visitors has since dled to encompass Chelsea Clin-) The Oxford of his day could give little help with writing: it was the)s, when Tennyson and Thacker- ere considered by the English fac- rather too recent to be adequate- sessed. But it was through writing Naipaul would explore who he reclaiming in such works as *The dle Passage* and *Among the Believers* areas of darkness around him; it by investigating other "half-made" eties that he would be able at last et a grip on his own.

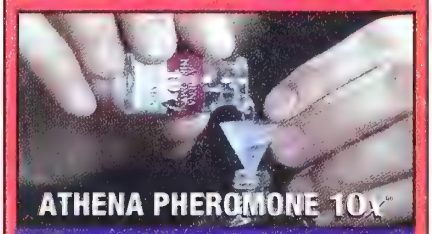
he Indians, Naipaul considers n his usual withering contempt, botched parodies of the English; England was a fantasy as well, ountered as a child only in the es of Dickens and a few other lit- ry imports, on which he then deled the real-life Trinidad und him. Eventually, in *The Enig- of Arrival*, he reverses the rela- n and speaks of projecting an ican landscape onto a Wiltshire e, in order to write about Africa n the only spot where he has felt y at home. Yet even the English al landscape is portrayed here as e in decline, marked by that sense decay, fragility, and impending chaos that inspires so deep-seated a fear in his novels.

The young Naipaul had to translate the English classics into his own Trinidadian terms in order to make them work—though he would later come to realize that writing is a kind of translation anyway, distilling and distorting the actual world into aesthetic shape. When he came to England in 1950, the nation that had previously figured only as a fantasy became one in another sense, full of English people pretending to be English. If the Indians and the Trinidadians were mimic men, the English were mimics of themselves, self-consciously performing their Englishness like a second-rate drawing-room comedy; men like Evelyn Waugh and the later Kingsley Amis really were irascible old reactionaries, but they also reveled in acting the part. At the same time, the social reality of England served to dispel the literary fantasy: the more Naipaul knew of English culture, the less he felt in possession of its literature. A country of the mind was forced to yield to the reality.

Knowledge was thus inseparable from loss, as it was in Naipaul's relationship to his small-time journalist father. It was his father's unpublished writings about Trinidadian street life that inspired Naipaul to begin writing himself, so that the son's text became an extension of the father's. What Naipaul did not know at the time, however, was that his father had suffered disgrace and humiliation: he was caught sacrificing a goat to ward off a curse placed upon him by some farmers whose cavalier way with government regulations he had exposed in the press. To this extent, Naipaul's knowledge of him was mixed with a saving ignorance, a salutary blankness that lies somewhere at the origin of his art.

Literary Occasions, like most of Naipaul's writing about himself, is remarkable for its honest lucidity and stringent self-criticism. If he is hard on others, he is quite as ungenial about himself. He admits, for example, that his early narrators in novels such as *Miguel Street* are a good deal more streetwise than he

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ever was; that he did not feel competent as a reader until his mid-twenties; and that "the ambition to be a writer was for many years a kind of sham." He is not in the least given to posturing or self-dramatizing. The collection is the work of an artist who nevertheless exemplifies one of the minor catastrophes of the twentieth century: the fact that the conflicts and instabilities that issued in so much superb writing led also, all too often, to a harsh, unforgiving elitism. Great art, dreadful politics: it is the link between the two that needs to be noted. ■

SOUNDS AND SWEET AIRS

The Norton Anthology may be bigger, but is it any better?

By *Daniel Anderson*

Discussed in this essay:

The Norton Anthology of Modern and Contemporary Poetry, edited by Jahan Ramazani, Richard Ellman, and Robert O'Clair. W.W. Norton, 2003. 2,000 pages. $75.

For many readers today, articulating the difference between modern and contemporary poetry is like telling yams from sweet potatoes: *You mean*, one might ask, *there's a difference?* The boundaries—both chronological and stylistic—seem vague, and the problem of distinguishing one literary period from the other is aggravated by a tendency to employ the terms "modern" and "contemporary" interchangeably. This is not just a confusion among the ranks of casual dabblers in poetry—critics and poets themselves often classify as "modern" poems written in our own time.

The original purpose of *The Norton Anthology of Modern Poetry* was to make a distinction for us, or to suggest one that we could use as a starting point. When the first edition was published in 1973, its chief virtue was its construction of a genealogy between modern poetry's immediate precursors and poets writing into the early 1970s. One could trace the lines of influence backward and forward in time, from the stirrings of modernism in the poetry of Walt Whitman, Emily Dickinson, Thomas Hardy, and Gerard Manley Hopkins to the formally experimental, epic, and fragmented works of Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot, and Hart Crane. From there one could move on to the postmodern sensibilities of those poets writing in the latter half of the twentieth century.

Now, in its third incarnation, edited by Jahan Ramazani (though the text retains the names of its previous editors, Richard Ellman and Robert O'Clair), the long-admired survey of twentieth-century poetry has lost its original focus: its youngest poets offer little to help us comprehend the legacy of modernism. For the survey to cast its speculative gaze into the near future of poetry still makes practical sense, but the latest edition has grown overlarge, and it buckles under the weight of its contending ambitions. In the three decades that the anthology has been in print, the number of poets included who were born after 1940 has grown from three to forty-three, and the need to accommodate this ever increasing population has prompted Norton to print the anthology in a two-volume set, with the first volume devoted to modernist poets and the second to their contemporary successors. This change raises a question about the shaping of such an authoritative text; namely, can the aims of literary stewardship ever be compatible with the charting of contemporary literary fashion?

Anthologies, by nature, are exercises in generality, and the task that Jahan Ramazani undertook was colossal, one undoubtedly fraught with agonizing decisions. Some of the excisions from the earlier editions are considerable. Readers may be surprised, for example, to find James Joyce and Samuel Beckett out after three decades. And although neither was included in the original edition, the entries for Oscar Wilde and Lewis Carroll also have been omitted. Additions to the front end of the anthology, which tend to broaden the cultural and aesthetic scope of the previous two editions, include James Weldon Johnson, Amy Lowell, Mina Loy, Elinor Wylie, Dorothy Parker, and Laura Riding, as well as markedly larger selections from Gertrude Stein and Langston Hughes.

Perhaps more significant than the anthology's revision of its modernist offerings is its assessment of contemporary poetry, through which Ramazani's editorial influence will have a lasting impact. In his introduction to the second volume, Ramazani extols the ability of contemporary poetry to reflect a sweeping variety of perspectives. "Globalization, ethnicization, and feminization" have left their unambiguous fingerprints on contemporary verse, he notes with approval, and have given voice to a multitude of cultural, ethnic, and sexual sensibilities.

In his essay "Tradition and the Individual Talent," T. S. Eliot submitted that "honest criticism and sensitive appreciation are directed not upon the poet but upon the poetry." We live in an era, however, when Eliot's observation is frequently turned on its head. Several of the poets whom Ramazani has selected seem to mean as much, if not more, to his vision of what contempo-

Daniel Anderson is the editor of The Selected Poems of Howard Nemerov *and the author of* Drunk in Sunlight, *a book of poems to be published next year.*

y is as the actual work itself. The introductions he has supplied for oets in the second volume, espe- the ones that round out the col- on, regularly betray a fixation on ethnic backgrounds and sexual ntations of his chosen writers. aps it helps to know that Carol Duffy is "the lesbian partner of k British' poet Jackie Kay," or Henri Cole is "beset with contra- ons between his homosexuality his Catholicism," but the infor- on probably doesn't need to be in irst sentence of the poet's entry in Duffy's case, the third). Ra- ni's eagerness to trumpet the di- ity of the anthology's writers is only distracting and patronizing; , in the case of Duffy and Cole, ecessary. Their fine poems are ca- e of speaking for themselves.

herman Alexie, who is also a nov- and screenwriter, holds the final y in the anthology. Alexie, a kane/Coeur d'Alene Indian n in 1966, garners Ra- ani's praise for being a "mas- of the trickster aesthetic": ny of [his] poems explore collision and tension be- en the perspectives of Na- and white Americans." nmenting on his own navi- ion of these two realms, xie is quoted from a 1998 rview in which he observed, hard to live in both worlds. But I'm always doing it, it's t of who I am. It's actually a ngth. . . . I know a lot more ut white people than white ple know about Indians." is, from a poet selected, in t, to help subvert the tyran- of generalization and stereo- e. And, indeed, all five of xie's poems that appear in anthology are delirious with hés and revel in an absolute rality. In "Evolution,"

Buffalo Bill opens a pawn shop
on the reservation
right across the border from the liquor
store
and he stays open 24 hours a day, 7
days a week

and the Indians come running in with
jewelry

television sets, a VCR, a full-length
beaded buckskin outfit
it took Inez Muse 12 years to finish.

Eventually, Buffalo Bill "takes everything the Indians have to offer" and "closes up the pawn shop, paints a new sign over the old/calls his venture THE MUSEUM OF NATIVE AMERICAN CULTURES/charges the Indians five bucks a head to enter." The poem is little more than trite imagery and flabby prose camouflaged by the jagged lines customarily associated with poetry. Although "Evolution" may aspire to point us in a direction of cultural enlightenment, its position as one of the final, and therefore concluding, selections in the collection is unfortunate. Admittedly, the anthology's assessment of contemporary poets in the previous editions may have seemed rather capricious, but in its latest version the standards for "creative daring, figurative reach, verbal dexterity, formal skill, historical responsiveness, psychological complexity"—all of which Jahan Ramazani lists in his introduction as his criteria for selecting works—have become especially whimsical. By including Sherman Alexie in *The Norton Anthology of Modern and Contemporary Poetry*, the editor is singling him out as one of the most promising poets of his generation. William Butler Yeats, Robert Frost, Hart Crane, and Langston Hughes; W. H. Auden, Elizabeth Bishop, Philip Larkin, and James Merrill—these are just some of the names in the collection's table of contents. Perhaps it's true, as Whitman writes, that "age vexes age." But, even so, Alexie's presence among these writers stands out less as a testimony to the vibrancy of poetry than as an unwitting acknowledgment of just how little we have come to expect from those who write it.



Even with poets more thematically and linguistically ambitious than Alexie, one notices a tendency to gravitate to the clichés of their own cultures. If, for instance, the imaginations of Marilyn Chin and Cathy Song range beyond their heritage as Asian Americans, you couldn't tell by the poems that Ramazani has selected to represent them. In "How I Got That Name," which Chin has subtitled "An Essay on Assimilation," the poet reflects on her fate as the namesake of Marilyn Monroe:

> And there I was, a wayward
> pink baby,
> named after some tragic white
> woman
> swollen with gin and Nembutal.
> My mother couldn't pro-
> nounce the "r."
> She dubbed me "Numba one
> female offshoot"
> for brevity: henceforth, she
> will live and die
> in sublime ignorance, flanked
> by loving children and the
> "kitchen deity."

The poet's experience may be undeniably authentic, but the poem itself stumbles into a campy spiel, one that permits its reader to snicker at the stereotype while grasping at the irony that the speaker was named after one of America's shallowly revered icons. The poem is little more than a rant; its "essay on assimilation" is a flailing of arms in which the poet composes a mock epitaph for her "integrated" self. "So here lies Marilyn Mei Ling Chin":

stration by Pep Montserrat

She is neither black nor white
neither cherished, nor vanquished,
just another squatter in her own bamboo grove
minding her poetry—
when one day heaven was unmerciful,
and a chasm opened where she stood.
Like the jowls of a mighty white whale,
or the jaws of a metaphysical Godzilla,
it swallowed her whole

"How I Got That Name," much like Alexie's "Evolution," attempts to stare its reader into submission. The poem wields its speaker's identity (or, in this case, negation thereof) in such a manner that we have no choice but to nod in sympathy and outrage, to sigh in response to the poem's unarguable truth—to feel, as it were, the poet's pain. Anything short of this would be a crime against sensitivity.

In "Beauty and Sadness," published in 1983, Cathy Song writes of the Japanese artist Kitagawa Utamaro, who, in Song's words, "drew hundreds of women/in studies unfolding/like flowers from a fan." It is a poem that demonstrates a quiet confidence, an eye that delights in detail, and a genuine respect not only for Utamaro's art but her own as well. She describes the painter's subjects:

Crouching like cats,
they purred amid layers of kimono
swirling around them
as though they were bathing
in a mountain pool with irises
growing in the silken sunlit water.
Or poised like porcelain vases,
slender, erect and tall . . .

In "Sunworshippers," published a decade later, Song proceeds into the more personal territory of her eating disorder. Its opening lines are crisp enough.

"Look how they love themselves,"
my mother would lecture as we drove through
the ironwoods, the park on one side,
the beach on the other, where sun worshippers,
splayed upon towels, appeared sacrificial,
bodies glazed and glistening like raw fish in the market.

As the poem nears the vortex of its speaker's affliction, the more talkative and relaxed it becomes:

The body, a temple we worship
secretly in the traveling revivalist tent of our clothes.
The body, hidden, banished to acceptable
rooms of the house, had only a mouth
for eating and a hole for eliminating
what the body rejected: the lower forms of life.

When at last the speaker declares, "No one knew how I truly felt about myself," she surrenders to the impulse to proselytize. This line, much like the passage above, is neither elevated in speech nor intellectually challenging. What results—and this is frequently the case in the second volume of the new anthology—is a poem that does our thinking for us. But the truth, as Emily Dickinson reminds us, "must dazzle gradually/Or every man be blind." The speaker's predicament, complete with its sorrow, anger, and self-loathing, may be genuine. We have no reason to doubt that it is. The poem, though, has the symptoms of a contemporary literature that inoculates itself against objective scrutiny by employing the untouchable suffering of its first-person narrator. This brand of poetry may, in part, take its cues from the confessional writers of the 1960s, yet forty years after Robert Lowell, Anne Sexton, Sylvia Plath, and others wrote their best work, it is bereft of any edginess or cunning. At its most manipulative and cynical, poetry of this kind anesthetizes its readers into a state of critical helplessness.

Ramazani's inclusion of Alexie, Chin, and Song illustrates the inconsistency that nags this anthology. Even in the context of the perfectly laudable ambition of broadening the collection's cultural perspective, the heavy-handedness of these poets is made all the more obvious by the skills of other selected authors who *do* contribute to a wider social discourse rather than rely on the authenticity of their experience alone. Li-Young Lee is one such poet. The late Agha Shahid Ali is another. And perhaps no poet in the contemporary volume achieves what Ramazani refers to as "historical responsiveness, social significance . . . and the inventive engagement with, and revision of, literary and extraliterary genres" more ruthlessly than the Caribbean-born poet and Nobel Prize recipient Derek Walcott, whose long poem, "The School of *Flight*," has been added to the anthology. "Christ have mercy on all sleeping things!" cries Walcott's narrator, Shabine, "From that dog I was getting down Wrightson Road/to what I was a dog on these streets. . . ."

I know these islands from Monc
Nassau,
a rusty head sailor with sea-green
that they nickname Shabine, the
tois for
any red nigger, and I, Shabine, sav
when these slums of empire was
adise.
I'm just a red nigger who love the
I had a sound colonial education,
I have Dutch, nigger, and Englis
me,
and either I'm nobody, or I'm a na

If these lines unsettle us, t
should, but not just because of t
unapologetic language or the
that they speak to postcolonial is
of identity. What makes this pas
matter is its capacity to transc
the poet's own experience; to ext
beyond the particular in order to
dress the experience of what it
be human. Robert Frost descri
poetry as metaphor: "saying
thing and meaning another, sa
one thing in terms of another,
pleasure of ulteriority." Shabine
give voice to a very specific cult
predicament, but as a character-
a metaphor—he stands, too, for
paradox inherent in all aliena
and estrangement.

In his essay on Frost, W. H. A
den reflects on the tension
tween poetry's simultaneous
bitions of beauty and truth:

We want a poem to be beautiful, th
to say, a verbal earthly paradise, a t
less world of pure play, which giv
delight . . . [and] at the same tim
want a poem to be true, that is to s
provide us with some kind of revel
about our life which will show us
life is really like and free us from
enchantment and deception.

Auden employs the characters of Ariel and Prospero, from Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, to represent the poem's dueling aspirations. Prospero—whom Shakespeare entrus

he audience, with characteristic
tas, that "the rarer action is/In
ıe than in vengeance"—repre-
; truth, and Ariel ("Where the
sucks, there suck I;/. . . On the
back I do fly/After summer mer-
) represents beauty. Auden sug-
; that "every poem shows some
of a rivalry between Ariel and
pero; in every good poem their
ionship is more or less happy,
t is never without its tensions."
ost himself saw this less as a ri-
/ than as a progression. A poem,
posited, "begins in delight and
; in wisdom." Under Ariel's in-
nce, Frost describes the ice-
usted limbs of trees he imagines
ıe early lines of "Birches":

> Often, you must have seen them
> oaded with ice a sunny winter morn-
> ing
> fter a rain. They click upon them-
> selves
> s the breeze rises, and turn many-
> colored
> s the stir cracks and crazes their
> enamel.
> oon the sun's warmth makes them
> shed crystal shells
> hattering and avalanching on the
> snow-crust—
> uch heaps of broken glass to sweep
> away
> ou'd think the inner dome of heaven
> had fallen.

d yet it is Prospero who ultimately
powers him to conclude that
rth's the right place for love:/I don't
ow where it's likely to go better." It
rospero, also, whom we hear when
lcott's Shabine declares, "Either
nobody, or I'm a nation."
Prospero's truth is not limited to the
row facts of personal experience,
is it the pious moralizing of iden-
/ politics; it is, rather, a starting
nt for our philosophical, moral, and
thetic ruminations. Referring to
st's poem "The Middleness of the
ad," Auden notes that "the purpose
he poem is to define [an] experience
d draw wisdom from it"; what dis-
guishes it from "a passage of infor-
tive prose" is "the beautiful verbal
ment." Alexie, Chin, and Song may
vide the experience, but they of-
little in the way of wisdom—and
exie does not even seem to bother
h the "beautiful verbal element"
that distinguishes poetry from prose. And wherever their poems attempt to step beyond the personal, the "truths" on offer are nevertheless confined to easy platitudes: obvious, and therefore harmless, to the reader's sensibility.

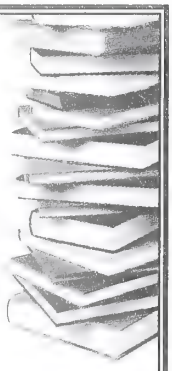
Likewise, Ariel's beauty by itself is little more than innocuous delight for the ear. When he isn't in thrall to the individuals writing the poems, Ramazani is mesmerized by the linguistic charms of Ariel. The addition of the objectivist poets Charles Reznikoff, Lorine Niedecker, and Louis Zukofsky, as well as the language poets whom they prefigured, such as Susan Howe, Lyn Hejinian, and Michael Palmer, is one indication of how a growing fascination with the raw experience of language has, over time, often come to preclude a more accessible mode of poetic thinking. This aesthetic tilt in the anthology is also evinced in the number of pages that Ramazani allocates for poets in whose work lyricism figures prominently: twenty-one for Sylvia Plath and Allen Ginsberg and twenty-three for John Ashbery, nearly doubling the number of pages given to these poets in the previous edition.

At the same time, Ramazani has reduced the entries for Richard Wilbur, Howard Nemerov, and Anthony Hecht. In the new edition, Nemerov is represented by three pages, Wilbur and Hecht each by six. All three, contemporaries of Ginsberg, Ashbery, and Plath and recipients of the Pulitzer Prize, continued writing rigorously in form even while rhyme and meter came to be considered by many as implements of artistic—even, ridiculously enough, emotional—repression. And in the work of all three poets one finds the kind of quarrel between beauty and truth that is all too often missing from the work of those poets favored with more generous entries in the anthology. Here is Wilbur's "A Barred Owl":

> The warping night air having brought
> the boom
> Of an owl's voice into her darkened
> room,
> We tell the wakened child that all she
> heard
> Was an odd question from a forest
> bird,
> Asking of us, if rightly listened to,
> "Who cooks for you?" and then "Who
> cooks for you?"

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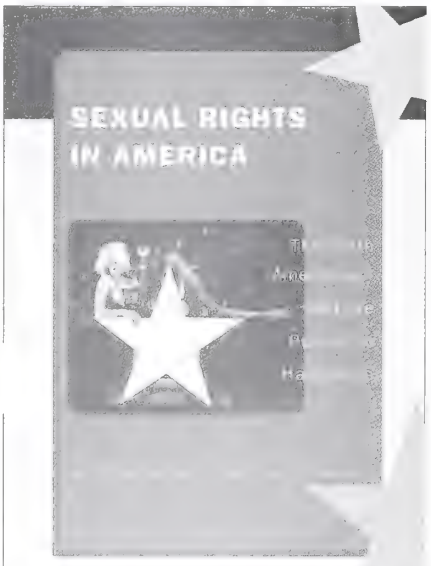
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Can also thus domesticate a fear,
And send a small child back to sleep at night
Not listening for the sound of stealthy flight
Or dreaming of some small thing in a cleft
Borne up to some dark branch and eaten raw.

The poem relishes in the potential of language—not just in the musical qualities of its rhymes but also in its delight at having transcribed the call of the owl into a seemingly benign inquiry: "Who cooks for you?" Yet Wilbur's conceit is far from lighthearted; the world, he reminds us, has its divisions, between experience and innocence, adult and child, predator and prey. Words can "domesticate a fear," mollifying a child's imagination, but the comfort they offer is fleeting. The world outside the child's window is often a brutal one.

Diminishing the presence of Wilbur, Hecht, and Nemerov is a pronounced step in trivializing not just technical expertise in poetry written today but narrative clarity too. Their shortened entries, as well as the glaring absence of their stylistic and intellectual heirs, such as Charles Martin, Mary Jo Salter, and Greg Williamson, point to a significant and lamentable imbalance in Ramazani's idea of contemporary poetry.

Charles Wright, Medbh McGuckian, and Michael Palmer are new additions to the anthology. Between them, they represent the range of Ariel's influence. At his most affectionate, Ariel inspires the kind of lovely and impressionistic moment that we find in Wright's "Blackwater Mountain":

That time of evening, weightless and disparate,
When the loon cries, when the small bass
Jostle the lake's reflections, when
The green of the oak begins
To open its robes to the dark, the green
Of water to offer itself to the flames,
When lily and lily pad
Hush and the last light
Which flares like a white disease, then disappears:
This is what I remember.

In his curious and more baffling moods, Ariel oversees the writing of poems such as McGuckian's "Captain Lavender":

Night-hours. The edge of a fuller moon
waits among the interlocking patterns
of a flier's sky.

Sperm names, ovum names, push inside
each other. We are half-taught
our real names, from other lives.

Emphasise your eyes. Be my flare-path, my uncold begetter,
my air-minded bird sense.

And at his most mischievous and pernicious, Ariel sponsors passages such as the following from Palmer's "Sun":

Write this. There is pleasure and pain and there are marks and signs.
A word may be shaped like a fig or a pig, an effigy or an egg
but
there is only time for fasting and desire, device and design, there is
only time to swerve without limbs, organs or face into a
scientific
silence, pinhole of light

These lines are largely driven by spastic word association and a thoroughly self-satisfied display of alliteration: *Pleasure, pain, pig. Desire, device, design. Scientific silence.* Palmer's is precisely the kind of hokum that makes poetry (and those who write it) largely dismissible to the general reading public. Yet Palmer's inclusion in the anthology grants him a legitimacy, one that will last until Norton issues a fourth edition. This is something to think about, if not shudder at.

"'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves/Did gyre and gimble in the wabe," begins Lewis Carroll's "Jabberwocky," a poem that, ironically enough, no longer graces the pages of the anthology. "All mimsy were the borogoves,/And the mome raths outgrabe." One difference between Carroll and Palmer is that Carroll actually acknowledges he is writing nonsense. "The Ariel-dominated poet has one great advantage," Auden tells us. "He can only fail in one way—his poem may be trivial. The worst one can say of one of his poems is that it needn't have been written." "Be not afeard," Caliban assures Stephano and Trinculo in *The Tempest*, "the isle is full of noises,/Sounds and sweet airs that give delight and hurt not." For as confrontational as certain poets (and editors) may fancy themselves, it's more that poetry fixates on the individual writing it, and the more it treasures beauty over truth, the more harmless it becomes. Auden also notes that Ariel's alias is Narcissus, and wherever Narcissus dwells can Echo be far off? Too often, in the late pages of *The Norton Anthology of Modern and Contemporary Poetry*, all music starts to sound alike.

September Index Sources

1 National Education Association (Washington); **2** A Likely Story Children's Bookstore (Alexandria, Va.); Nielsen BookScan USA (White Plains, N.Y.); **4** National Opinion Research Center (Chicago); **5** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Atlanta); *Me*, by Katharine Hepburn (Random House, 1992); **7,8** American Film Institute (Los Angeles); **9** *Times of India* (Mumbai); **10,11** Pew Center for People and the Press (Washington); *New York Times*, 6/22/03; **13** U.S. Department of Defense transcripts, 6/24; **14** Dean for America (Burlington, Vt.); **15** ABC's *This Week*, 7/30/00; **16** *Washington Post*, 6/23/01; **17** Christian Broadcasting Network (Virginia Beach, Va.); **18** *Harper's* Research; **19** World Food Programme (Rome); **20** Tourism Authority of Thailand (N.Y.C.); **21** World Health Organization (Geneva); **23** Major League Soccer (N.Y.C.); United Nations (N.Y.C.); **25** New Zealand Fire Service (Wellington); The Thoreau Institute at Walden Woods (Lincoln, Mass.); **27,28** U.S. Environmental Protection Agency; **29,30** Ford Motor Co. (Dearborn, Mich.); **31** John E. Tobin (Ann Arbor, Mich.); **32** Chisholms & Butterfields (San Francisco); *Washington Post*/ABC News poll, 6/24/03; **34** CBS News poll, 7/9/03; **35** United States Central Command (Tampa); **36** U.S. Department of Defense; **37** Harris Interactive (Rochester, N.Y.); **38** Amnesty International (Washington)/Federal Drug Administration (Rockville, Md.); **39** Saskatchewan Department of Corrections (Regina, Canada).

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Not in Their Name

[illegible] scribed as having been prepared [illegible] fleets in no way represent those [illegible]

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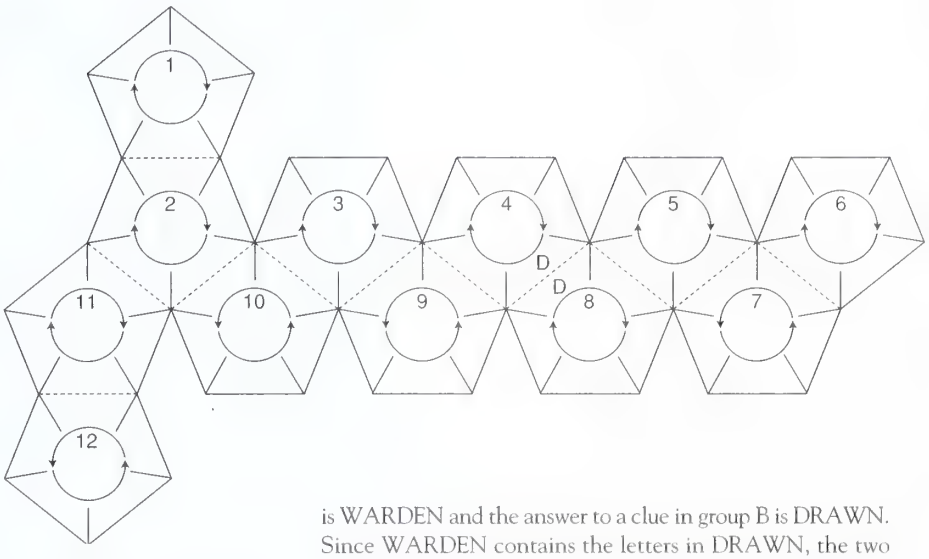
[illegible] water added to a bath. As long [illegible]

Correction

[illegible]

Dedicated Dodecahedron

By Richard E. Maltby Jr.
(with acknowledgments to Jackdaw of The Listener*)*



The diagram would form a regular twelve-sided solid if folded along the dotted lines. The clues in group A lead to words of six letters; each of these words contains all the letters (scrambled) of a five-letter word plus one extra letter. The five-letter words are clued in group B. The extra letters are to be entered in the centers of the appropriate pentagons with the associated five-letter words inscribed around them (to read in the direction shown by the arrows) in such a way that, *at each edge of the solid, adjacent letters are the same*. When the diagram is complete, the central letters from 1 to 12 will spell the name of the person (a puzzling celebrity) to whom the puzzle is dedicated.

The clues are in no particular order. The solver must figure out which answers are "associated" with each other and where to place them. Example: Say the answer to a clue in group A is WARDEN and the answer to a clue in group B is DRAWN. Since WARDEN contains the letters in DRAWN, the two words would be "associated." DRAWN would be entered (in the direction of the arrows) in a pentagon, surrounding the extra letter E, in such a way that the D, the R, the A, the W, and the N would each be duplicated in another word on the adjacent side of an edge.

Answers include one proper name and one foreign word. Answer #3 in group B is uncommon. One letter with its duplicate has been entered to help you get started. As always, mental repunctuation of a clue is the key to its solution. The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 75.

GROUP A: 6-LETTER WORDS

1. Openings in forestry for great young man with energy and some initiative
2. Achieve reparations negotiated in Geneva
3. Inner vest pockets, shaking
4. Positive role models in *Here's Love*
5. Annie's wild for cracked nuts or bananas
6. Heartless-seeming but dating
7. Long, perhaps, for one beach, including lakefront
8. Jacqueline, the actress in second-rate movies, is contracted
9. Fell down, drinking a fashionable vino
10. Mostly, Miss Del Rio is a continental pain
11. Speak endlessly, pursuing study of canines, etc.
12. Nothing tall and lanky, sort of yellow, but hotter

GROUP B: 5-LETTER WORDS

1. Model, talking, covers up broadness at the mouth
2. One who helps head off unwanted corporate buyer
3. Tuberose cutting having irregular notched leaves
4. 'S not a correctly named number!
5. Fixes broken legs without introduction of drugs
6. Wranglers audibly passed on things
7. Locates spots in the car
8. Saying "Hi! This is a spot on the Cape with great flavor"
9. Beef jerky organ
10. Slaver brings back local ruler possessing nothing
11. Dead wrong about Los Angeles
12. No carnivore, for example, is placed in a leadership position

Contest Rules: Send completed diagram with name and address to "Dedicated Dodecahedron," *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Entries must be received by September 15. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive one-year subscriptions to *Harper's Magazine*. Winners' names will be printed in the November issue. Winners of the July puzzle, "Finding the Right Word," are Bruce A. Kahn, Atlanta, Georgia; Kevin Kinne, Peoria, Illinois; and Judith Rhoads, Boulder, Colorado.



PLAYING AROUND

1. The Landlord's Game, invented in 1904 by a Maryland Quaker as a criticism of the tax system, was the inspiration for what best-selling board game?

2. The basic concept of what popular board game was published by Lewis Carroll in *Vanity Fair* fifty-two years before its 1931 invention?

3. What ubiquitous object used in child's play and other sports was introduced to Europeans by sixteenth-century Central American natives?

4. In 1475, Scotland's King James II banned what sport on the grounds that it was distracting young men from the practice of archery?

5. Who reinstated kings, queens, and jacks on playing cards in France after they were banned during the French Revolution?

6. What European country's president began his first term by appointing a Minister of Free Time?

7. What country signed a 1990 U.S. trade agreement promising to shorten its government employees' workweek to five days?

8. What U.S. city's mayor closed all 550 of its movie theaters in 1908?

9. In 1926 a New York City rooftop was the first of at least 150 to be devoted to what amateur sport?

10. What future U.S. president co-hosted *Dateline Disneyland*, a live TV broadcast of the amusement park's 1955 grand opening?

11. Which of these activities have taken place in the White House's East Room—roller skating, boxing, wrestling?

12. Which Civil War battle did Washington's elite travel eight hours to watch, fleeing in panic when Union soldiers were forced to retreat?

13. What eighteenth-century monarch had a mock peasant village built near her summer palace so that she could engage in simple pleasures?

14. In what twentieth-century British dystopian novel does a character proclaim, "Imagine the folly of allowing people to play elaborate games which do nothing whatever to increase consumption. It's madness"?

Contest Rules: Send numbered answers with name and address to "Quiz," Harper's Magazine, 666 Broadway, New York, NY 10012. If you already subscribe to H[arper]'s, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Entries must be received by September15. The sender of the first correct set of answers opened at random will receive a one-year subscription to Harper's Magazine. *The winner's name will be printed in the November issue. The answers to last month's quiz, "Labor Pains," appear on page 65.*

Research by Andie Picher. Illustration by Ralph K[illegible]



ostitutes in Mumbai, India. Virtually all
o the sex trade in very early adolescence.
nita Singh

imagine

(you may say I'm a dreamer, but I'm not the only one)

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Driving Briskly in a Post Chaise with a Pretty Woman

By Garret Keizer

THE MEDIA IS THE MESSAGE

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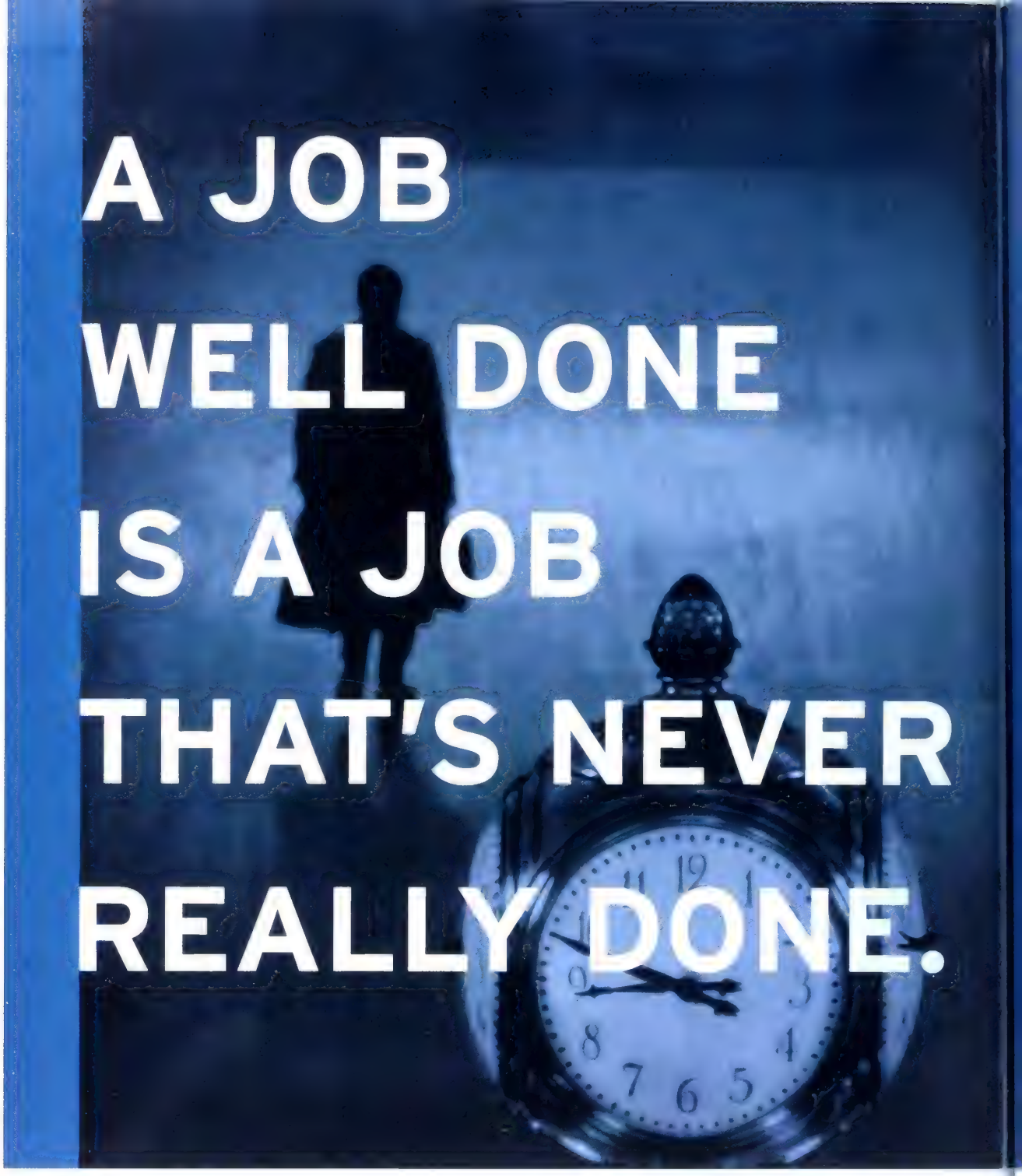
By Gene Lyons

SONG

A story by Stuart Dybek

Also: Laura Kipnis and Sam Smith

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LETTERS

Old-Time Religion

The historical aspect of Jack Hitt's folio ["A Gospel According to the Earth," July] would have been enriched by an examination of traditional pagan spirituality. In her 1967 article "The Historical Roots of our Ecological Crisis," human ecologist Lynn White noted that when biblical monotheism replaced pagan faiths, there was a shift away from the reverence of nature toward a view of the earth as created wholly for human benefit. Today, while most Christian and Jewish congregations remain on the trailing edge of the ecological movement, and Jerry Falwell insists that Jesus would drive an SUV, modern pagans have embraced ecological thinking as well as environmental activism. The religious transformation suggested by Hitt isn't the appearance of a new phenomenon. It is the revival, after a 2,000-year interruption, of a very old one.

John Michael Greer
Seattle

Jack Hitt reports on the trend of trading the humorless anti-rationalism of muscular Christians for the humorless self-righteousness of eco-warriors. Why must our need for a belief system drag us toward bad science, self-satisfaction, and disdain for the perfection of human beings? In earth-first catechism there lurks misanthropy. Personally, I find no for hope in a lot of loopy martyrs f from trees.

Dennis Tafoya
Doylestown, Pa.

Although I am grateful to Hitt for his effort to engage ra idealism, he encourages an unf nate misconception by sugge that living off the grid involves fice and asceticism. I live off th but enjoy my DVD player, st and washing machine. In fact better off than my on-grid neigh When a storm knocks out pow the whole town, I usually d know about it until days later. the assistance of solar power an ternative energy sources, it is p ble to enjoy all the convenienc modernity while leaving a m smaller footprint on the land.

Tony Burgess
Boulder Creek, Calif.

The religious environmenta Jack Hitt describes should b garded as the latest attemp modernity to develop a reli without the Judeo-Christian There have been other attemp this vein: the Jacobins' drea Universal Brotherhood, the C munists' march of history tow classless society, and the civil gion and scientific priesthoo John Dewey. Perhaps this new

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ental religion will not meet
ıte of its predecessors.

Smith
sville, Md.

ration Desert Scorn

ul William Roberts ["Beyond
dad," July] paints a heroic picture
Iraqi guide, Omar, who claims to
freed seven American POWs in
ırra, Iraq. In fact, a small unit with
1st Marine Division under my
nand freed those seven Ameri-
shortly after entering Samarra in
April. Roberts also indulges
r's highly dubious claim that he
ned a coup against Saddam Hus-
and criticizes the Americans for
giving Omar enough credit for his
or." My colleagues and I met
ıtless Iraqis who made similar as-
ons, but we did not place faith in
self-aggrandizement until pro-
d with proof.

ırthermore, Roberts portrays U.S.
iers as brutal, ignorant, uneducat-
callous, and oblivious to their cul-
l surroundings. They are even re-
d to as "creatures," a label Roberts
ld likely condemn if applied to
is. These depictions may satisfy
preconceived notions of *Harper's*
gazine but they do little to accu-
ly portray the men and women in
risking their lives for a cause they
or may not support. These sol-
s serve, sometimes reluctantly but
ays with pride, because they are
fessionals. As a fellow professional,
erts should ask himself whether
llowed his personal bias to twist his
quent writing.

otain Ben Connable
ington, Va.

fe for Plutocracy

Lewis Lapham ["Yankee Doodle
ndy," August] describes the United
ites' entrance into World War I as
atuitous." I was born in Britain, and
ny of my compatriots view Ameri-
s entry into both world wars as sim-
tardy. Perhaps vanity *did* lead
oodrow Wilson to make his mark
history, but in doing so he un-
ubtedly shortened the war and
elled the bloody cost of a continued
lemate on the Western Front. In
this case, Wilson's narcissistic yearnings coincided with Europe's needs. Although it may be of consolation to Lapham that history has been less than kind to Wilson and his stillborn League of Nations, Europe and other parts of the world have reason to be thankful for his effort.

Christopher Moss
Tatamagouche, Nova Scotia

Lewis Lapham hails Ambrose Bierce and Mark Twain as "dissenting spirits." To this list I would add Philip Wylie. In his 1942 *Generation of Vipers*, Wylie exposes the various hypocrisies that mar American society and assails our failure to live up to the noble image we have of ourselves. His sentiment is summed up at the book's end: "If we want a better world, we will have to be a better people." Like Walter Karp's *Politics of War*, *Generation of Vipers* is worth rereading in these times.

Carolyn D. Lewis
Ocean View, Del.

Today, I made a forecast for change

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Conscientious Objectors

Edward Hoagland's use of the phrase "passive resistance" ["The American Dissident," August] in reference to the actions of Gandhi's and Martin Luther King's followers suggests that he does not know what a true pacifist is. The correct designation should be "*pacifist* resistance." Real pacifists are never passive; they are disciplined dissidents who stand up for their beliefs. They risk physical and psychological abuse, their jobs, and even their lives. It is nondissidents who act passively by refusing to express opposition openly.

Georgia Hotton
Green Valley, Ariz.

Contrasting the consequences of "symbolic disobedience" in America with those in brutal dictatorships, Edward Hoagland writes that "a Gandhi in . . . Sharon's Palestine would not have been let off nearly as lightly."

Dissidents publicly take issue with their own leadership, such as Palestinians who wish rapprochement with Israel. These brave souls are punished not by Sharon but by their fellow Palestinians, many of whom are loath to cooperate with Jews, ever. Occupants of a territory at war with another state may be vocal or even violent in their disapproval of the enemy, but they are not dissidents.

Fred Wickham
San Francisco

Pour l'Amour de Dieu

According to Cristina Nehring ["Love in the Time of Hedonism," Reviews, August], Michel Houellebecq insists that he has "never . . . had a coherent idea in his life." I disagree with this "self-assessment." Ever since St. Augustine discarded his lover, religion has, for the most part, stood opposed to pleasure. In the novels *Platform* and *The Elementary Particles*, Houellebecq attempts to realign pleasure and love, leaving religion, the offensive bystander, behind. That *Platform*'s protagonist, Michel, cannot seem to survive the fusion of sexual satisfaction and love merely reflects his lack of matu

Robert Hamel
Grass Lake, Mich.

Art in America

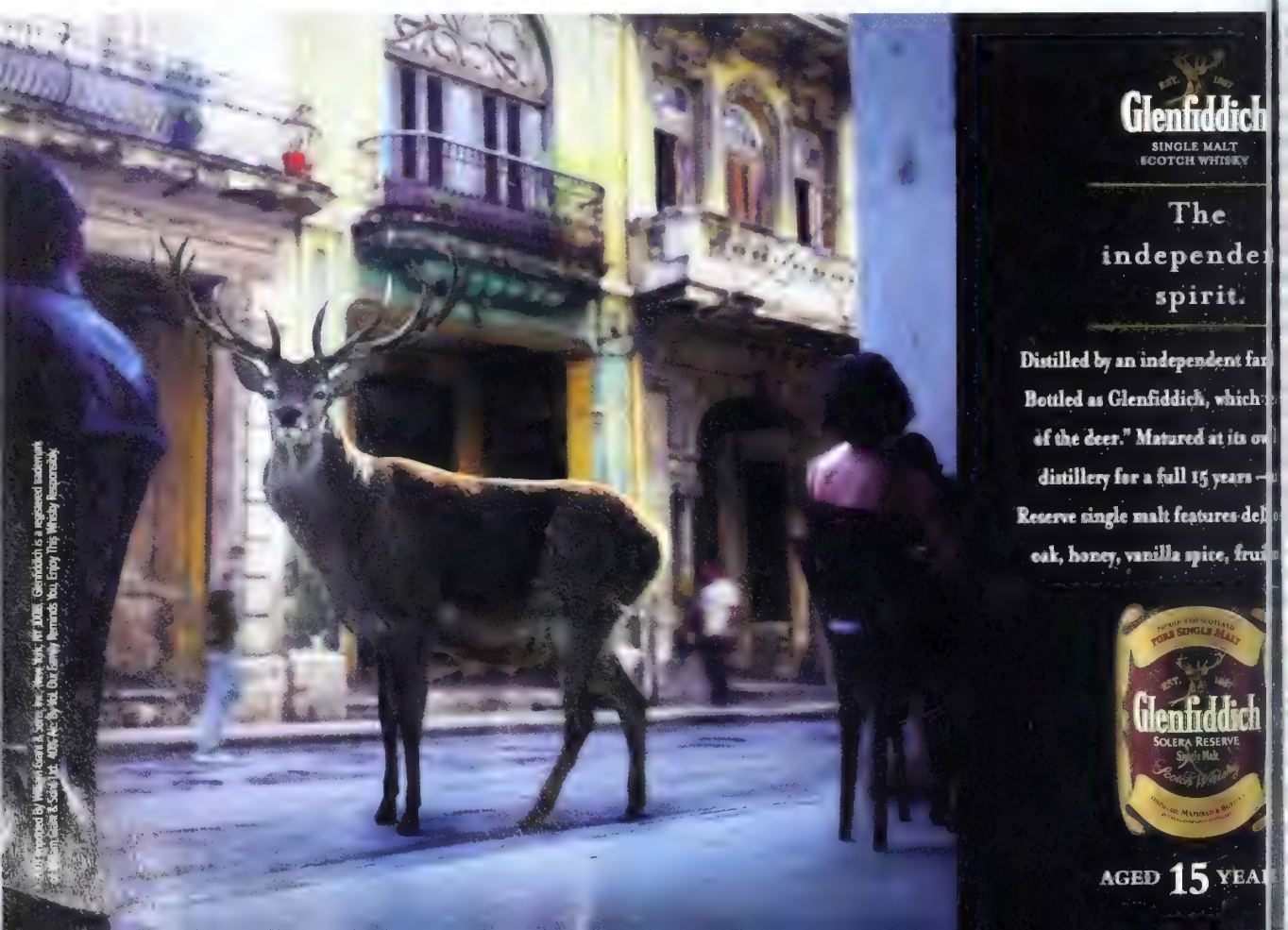
The New York art world M Kingwell describes ["Art Will Ea self," Reviews, August] is as rea most working artists as *Sex and City* is to most working women. may read about it, and some o may dream about joining it, but w usually too busy creating art building our careers to pay much tention to its shenanigans. Bey the New York art bubble, the big ry of the last third of the twent century isn't conceptual art democracy—how regular folks h pursued a passion for creating bea

Empress Cindy
Rochester Hills, Mich.

There's No Place Like Ho

Thomas Frank apparently hec

Continued on pa



NOTEBOOK

The golden horde

By Lewis H. Lapham

the most difficult [decision] I've e in my entire life, except the one I le in 1978 when I decided to get a ni wax.

—Arnold Schwarzenegger

The well-contrived one-line joke a little too well-rehearsed and the ning smile adjusted from maybe too many angles in the green-room ror—what a lovable guy, so won-ful an action hero that he can play being feminine and cute—but it w the preprogrammed laugh from studio audience at the taping of *Tonight Show with Jay Leno* on Au-t 6, and it served as the announce-nt of an actor's wish to become gov-or of California. On cue and in time the hourly headlines, the national ws media went for the story like an arium seal flopping after the hand-ld fish. The tabloid press made loud d happy barking noises—California's all election compared to a Holly-od musical with a chorus of 135 ncing clowns; the Terminator loose ong the aliens in Benedict Canyon. e upscale parlor press made mourn-, elegiac sounds signifying the death Thomas Jefferson and an end to "pol-cs as we know it."

My own acquaintance in the pro-ssion inclines toward the latter mpany of scriveners (guardians at e gate of reason, protectors of the ation's moral fabric), which was hy, during the eight days between hwarzenegger's declaration of intent d the power failure that discomfort-50 million people across eight states August 14 (an even more vivid re-inder of the grim tidings likely to be hidden behind the curtain of tomor-row's news), it wasn't easy to avoid dis-cussions about the flight of meaning from the American public square. No conversation was safe from earnest monologues accounting for the evils that had befallen the theory and prac-tice of democratic self-government. Professors of political science professed themselves appalled. An alarmed pub-lisher compared Schwarzenegger's ef-frontery to that of the emperor Caligu-la, who appointed his horse to a seat in the Roman senate. Various editors of the *Wall Street Journal* wondered what outrageous act of impudence our de-based society might still recognize as a display of shameless gall. Nobody could think of anything other than canni-balism; lesser offenses against the sense of public decency merely would attract the customary book and movie deals. A wit suggested "Shameless Gall" as the name for a men's cologne. Noting that California wallowed in the quagmire of mindless ego, three contributors to the *New York Times* asked where were the "ropes of leadership" with which to drag the animal back to the high and solid ground of the "shining city on the hill."

The elevated tone of the conversa-tions opened the question as to whether those present had spent the last twenty years somewhere outside the continental United States, or pos-sibly in a library at Harvard with the collected works of James Madison. I couldn't quarrel with their definitions of effrontery or their observation that gravitas had escaped the clutches of Barbara Walters, but in what country did they think they were living, and how had they neglected to notice that the arguments put forward in *The Fed-eralist Papers* had been replaced by the preening sophisms of Rush Limbaugh and Howard Stern? The political ship of state designed to the specifications of the eighteenth-century Enlighten-ment sailed over the horizon in 1980 when Ronald Reagan was elected to the White House on the strength of his heartwarming sentiment and his talent for striking an heroic pose. How dif-ferent Schwarzenegger's shameless gall from the shameless gall of President George W. Bush, who offered as his credentials for admission to the White House little else except a famous name, a record of failure and probable fraud as both a business executive and as a soldier, a friendly state of wholesome ignorance, and a desire for applause?

When temporarily at a loss for quo-tations from Cicero or Edmund Burke, the voices of conscience in New York blamed the country's troubles on the state of California. What were those people thinking out there in the gold-en West? Why were they so feckless, and where did they come by the idea that in the years between the Clinton and Bush administrations, Martin Sheen was the president of the United States? Because several of the people sitting at the table or the bar remem-bered that I happened to have been born and raised in San Francisco, their questions were often indistinguishable from accusations, and I soon found my-self fortifying the specific answers with the bulwark of a general theory. The tendency is consistent with the Cali-fornia temperament and turn of mind.

Like Athena springing full-blown

from the head of Zeus, California emerged full-blown from the myth of Golconda, its origin coincident with the discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill in 1848. The deposits of the miraculous, fortune-bearing sand ranged across an escarpment roughly 300 miles long and 50 miles wide, present at depths varying from a few inches to a few hundred feet, and for twenty years they offered the chance of fabulous riches to anybody who cared to come and dig. Never before or since in the annals of the American dream did its promise prove so demonstrably true.

The gold rush attracted expectant capitalists from everywhere in the world—not only other Americans from Ohio and Vermont but also Frenchmen, Chinese, Mexicans, Italians, Irishmen, Germans, Dutchmen, Swedes—all of them optimists, most of them young and male, few of them burdened with the luggage of civilization and its discontents. Because they arrived at more or less the same moment, they got off to a more or less even start in a new country unmolested by the nuisances of law, government, tradition, social custom, curfews, or prior claimants. San Francisco enlarged its population from 800 in 1848 to 30,000 by 1851, prompting Bayard Taylor, an early traveler in the city, to liken it to "the magic seed of the Indian juggler, which grew, bloomed, blossomed, and bore fruit before the eyes of his spectators."

Excused from a term of apprenticeship as a territory, California was admitted to the union in 1850, the resident aliens already in the habit of making up their own rules, owing nothing of their newfound circumstances to the existence of old ideas, settled monopolies, eastern money. The motley character of their society (plural, cosmopolitan, tolerant, and unstable) guaranteed the freedom of movement and encouraged, or at least didn't frown upon, the freedom of thought. Like the hero in a Clint Eastwood movie or a Raymond Chandler novel, the California protagonist belongs to no establishment, a born renegade fond of mocking the shabby masquerades (of traffic courts and dictionaries and jails) with which the corrupt officials in City Hall or Chinatown seek to imprison the noble savage dreamed of in the philosophy of Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

It is no accident that California over the last 150 years has furnished the country with so many of its new directions, most obviously in the entertainment business and the computer industry (a second manifestation of the miracle in the fortune-bearing sand) but also by way of its enthusiasm for Scientology, environmental ballot initiatives, sexual experiment, aircraft design, muscular artichokes blown up to the weight and size of Mr. Universe. Now as in 1848, the belief that wealth follows from a run of luck fosters among the Californians a willingness to deal the cards, take the chance, entertain the proposition from the gentleman wearing the mismatched boots or the lady with the parrot. Who knows? Maybe one of them will bring rain.

California is a desert, heavily populated by nomadic souls searching for the fountains of eternal youth, certain that if not the abundance of nature then the wonder of the consumer markets or the Indian juggler's magic seed will provide the people of the caravan with limitless pasturage for their camels and immediate seating at a poolside table in the lost oasis under Barbra Streisand's palm and eucalyptus trees. West of the Sierra Nevada, the delight in metaphor matches the wish to believe in what isn't there. Most of the people likely to be met with at a gas station in Bolinas or on the beach at Santa Monica turn out to be playing a part in a movie of their own invention. The reflections in the camera's eye seldom bear much resemblance to what an uninitiated bystander might mistake for reality, but to ask of the director too many disheartening questions, or to remember what he or she said yesterday or last week, constitutes an act of social aggression.

Who dares to speak to such people of death or law or taxes?

During the endless summer of 1978, the same year that Arnold Schwarzenegger made his fateful move toward the bikini wax, the children of paradise passed by an enthusiastic majority the grand ren[ovation] strance known as Proposition [13] which stripped the state governm[ent] of its authority to set property t[axes]. The ballot initiative served as [the] logue to the reactionary triumph[s] the Reagan revolution that [would] have brought to California the [gift] of political bankruptcy and econ[omic] ic ruin. How better to express [the] abiding hatred of government, [or] government, than by sendin[g] Sacramento a robot with a g[un]. Where else does California wis[h] go if not into the sunset or the[n] with Conan the Barbarian?

So apparently does the rest of [the] country. Reading from the Califo[rnia] script, Ross Perot announces his p[re]idential candidacy on *Larry K[ing] Live*; the voters in Minnesota elec[t] their governor a professional wres[tler]; the state legislature in Texas sh[uts] down operations because half o[f] members fled first to Oklahoma [and] then to New Mexico; Mich[ael] Bloomberg, a billionaire as po[litically] qualified for public office as Mr. [Perot] or Mr. Schwarzenegger, pays $60 [mil]lion for the mayoralty of New Y[ork] City and the pleasure of traips[ing] around a political soundstage [in a] movie of his own invention. [In] Washington the Bush Adminis[tra]tion seeks to rid itself of nearly ev[ery] government service (schools, pris[ons] electrical transmission lines, tax [col]lections, broadcast frequencies) [that] it can sell or deliver [to] a church.

The high-end thinkers at the [think]icy institutes in Washington [and] New York like to imagine the p[res]ence of such a thing as an Ameri[can] body politic, coherent and well [in]formed, capable of carrying forw[ard] the work of a democratic repub[lic]. They ignore the fact that a g[reat] many of their compatriots h[ave] adopted the California frame [of] mind, wandering bedouin in plac[e] settled citizens, drifting west [and] south toward the Garden of Eden [in] Las Vegas, many of the tribes illit[er]ate or speaking strange languag[es] few of them familiar with the Fou[rth] Amendment or the name Patr[ick] Henry. Twenty percent of the po[pu]

shifts its household or habita-
very year, and much of what
constitutes American society
tentative and makeshift char-
as if it had been put together
season and was meant to be
med at the point of sale. Even
n the supposedly stable and in-
ional structures of the corpora-
the Army, the media, the uni-
ies, the interior movement is as
ss as water. Promotions fail to
e to the accounts of people who
oo long in one place, who ex-
the virtues of patience, citizen-
loyalty, and honor. Money at-
es itself to velocity, to the
ging of occupations or employ-
t least once every six or seven
, and the country swarms with
s of itinerant opportunists for-
keeping their "options open,"
eiving of democracy as a pas-
romance.

ne settled townsman makes art,
ice, government, and law; of ne-
ty he comes to understand the
racy of the soil or the stone, and
easures his victories over periods
me longer than those sold on
vision. The nomad merely gathers
ther his tent, his music, and his
nals, and wanders over the moun-
in search of next year's greening
merica. By nature predatory and
emperament aristocratic (one
takes but doesn't build), the
uin of the great American desert
to imagine themselves as mighty
riors seizing the spoils and em-
ns of their magnificence—oil
panies, baseball teams, gold-plat-
golf clubs. Consumer markets wel-
e them as the golden horde that
ains the national economy with
oracious appetite and sets in mo-
the blessed chain reaction that
ls to more spending, more invest-
nt, more employment, more high-
s, stronger steel, more confidence,
re traffic deaths, more missiles,
re amphetamines, more forms to
out, more firepower, better cos-
tics, more fear. Most prized of all
nomad's possessions is the heroic
se of self, and in place of the ques-
ns asked by citizens in a public
are ("Who are they?" "What is
s?"), the princes of the desert stare
ingly into the pools of Narcissus
and ask—much to the joy and profit of their attendant dance instructors, psychotherapists, plastic surgeons, dealers in rare jewels and exotic religions, designers of designer jeans—"Who am I?"

Expressed in the acquisitive instead of the investigative case, the question becomes "What about me?" which was the form used by President Bush at a news conference in Crawford, Texas, on August 13, when he was surprised by the temerity of a reporter describing the entry of the actor Schwarzenegger into the California gubernatorial race as "the biggest political story in the country." The colloquy merits quotation in its entirety:

> THE PRESIDENT (insulted): It is the biggest political story in the country? That's interesting. That says a lot. That speaks volumes.
>
> FIRST REPORTER: . . . You don't agree?
>
> THE PRESIDENT (irritated): I don't get to decide the biggest political story. You decide the biggest political story. But I find it interesting that that is the biggest political story in the country, as you just said.
>
> SECOND REPORTER: You don't think it should be?
>
> THE PRESIDENT (cute and sarcastic): Oh, I think there's maybe other political stories. Isn't there, like, a presidential race coming up?

In California the Hollywood press corps would have known better. It's never any good mentioning the names of two action-movie stars at the same news briefing. The technical assistants don't bring enough bikini wax for both heroes, and one of the seedy, freelance cameramen invariably makes a dumb mistake with the credit lines, forgetting whether it was Arnold Schwarzenegger in *Moon over Baghdad* who said, "Hasta la vista, baby!" to Saddam Hussein or George Bush in *California Sunshine* who said, "Bring 'em on" to the Sacramento chapter of Al Qaeda. By the time the publicists smooth things over with an agreement on the wording of the next day's gossip item, the star has stopped trying to answer questions in English. ■

The book that holds Mormon leaders responsible for the tragedy at Mountain Meadows, 1857

AMERICAN MASSACRE

by **Sally Denton**

herself descended from Mormon pioneers

"It brilliantly captures
a forgotten episode in our country's history. It is a fascinating story." —HOWARD ZINN

"The atrocity was so bewildering
that it demands the careful investigation & eloquent recounting it receives in Sally Denton's book." —MICHAEL KENNEY, *Boston Globe*

"From its first harrowing pages to the potentially explosive discovery
described in the epilogue, it is hard to put down...A vivid account of persecution and paranoia, deceit and self-deception, cruelty and cover-up." —GEOFFREY C. WARD

"A clear and convincing argument
of Mormon culpability." —JOHN RIVERA, *Baltimore Sun*

"With eloquence and grace,
she tells the story of a remarkable episode of bloodshed that remains highly controversial." —T.J. STILES

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HYBRID SYNERGY DRIVE

TOMORROW

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HARPER'S INDEX

Percentage points by which George Bush Sr.'s approval rating in August 1991 exceeded his son's last August : 11

lection campaign funds raised by Bush Sr. as of June 1991 and by his son as of last June, respectively : $0, $67,687,000

Percentage of Americans who believe that George W. Bush was legitimately elected president : 54

Percentage who believed this in March 2001 : 56

Rank of last year among those in which the largest number of federal records were officially classified : 1

Months before September 11, 2001, that Dick Cheney's Energy Task Force investigated Iraq's oil resources : 6

Years before Enron declared bankruptcy in 2001 that the IRS asked the SEC to investigate the firm : 2.5

Number of SEC investigations of Enron that resulted : 0

unt in "disgorgement" that the SEC has ordered a former Xerox CEO to pay in connection with alleged fraud : $7,600,000

Percentage of this payment that Xerox will cover : 100

ercentage of Americans who will save less than $100 on their 2006 federal taxes as a result of this year's tax cut : 88

Average amount these Americans will save : $4

Estimated market value of the usable body parts of an adult human : $46,000,000

Age at which a Missouri basketball prodigy was welcomed into "the Reebok family" last May : 3

unt, in inches, by which the average North Korean 7-year-old is shorter than the average South Korean 7-year-old : 2.9

Percentage of Botswanans requiring highly active anti-retroviral therapy for whom it is available on request : 100

Percentage that have requested it : 9

entage of U.S. doctors who say they have not told patients about a treatment because their insurance didn't cover it : 31

Chance that a Londoner believes that epilepsy is caused by "evil spirits" : 1 in 20

Chances that a person executed as a witch in Iceland between 1625 and 1685 was a man : 9 in 10

rcentage change in the number of Colombians killed or disappeared since the U.S. implemented Plan Colombia : +33

Number of U.S. troops who have died in Afghanistan and Iraq in the last two years : 354

Number who died in Vietnam in 1963 and 1964 : 324

ercentage of Iraqis who said in July that they would rather live under the Americans than under Saddam Hussein : 29

Percentage of Palestinians in refugee camps who say that given a choice they would live nowhere but Israel : 10

Percentage who say they would accept compensation and homes in a Palestinian state : 54

Percentage of Jewish settlers in the West Bank and Gaza who say they would relocate if compensated : 83

Number of the U.N.'s 15 ongoing peacekeeping missions that have been in operation for at least a decade : 8

Ratio of Liberia's GDP last year to the amount Americans spent on skis : 1:1

Rank of Sudan and Belgium, respectively, among 122 countries assessed for water quality : 118, 122

Chances that farmed salmon contains PCB levels that are 4 times higher than those found in beef : 7 in 10

Chance on any given day that the only "vegetables" served in a U.S. public school are potatoes : 1 in 2

nimum number of states where tuition at one or more public universities will be raised by at least 20 percent this year : 7

Number of states that require energy companies to derive a percentage of their output from alternative sources : 13

Number of U.S. senators last year who voted against creating a similar federal requirement to take effect in 2020 : 70

Year in which House Republicans thrice rejected an amendment to upgrade the U.S. electrical grid : 2001

Number of Democratic legislators absent for this year's 213–210 vote restricting workers' overtime-pay eligibility : 7

Number of Virginia Republican Party officials fined this year for eavesdropping on Democratic Party conference calls : 3

ars after the Watergate break-in that deputy campaign director Jeb Magruder admitted hearing President Nixon order it : 30

Year in which Donald Rumsfeld gave Saddam Hussein a pair of golden spurs : 1983

Figures are the latest available as of August 2003. Sources are listed on page 71.
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READINGS

[Catalogue]

THE DOMESTIC GULAG

From Against Love: A Polemic, *by Laura Kipnis, published by Pantheon. Kipnis is the author of* Bound and Gagged: Pornography and the Politics of Fantasy in America.

What follows is a brief sample of answers to the question: "What can't you do because you're in a couple?" This information is all absolutely true. Nothing was invented. Nothing needed to be.

You can't leave the house without saying where you're going. You can't not say what time you'll return. You can't stay out past midnight, or eleven, or ten, or dinnertime, or not come right home after work. You can't go out when the other person feels like staying home. You can't go to parties alone. You can't go out just to go out, because you can't not be considerate of the other person's worries about where you are, or their natural insecurities that you're not where you should be or about where you could be instead. You can't make plans without consulting the other person, particularly not for evenings and weekends, or make decisions about leisure-time usage without a consultation.

You can't be a slob. You can't do less than 50 percent around the house, even if the other person wants to do 100 to 200 percent more housecleaning than you find necessary or even reasonable. You can't leave your (pick one) books, tissues, shoes, makeup, mail, underwear, work, sewing stuff, or pornography lying around the house. You can't smoke, or you can't smoke in the house, or you can't leave cigarettes in cups. You can't amass more knickknacks than the other person finds tolerable (likewise sports paraphernalia, Fiestaware, or Daffy Duck collectibles).

You can't leave the dishes for later, wash the dishes badly, not use soap, drink straight from the container, make crumbs without wiping them up (now, not later), or load the dishwasher according to the method that seems most sensible to you. You can't use dishes directly out of the dishwasher without unloading the whole thing. You can't accumulate things that you think you just might use someday if the other person thinks you won't. You can't throw wet clothes in the laundry hamper. You can't have a comfortable desk because it doesn't fit the decor. You can't not notice whether the house is neat or messy. You can't not share responsibility for domestic decisions the other person has made that you've gone along with to be nice but don't really care about. You can't hire a housecleaner because your mate is a socialist and can't live with the idea.

You can't leave the bathroom door open, it's offensive. You can't leave the bathroom door closed, they need to get in. You can't enter without knocking. You can't leave the toilet seat up. You can't read on the john without commentary. You can't leave bloody things in the bathroom wastebasket. You can't leave female-hygiene products out. You can't wash your dirty hands in

the kitchen sink. You have to load the toilet paper "over" instead of "under." You're not allowed to pay no attention to what you'd simply rather ignore: your own nose hair, underarm hair, or toenails. You can't leave the bed unmade. You must not fail to express appreciation when the other person makes the bed even if you don't care. You can't sleep apart, you can't go to bed at different times, you can't fall asleep on the couch without getting woken up to go to bed. You can't eat in bed. You can't get out of bed right away after sex. You can't have insomnia without being grilled about what's *really* bothering you. You can't turn the air conditioner up as high as you want. You can't sleep late if the other person has to get up early. Or you can't sleep late because it's a sign of moral turpitude.

You can't watch soap operas without getting made fun of. You can't watch infomercials, or the pregame show, or Martha Stewart, or shows in which men are humiliated in front of women or are made to play the buffoon. You can't leave CNN on as background. You can't pathologically withdraw into sports even if it's your only mode of anxiety release. You can't listen to Bob Dylan or other excesses of your youth. You can't go out to play pinball, it's regressive. You can't smoke pot. You can't drink during the day, even on weekends. You can't take naps when the other person is home because the mate feels leisure time should be shared. You can't work when you're supposed to be relaxing. You can't spend too much time on the computer. You can't play Dungeons and Dragons. And stay off those chat rooms! You can't have email flirtations, however innocent. You can't play computer solitaire because the clicking drives the other person crazy. You can't talk on the phone when they're home working. You can't be rude to people who call on the phone for the mate. You can't just hang up on telemarketers, you must be polite. You can't talk on the phone when they're in the room without them commenting on the conversation, or trying to talk to you at the same time. Your best friend can't call after ten. You can't read without them starting to talk, and you're not allowed to read when they're talking to you. You can't not pay attention to their presence.

You can't be impulsive, self-absorbed, or distracted. You can't take risks unless they're agreed-upon risks. You can't just walk out on your job or quit in a huff. You can't make unilateral career decisions, or change jobs without extensive discussion and negotiation. You can't have your own bank account. You can't make major purchases alone, or spend money on things the other person considers excesses, you can't blow money just because you're in a really bad mood, and you can't be in a bad mood without being required to explain it. You can't have secrets (about money or anything else).

You can't eat what you want. You can't skip meals. You can't eat alone. You can't bring Ding Dongs into the house. You can't break your diet. You can't eat garlic because they can't stand the smell. You can't eat butter if they're monitoring your cholesterol. You can't cook cauliflower even if you don't expect the other person to eat it. You can't use enough salt to give the food some flavor without it being seen as a criticism of their cooking. You can't refuse to share your entrée when dining out, or order what you want without negotiations far surpassing the Oslo Accords. You

[Aperçu]

MARRIAGE

By Melanie Sumner. Sumner will read the story at the Southern Women Writers Conference this month.

"Every night," she told the marriage counselor, "he drinks a glass of milk. When he's finished, he sets the empty glass on the kitchen counter and goes to bed. He does not rinse it out. I have asked him and asked him. I've asked nicely, and I've screamed. Why should I rinse his glass out for him every night? If I don't do it, it's the first thing I see in the morning, this disgusting milk scum. I've even asked him, 'Will you just put the glass in the sink?' But he won't."

The counselor looked at the husband, a balding, middle-aged man who sat with his hands in his lap, a pleasant expression on his face.

"Did you hear what she was saying?" asked the counselor.

"Yes," said the man, nodding first at him, and then at his wife, to acknowledge everyone present.

A moment of silence passed. The counselor made a note on his pad, reminding himself to pick up a gallon of milk after work. Then he made eye contact with the wife.

"There is something you need to understand," he said. "He will never, never stop drinking that glass of milk before he goes to bed, and he will never rinse it out. There is absolutely nothing you can do."

The woman looked surprised. Sometimes, even after the divorce, she would think about the counselor's words, marveling at his wisdom.



sthof zur Muldentalsperre, *by Peter Doig. His work was on display last summer at the Bonnefantenmuseum, in Maastricht, Holland.*

can't blow your nose at the table. You can't read the newspaper at meals. You can't eat things that give you gas. You can't make jokes about gas.

You can't drink without the other person counting your drinks. You can't bum cigarettes because it embarrasses the mate, even though you explain about the unspoken fraternity between smokers. You can't not "fit in." You must not dance because you're a terrible dancer (according to the mate; you happen to disagree). You can't leave a place before they're ready to go. You can't be late, even if you prefer being late. You can't dawdle. You can't lose track of time, especially when engaged in something that doesn't involve the mate, like your email. You can't forget things and then go back in the house for them once the door is closed. You can't drive too fast, or faster than the mate defines as fast. You may not criticize the other person's driving, signaling, or lane-changing habits. You can't listen to talk radio in the car. You can't get angry when driving, or swear at other drivers. You may not tailgate. Honking is forbidden.

You can't say the wrong thing, even in situations where there's no right thing to say. You can't use the "wrong tone of voice," and you can't deny the wrong-tone-of-voice accusation when it's made. You can't repeat yourself, you can't be overly dramatic. You can't know things the other person doesn't know, or appear to parade your knowledge. You can't overly celebrate your own accomplishments, particularly if the mate is less successful. You can't ask for help and then criticize the mode of help, or reject it. You can't not produce reassurances when asked for, or, more frequently, when they're not asked for yet expected. You can't begin a sentence with "You always." You can't begin a sentence with "I never." You can't be simplistic, even when things are simple. You're not permitted to employ the Socratic method in an argument. You can't have the wrong laugh: too loud, too explosive, too inappropriate, too silly. You can't say "cunt." You can't make penis-size jokes, or laugh when others do. You can't say what you think about the mate's family. You can't compare the mate to any of their family members, especially not the same-sex parent. You can't be less concerned with the other person's vulnerability than with expressing your own opinions. You can't express inappropriate irony about something the other person takes seriously. Or appropriate anger

at something the other person takes casually. You can't call a handyman to repair something [illegible] consider themselves to be "handy." You can't not be supportive, even when the mate does something insupportable.

You can't analyze the cinematography in a movie that they were emotional about. You can't make a joke that the other person could potentially construe as unconsciously aimed at them. You can't talk about religion, politics, Germany, Israel, the class struggle. You can't tell Polish jokes. You can't make puns or tell dirty jokes, or relate overly lengthy anecdotes. You can't make jokes about bald spots, ear shape, fat, or any other sensitivity, even if you didn't know until that moment that it was an area of sensitivity. You can't talk about your crush on your shrink. You can't talk about past relationships. Or you can't not talk about past relationships, and can't refuse to reveal all the long-forgotten details when asked. You can't refuse to talk about what you talked about in therapy. But you can't "overanalyze" either, or import psychological terminology into the relationship. You can't not "communicate your feelings." Except when those feelings are critical, which they should not be.

Thus is love obtained.

[Marketing]

THREE COMPANIES WALK INTO A BAR

The following scenarios are from a consulting study commissioned by Shell Energy to ascertain whether to enter the Swedish electricity market. The subjects were asked to tell a story in which they themselves, their current energy providers, and Shell feature as human characters. Fortum, Storuman, and Sollefte El are electricity companies operating in Sweden.

My wife and I have been invited out to an elegant house in the country to celebrate midsummer. The atmosphere is great, the people elegant and trendy. Their ages vary, and I notice that I am one of the oldest.

Fortum and Shell arrive, and they are old friends of mine. Fortum and Shell, however, do not know each other. Fortum comes by boat, a large yacht. He has an attractive young woman with him, but they have not known each other for long. Shell comes in an elegant car with his wife.

They approach the group I am in and quickly take over the conversation. It's a friendly, amusing discussion, and they are more or less bouncing ideas off me. Actually, I don't think they listen very much to what I say but just check that I am listening now and again without being very interested in my answers. The whole thing ends up with us sitting in the sauna, even the ladies. We have a really great time. By the end of the evening, Shell and Fortum have become friends. I am pleased that my two friends have hit it off so well. They are both so different but similar as well.

I often get the feeling with these two that I am older and more experienced, and I think they feel that, too. Sometimes they probably think I have odd ideas, but I know they like me because, after all, I am fairly open and young at heart and have a clear idea of where I stand.

***

It's the opening of a new restaurant, and Storuman and Shell have been invited. Storuman and Shell do not know each other.

Storuman goes around introducing herself; she probably thinks that this is very pleasant and fun and that this is where she might meet some new people. She is a bit more open. She likes social events.

Shell turns up, but he is not the kind of person who goes around and says hello. He just grabs a glass of red wine and stands in a corner. Shell only came because he was invited; he will just drink some free wine, eat some free food, and go home. I would talk to Storuman. You can talk to her about everything. She is interested, she does new things, and time flies with her.

Shell is a bit boring. I would probably talk to him a bit, but I wouldn't enjoy spending a whole evening with him. If we started talking, it would probably be about travel. He could probably teach me a thing or two that would be useful at work.

I wouldn't want to meet Shell again, but definitely Storuman. She is fun, nice, and open.

INTERVIEWER: If you compare petrol Shell with electricity Shell, what do you think of?

Well, I think that petrol Shell is a bit older, a solid father figure. Whereas electricity Shell would be the child in the Shell family—a bit younger, a bit more open, more fun. Among the profiles it would be a slightly trendier one. Provocative, sporty, lots of ideas.

Electricity Shell probably works for an advertising agency or a restaurant or a sports club or in fashion. Jobs where he meets lots of people. Electricity Shell would drive something like a Golf, something sporty and small.

I would enjoy being with him, and I would meet a lot of people. He is a bit younger and I could get involved in some of the things that are going on. He knows what's what. That would

make me happy. It would lift me out of the everyday grayness, get me involved in a few things, and so on.

INTERVIEWER: What would happen at the party later?

Shell has had his free meal. He does not really have the energy, so he would go home. Storuman, though, would stay. She has gotten to know someone who has been to the French Riviera and taken a course in painting, so she would stay because she would like to find out more about it. I myself would stay a bit longer but would want to move on later. I probably wouldn't get stuck in any one place. I could probably join electricity Shell. He would go places I don't know about, and that would give me a chance to go with him.

***

Shell, Sollefte El, and I are on a weekend holiday with our families at Åre, where the mist can fall very quickly. This is the first time Shell has been to Sweden, and the weather has not been too good, and suddenly there is a dreadful mist so you cannot see anything. We sit drinking coffee in a snow grotto; the children have begun to play with one another and get to know one another. When the mist comes we finish our coffee and I feel a bit panicky; the children are with us and the mist can last for some time. We call to the people in the next grotto, "Hello, can you see anything?" and we all sit together in the biggest one and wait for the mist to lift.

We talk about the weather in Sweden and compare it with England, and it feels secure that there are so many of us. Shell's wife gets really worried, but the Sollefte El family are calm and secure; they know what the weather can be like in the mountains and they reassure Mrs. Shell.

My family and Sollefte El's are better equipped with rucksacks and things to lie on, which the Shell family don't have, because they don't know much about the Swedish climate.

We try our mobile phones, and someone has a subscription with coverage, and that impresses us. When we phone to the reception desk they tell us that it will soon clear up and that we can stay where we are. We go on sitting there, and Shell suggests that we can ski down if we stay close behind one another. He is a sportsman, very fit, and can ski well and wants to get moving. He does not come from the north, and is a restless person who wants to be on the move. Sollefte El's family and mine take things more calmly, since we know the mist will soon lift. But it starts getting late and dark, and I want to try to ski down as well, and finally we follow Shell and get to the bottom in the end.

[Euphemisms]

GET SMART

From a list of investigations by the office of the inspector general of the U.S. Defense Department. The list was compiled by Michael Ravnitzky, a freelance journalist living in Silver Spring, Maryland. All the cases were closed within the last decade.

Operation Brown Bag
Operation Bad Gas
Operation Electric Avenue
Operation Wingit
Operation ProFraud
Operation Baited Hook
Operation Bad Back
Project Can't Be
Operation Shrinkwrap
Operation Barndoor
Project Broken Rule
Operation Blood Money
Operation PC Scam
Operation Busted Dreams
Project Forgery
Operation Treasure Trolls
Operation Barrel Roll
Project Excess
Project Crank Call
Project Makeover
Project Easy Pickings
Project Oil Slick
Project Bad Lab
Project Stolen Secrets
Operation Fake Fuel
Project Back Orifice
Operation Wise Cracker
Operation Head Game
Project Kickback
Operation Rhumba
Operation Kill-Dare
Operation Kick the Can
Project Core Values
Project Hot Dog
Operation Fatcat
Operation Hands Off
Project Walk Along
Operation Chosen Path
Project Dropbox
Project Blue Lagoon
Operation Deception
Project X-Files
Operation Hack in the Box
Operation Sign-Off
Operation Kaboom

[Self-Improvement]

HAPPY ENDING

From How to Good-bye Depression: If you constrict anus 100 times everyday. Malarkey? or Effective way? *by Hiroyuki Nishigaki, published by Writers Club Press. Nishigaki is the author of four books in Japanese and two books in English.*

I think it is effective to cure or prevent depression and become happy-healthy-efficient that you constrict anus 100 times in succession and dent navel 100 times in succession everyday following the life style of long-lived British as possible.

Instead of indulging in self-pity or the wear and tear or hate, we had better begin to have such a brass nerve as we try to temper ourselves playing with a petty tyrant. Don't deal with a petty tyrant seriously. Play with a petty tyrant for 3–5 years (at most 10 years) or only for a year. In this respect, I think constricting anus 100 times in succession and denting navel 100 times in succession everyday can give us such a brass nerve.

If you are less than 40 or 50 years old, you may become impatient and want to rape secretively. You will not be able to sleep thirsting for a young beautiful woman or man almost all night at the beginning. You feel something strong is about to pierce through the center of your body. Your gunshot of *** will become longer than that of your high school for 2 weeks.

I have known 70 year old man who has practiced it for 20 years. His eyes sparkle. He is full of vigor, happiness, and joy. He has neither complained nor born a grudge under any circumstance. Furthermore, he can make *** three times in succession without drawing out.

Surprisingly, you are not tired in spite of little sleep and start beginning to feel happier. If you eat sea vegetable as well everyday, your hair will grow back blond or black in 2–3 weeks. You'll be very pleased to realize to become full of energy for the first time. Within a year some part of your body may become painful, hot, and may shiver. Then the root chakra between anus and sexual organ sometimes may begin to shoot out energy violently like a big blank. Such a big blank is much more violent than nocturnal emission, diarrhea, and ***. You look into your brief secretively. Your brief is not wet or dirty, so you are very pleased to realize to become full of energy for the first time. That is to say, you have had strong immaterial fibers of root chakra, anus, or sexual organ that shoot out downwards or diagonally at last. Besides shooting out a big blank from your buttock, you can feel as if your root chakra leaked sweet hot mucus. You can feel your root chakra as if it were a exciting womb.

So I think we had better respect doing some proper body—exercise (for example, constricting anus 100 times-denting navel 100 times everyday following the life style of the long-lived British), so that we can begin to erase the dirty stickiness of our bodies and act, talk, and see with abandon, largess, and humor naturally.

[Customer Service]

FLUSHING NEMO

The following phone conversations took place last summer. Roto-Rooter has received more than ninety such calls since the release of the animated film Finding Nemo, *in which a pet fish reaches the ocean after being flushed down a drain.*

ROTO-ROOTER: Good morning. This is Margie. I can help you.

CUSTOMER: Um, hi, how are you?

ROTO-ROOTER: Oh fine, thank you. How are you doing?

CUSTOMER: Well, we had a little incident this morning.

ROTO-ROOTER: Oh no. What's wrong?

CUSTOMER: Well, my daughter flushed her fish down the toilet, and she's crying because I told her that it's gone and not coming back.

ROTO-ROOTER: Oh, how sad.

CUSTOMER: You can't do anything, can you?

ROTO-ROOTER: Um, no, I think it's gone.

CUSTOMER: Yeah, I know. I told my daughter I would call to check to make her feel better.

ROTO-ROOTER: Oh, I'm sorry. Why did she flush the fish down the toilet?

CUSTOMER: I think she thought she was setting him free. We went and saw *Finding Nemo* the other day.

ROTO-ROOTER: Oh, I haven't seen it. Is it good?

CUSTOMER: Yeah, it was fun for the kids.

ROTO-ROOTER: That's what I heard. I have been trying to take mine to go see it.

CUSTOMER: Oh, you should, they really loved it.

ROTO-ROOTER: Okay, well, is there anything else I can do for you?

CUSTOMER: No, that's it.

ROTO-ROOTER: Okay, well thank you for calling Roto-Rooter, and I am sorry about your fish.



COURTESY GOEDHUIS CONTEMPORARY, NEW YORK CITY

Untitled #16, *by Guo Wei, can be viewed at Goedhuis Contemporary, in New York City.*

ROTO-ROOTER: Thank you for calling Roto-Rooter. This is Ryan. I can help you.
CUSTOMER: Hi. I was wondering if there is anything you can do about a fish sent down the toilet.
ROTO-ROOTER: Um, like retrieve it for you?
CUSTOMER: Well, I don't know. Do you think it's dead?
ROTO-ROOTER: Unfortunately, yes. The flushing would have damaged it, and there isn't exactly fresh water in your drainpipes.
CUSTOMER: That's what I thought.
ROTO-ROOTER: We do have a camera that can locate it in the pipe if you'd like.
CUSTOMER: No, no, that's okay. I am sure it's gone to fish heaven.
ROTO-ROOTER: Yeah, it's in a better place now.
CUSTOMER: Okay, well thanks for your help.
ROTO-ROOTER: No problem. Thank you for calling Roto-Rooter.

ROTO-ROOTER: Thank you for calling Roto-Rooter. This is Sheri. I can help you.
CUSTOMER: Hi. My little sister put her new fish in the toilet. She only flushed it a few minutes ago. Do you think the fish is still alive? Can you get it back?
ROTO-ROOTER: Oh, I'm sorry, I think it's too late. Once it goes down, there is not much we can do.
CUSTOMER: Oh no . . . [*to her sister*] You're gonna be in trouble. I am going to tell Mom. [*Customer hangs up.*]

CAN A SECURITY BLANKET
BE MADE OF SHEET METAL?



YOUR FAMILY'S SAFETY IS YOUR MOST IMPORTANT CONCERN. WHICH IS WHY IT'S SO IMPORTANT TO US.

We designed the first car seat to help protect children. And we invented the modern-day front crash test dummy. We were the first to make air bags available to the masses. And we introduced drivers to infrared Night Vision. Over the years, our dedication to safety has helped save countless lives.

Today, we continue to set the standard with OnStar,® one of the most important safety innovations ever. This GM-pioneered system helps keep drivers in contact with a live Advisor 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.* Wherever you are, OnStar is there. It's the peace of mind over two million GM drivers have come to trust. Which is why we offer it on over 40 different GM cars and trucks.

Our safety measures don't stop there. Later this year, we're introducing the first ever Advanced Automatic Crash Notification system. This groundbreaking technology reports vital crash data to the OnStar Center, such as the severity and direction of impact, helping emergency response teams prepare before they even arrive.

And this is just the beginning. Because at GM, we're dedicated to building safe cars and trucks. And making sure you feel protected every time you get behind the wheel.

NIGHT VISION. ALLOW US TO SHED SOME LIGHT.



A lot of companies are using cameras these days. But only GM is using one like this: a high-powered, ferroelectric heat-sensing camera – aka, Night Vision. Offered exclusively in the Cadillac DeVille, this first-of-its-kind feature harvests thermal-imaging technology from the military to help drivers see beyond the range of low beam headlamps. By projecting infrared images onto the windshield, Night Vision can give drivers some extra time to react.

OnStar is on the scene fast.

When a crash occurs, a quick medical response can mean the difference between life and death. The OnStar Air Bag Notification System* can help first-aid get to the scene faster. If a vehicle's front air bag deploys, an emergency signal is sent automatically to the OnStar Center. An Advisor will attempt to communicate with the vehicle's occupants. If there is no response, or if the car's occupants report an emergency, the Advisor will contact the nearest appropriate emergency services provider. OnStar



The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) gave Chevy Impala five stars for frontal crash safety, the highest government rating.**



Beneath the inviting exterior of the Saturn Ion is a mighty steel spaceframe. This reinforced safety structure helps preserve occupant space in a crash.



GM Versatrak™ is a move in the right direction. Available on the Buick Rendezvous, it adds torque to the rear wheels when conditions get slippery.

The latest news, reviews and a glimpse of the road ahead. See it all at www.gm.com/story.

GM

CHEVROLET PONTIAC OLDSMOBILE BUICK CADILLAC GMC SATURN HUMMER SAAB

system information and details. **Testing conducted by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) as part of its New Car Assessment Program (NCAP).

[Appeals]

DANGEROUS LIAISONS

From letters sent by Ugandan youths to the sex-education circulars "Straight Talk" and "Young Talk," both published in Kampala.

My friend's parents failed to pay her school fees. A family friend is assisting. Now that friend is demanding sex. Should she give in and continue her studies, or refuse and leave school?

—Rachael Atuhaire, Kitagwenda High School, Ibanda

In grade six a teacher forced me into sex. Later he got married. Then I heard that the wife had died. I did not know the cause. So I doubted my status. I found out that I did not have HIV. I was happy.

—J.A., Nkoma Secondary School

I'm living with a relative who is married with one child. His wife wants to be my sugar mummy. She praises and buys me many good things. She grabs me and kisses me and insists that we should have sex. She says that if I refuse, she will tell her husband that I raped her. What can I do, since it is the husband paying my school fees?

—Boy, eighteen, Kampala

I had a girlfriend. She abandoned me for a sugar daddy. I thought I had been sharing her with that man. Then I got a skin rash. I was really scared!

—Emmanuel Sam Osekeny, eighteen, Mbale

At twenty, my parents started wondering why I hadn't had sex. Once, my mum and aunt forced a girl of seventeen into my room. I wonder why my parents want to force me into sex. I hope you will assist me to come out of this problem.

B. Rockie, Kampala

There are some teachers who ask us for sex. We fear to say No because they are our teachers. What should we do?

—A pupil of Jesjonny Primary School, Mukono

I have a girlfriend. I fear using condoms because my penis is very small. I feel it may get off and remain inside her. Some boys say condoms fit everybody. Advise me.

—N.A., thirteen, Masindi

My teacher always says that I have breasts and I should leave school. Is that true?

—Scovia Aparu, twelve, Yumbe

I am abstaining and I do not regret it. It is right for me. I look at my age, fourteen, and imagine that if I get HIV now, I will die before reaching maturity.

—Levi Ssekiro, Kamuli

I have a boyfriend who wants to give me money so that I play sex with him. What can I do?

—Jennifer Musoki, Kasese

To be involved in sex requires some money. When I abstain from sex, it will help me not to spend so much money!

—Wilberforce Bakaaki, fifteen, Kamuli

There is a friend in my class who wanted me to be his girlfriend but I refused. He said he would give me 10,000 shillings as pocket money when I am going back to school. What can I do?

—Agnes Nyiransenga, twelve, Kisoro

When I go to the shop, I find boys who tell me they want to have sex with me, yet I don't know them. They said they will kill me if I don't do what they want. What can I do?

—Lilian Nakajja, thirteen, Kampala

When my parents are away, my brother brings a girl and tells me to love her. I do not want this to happen again.

—Moses K., Kayunga

I advise boys not to be tempted by girls. These girls look young but some are taken by big men, and after that they ask us to love them. Please girls, we as boys still want our lives. Let us live for a bright future with no AIDS. Girls, protect your lives.

—Johnson Kyeswa, Kampala

[Primer]

REAL SIMPLE

From A Complete Home Funeral Guide, *by Janelle Va Melvin and Jerri Lyons, director of Final Passages, an organization "dedicated to a natural approach of home and family-directed funerals."*

We have prepared the following workbook for your consideration. We hope this will encourage people to begin thinking about planning ahead.

LYING-IN-HONOR

Final Passages uses the term "lying-in-honor" to describe someone who is attended by family or friends in a home setting. While someone is lying-in-honor, water the garden,

chop and stack firewood. Decorate a cardboard or wooden casket. A plain wooden or cardboard casket is an empty canvas. You may want to buy disposable cameras and encourage people to use them.

CLOSING THE EYES

It may be important to close the eyes and mouth immediately after a death, as the head area is the first to rigidify. It may be difficult to close the eyes and mouth if you wait too long. Fill a handkerchief or zipper-lock baggy with a half to one cup rice, salt, or sand and place over the eyes. Q-tip–sized cotton swabs can be placed under eyelids to help them remain closed. This works very effectively. Be flexible.

CLOSING THE MOUTH

If you would like to try and close the mouth, you may want to hold a person's chin in your hand, closing the mouth for brief periods of time, as the jaw begins to set from rigor mortis. You may want to loop a scarf underneath the chin and tie it at the top of the head. This will probably have to be tied snugly. You may want to place a rolled-up towel underneath the chin. One family improvised with a roll of toilet tissue.

Continued use of dry ice may help the jaw to remain closed. Crazy glue has been used to close wounds, and funeral directors often use it to keep eyelids and lips closed. It needs to be applied to a dry surface.

THE BODY

You may have a difficult time removing garments if more than two to six hours have passed. It may be easier to remove the clothing with the use of scissors.

There is always the possibility that fluid has collected in the internal areas of the body. Slowly push down on the abdominal area before bathing the body. The use of dry ice over a wound or underneath a person soon after death eliminates or reduces all unwanted drainage and odors. It is customary to place cotton in the orifices of the body to prevent leakage. We suggest taping a waterproof dressing over any open wounds.

Use good body mechanics and/or wear a back brace if you need to support your back. Many people are surprised at how heavy a body feels, which gives rise to the expression "dead weight."

Embalming (replacing the blood of the body with toxic chemicals) is never required unless you transport a body across state lines. The purpose of ice is to reduce growth of microorganisms, retard decomposition, and preserve. You can use frozen or dry ice. It is not advisable to purchase dry ice ahead of time because of its

[Malediction]

HOW'M I DOIN'?

From a letter sent last August by school-board official Rochell Moore to Francis Slay, mayor of St. Louis. Moore, who was elected in April 2001, is unhappy with the board's decision, on the advice of a private management firm, to close sixteen schools and eliminate 1,400 jobs. When questioned about the letter, Moore denied wishing the mayor harm, claiming, "I didn't say it, God said it."

Open Letter to Francis Slay, Mayor of the City of St. Louis.

Because of the position you have taken against St. Louis Public Schools, you are cursed with a curse.

Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings: yea, I have cursed Francis Slay and all those whom help him already. Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field. Cursed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy land, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. Cursed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and cursed shalt thou be when thou goest out.

The LORD shall send upon Francis Slay and anyone who helps him cursing, vexation, and rebuke, in all that thou settest thine hand unto for to do, until thou be destroyed, and until thou perish quickly; because of the wickedness of thy doings.

The LORD shall make the pestilence cleave unto Francis Slay and anyone who helps him, until he have consumed thee from off the land, whither thou goest to possess it. The LORD shall smite Francis Slay and anyone who helps him with a consumption, and with a fever, and with an inflammation, and with an extreme burning, and with the sword, and with blasting, and with mildew. And the angel of the LORD shall pursue Francis Slay until he perishes. The LORD shall make the rain of thy land powder and dust: from heaven shall it come down upon thee, until thou be destroyed.

The LORD shall cause Francis Slay and all those whom help him to be smitten before thine enemies: You shalt go out one way against them, and flee seven ways before them: and shalt be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth.

Consume Francis Slay and all those whom help him in wrath. Consume them, that they may not be: and let them know that God ruleth in Jacob unto the ends of the earth. Selah.

So it is and so shall it be.

quick evaporation. Other ice can be used when needed. A number of people have used frozen vegetables. One mother wrapped her son in blankets and held him next to her near a raging fire. She couldn't bring herself to use the ice because "it makes him too cold." The lack of ice quickened his decomposition.

Ice should be placed under the body soon after a person has died. If dry ice is not available, you may use frozen bottled water or frozen refreeze containers. Be sure they are double bagged. To purchase dry ice, look under "dry ice" in your telephone directory. Bring an ice chest. We suggest fifty pounds of ice for the first two days. Dry ice will stick to fabric or skin when it has direct contact. Dry ice will not mist if it has been wrapped. When dry ice is placed in a cardboard casket, expect the box to get soggy; do not use sawhorses, stacked bricks, or anything that creates an open space under the box.

CLOSURE

The act of placing the ice underneath a person and the touching of their cold body brings home understanding that the person has died. It may make the death seem more real. Although individuals may express apprehension about taking charge of a home funeral, unsettled feelings seem to dissolve when they confront the unknown and are given the opportunity to conquer their fears.

[Theology]

THE SACRED AND THE METHANE

From Adil Salahi's Thoughts and Reality During Prayer column in Arab News, *an English-language daily published in Saudi Arabia.*

Q. A person feels very uncomfortable during prayers because he gets recurrent thoughts that he might have discharged wind and invalidated his ablution. This happens very frequently, almost in every prayer. And it is all without sound or smell. This person often wonders whether he actually discharged wind or it was merely a bowel movement. Please advise.

A. An important rule in Islamic worship is that a certainty cannot be removed or contradicted by a doubt. Therefore, we should always rely on what we know to be certain. Thus, if prayer is due and one is unsure whether he needs to have ablution or not, there are two possibilities. The first is that he had already done his ablution but is unsure as to whether he might have invalidated it. The certainty here is that an ablution has been done. The doubt is about its invalidation. Therefore, he is considered to still have a valid ablution. The second situation is that he is not sure whether he did the ablution in the first place. In this case, he is deemed not to have done it, and a new ablution is required. Thus, in the case of doubt, we always act on the basis of what is certain.

If we look at the case mentioned by the reader, we have a person who is certain to have had ablution, but then he experiences a feeling that he might have invalidated it by a wind discharge. He is unsure. We say that a certainty cannot be removed except by a counter certainty. A wind discharge is ascertained by sound or smell. If neither is present, then no wind discharge has taken place. It is a mere sensation that might have no substance.

Scholars in all generations warn against giving in to such thoughts because they can become an obsession. In this case, the reader describes this person as permanently uncomfortable in prayer. The best thing for him to do is to ignore the prompting to have a fresh ablution and repeat his prayer. When he does this for a few days, he will find that the whole thought is removed, God willing.

[Story]

THE REACH OF WONDER

By David Coley, from volume 86, number 4 of the Southwest Review.

You have to understand right at the beginning that I scarcely believe any of this. I live in Pittsburgh. The buildings there are made of steel and concrete and glass, and the roads that run between them are simple asphalt and tar. When I look in the mirror in my apartment, I see a pale-faced woman with brown eyes and thin hair the color of burnt toast. At the sides of both of her eyes are three lines pushing out toward her cheeks. Her mouth is thin like the skin of apricots, and lines drop down from the corners, setting her chin off like the jaw of a marionette. In



ıtile Fleet *(detail), by Amy Cutler. Cutler's work will be on display in February at Leslie Tonkonow Artworks + Projects, in New York City.*

the hollow of her neck, she has a small mole, which she often strokes self-consciously with the fingers of her left hand. Her nose bends radically down and to the right. The woman is thirty. She is tired. She is always there when I look in the mirror, and the mirror, outlined in dark-painted wood, is always the same. This mirror will not ripple when I push on it; it will not turn to liquid or light on certain days. The woman looking back never becomes a child or a rainbow; her eyes never turn blue, and her skin, drawn over her cheeks, never turns to gold. This is a Pittsburgh mirror, and the woman in it and the woman looking at her—they are Pittsburgh women. They have a tabby cat named Jake and a fake ficus tree sitting by their recliner. These are things that they believe in. These are not things within reach of wonder. The ficus tree and the tabby cat and the plain-skinned woman with the crooked nose—they are not the stuff of miracle.

The story I have to tell, the story that I still don't know how to believe, is not my own, though it is tied to me now as a balloon is tied to a child's wrist. The story belongs to my sister, Valerie. If I want to start from the beginning, I should probably talk about our childhood, how we both lived in Glenrock, how we played together in the streams that trace through the town, why I left. Maybe I should talk about Slocum Murray as well, about his daughter, Ida, or about the impromptu carnival that developed under her bedroom window when she went through puberty overnight and innocently changed her clothes with the blind open. I will start instead with the train ride from Pittsburgh to Glenrock. Because Valerie had called to tell me that she was going to have a baby and that she wanted me there. That is where the story I want to tell really starts, with a phone call and a train ride and 296 airmail envelopes, each holding a letter and a pressed, dried flower.

The day of the railroad has passed. Trains are lonely things now, filled with the bored and the dispossessed. Outside the thick window the

sky meets the ground, but it is hard to tell where one ends and the other begins. The train knows, of course. The train travels the imperceptible line between the gray sky and the gray earth, skirting along the horizon of civilization, away from Pittsburgh and past the factory towns and mining hamlets that never registered on the map. Now and again the train stops, and a man in a blue hat walks through the cars calling out names—Beltston, Oakmount, Upper Sandusky—names that spread out from mills and refineries like echoes. When the train reaches the mountains it slows and winds through crags and over ravines. Here the names that the blue hat calls out become stranger: Medicine Hope, Tappahonchock Pass, Fainting Bear. You look out the window to see Fainting Bear because you can't imagine what it must look like, and you see seven or eight wooden houses beyond the dilapidated railroad platform, two or three more farther in the distance, half-swallowed by the woods. There is a truck on cinder blocks with its rusted hood propped open by a baseball bat, a child with bad teeth bouncing a tennis ball against the side of a shed, an old man with one eye sitting in a beach chair and talking to a lawn jockey. You look away then because you remember that the man probably thinks the lawn jockey will talk back. He will tell his neighbor Mrs. Kinney that it told him to mow his lawn with his teeth, and then he will do it, and all eleven town families will come out and watch as the man chews perfectly straight lines in his yard on his hands and knees. "It's a miracle," one will say. "Old man Bingen hasn't crawled in thirty-five years," another will say. A putty-faced girl in torn overalls will put dandelions around the lawn jockey, and the buck-toothed boy with the tennis ball will stop throwing because the Lord works in strange and mysterious ways. Then the old man will die. He will chew the last row in his lawn, and he will keel over onto his side like a stiff dog. Perhaps a marigold patch will sprout where his mouth is, his teeth green with half-chewed weeds and crabgrass. The people will not touch him. "You should not touch miracles," they will say. "He weren't meant to be touched," they will say.

When the blue hat passed again he said, "Glenrock," and I stood up.

I will not tell you about the train station in Glenrock except to say that it is like all the other train stations in these mountain towns. It is an uneven wooden platform and a corrugated metal roof, a few metal benches facing the tracks, a rusty sign that rattles on its post when the train pulls through. Nor is it worth talking about the five-block walk to my sister's house except to say that when I left the train station, I saw a taxi driver sitting on the hood of his cab, eating a sandwich on white bread. As I walked by his car he stopped chewing and nodded at me, letting his lips and eyes pull into a tight smile. I mention him now because he should not be forgotten; because he represents everything that is wrong with this town. I've heard that it is a weak person who will turn a human being into a symbol, but it

[Virginia]

THE CONSOLATION OF PHILOSOPHY

From Philosophy in a Time of Terror: Dialogues with Jürgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida, *by Giovanna Borradori, published by the University of Chicago Press in June.*

BORRADORI: September 11 [*Le 11 septembre*] … gives us the impression of being a major event: one of the most important historical events we will witness in our lifetime, especially for those of us who never lived through a world war. Do you agree?

DERRIDA: *Le 11 septembre*, as you say, or, since we have agreed to speak two languages, "September 11." We will have to return later to this question of language. As well as to this act of naming: a date and nothing more. When you say "September 11" you are already citing, are you not? Something *fait date*, I would say in a French idiom, something marks a date, a date in history. "To mark a date in history" presupposes, in any case, an ineffaceable event in the shared archive of a universal calendar, that is, a *supposedly* universal calendar, for these are—and I want to insist on this at the outset—only suppositions and presuppositions. For the index pointing toward this date, the bare act, the minimal deictic, the minimalist aim of this dating, also marks something else. The telegram of this metonymy—a name, a number—points out the unqualifiable by recognizing that we do not recognize or even cognize that we do not yet know how to qualify, that we do not know what we are talking about.

is important that I do so to him. I want you to see him: pug-faced, stubble-chinned, a sweaty little man covered poorly by a yellowing T-shirt and whistling catcalls as I walk by him. In his gaze I noticed the worn cars parked up and down the street, the bitterness of the coal-choked mountain air, the spaces under front porches where on dry summer days dogs would rut and fight and bleed and pant out their doggie days minute by minute. From that moment on I was eighteen years old again, and the urge to get out of this town pulled in my groin and in my calves.

My sister's house, the same house that she and I grew up in, is located at the far end of a dead-end street, a one-story job that rolls helter-skelter across its lot like spilled paint. Like everything else in Glenrock it was put together piecemeal. A bay window in the kitchen looks out over the living room because my grandmother had always loved that bay window and wouldn't it be a shame to get rid of it just because we're adding a new room.

Walking toward it with the sun setting at my back, I watched as the shadows of the house fell and refracted, bent over odd surfaces and uneven planes, collected in crannies like dark water, and bled sideways under bent gutters and sloping ledges. Orange-yellow light glanced off windows and played through the broken slats of old shutters, and the whole house seemed to move just slightly, to bend and twist and dilate, mastered by alternate waves of light and shade. I was no more than ten feet away when I finally saw Valerie, her body crossed and recrossed by broken spears of light. She blended into the house as though she were a part of it. Her head was tipped back over her shoulder, and she looked up at the sky. Her left arm hung loosely down to the floor of the patio; her right hand pressed something flat against the full swell of her belly.

She turned her head to look at me when she heard me approach. "This is the most recent one," she said as I walked up the driveway, and she crinkled whatever was in her hand down against her body.

I ran my fingers over the mole on my neck and then lowered my hand into my pocket. "Valerie," I said.

"It came in the mail this morning," she said. And because I was on the porch myself now, I could see that she was smiling and that the hand resting on her belly held a letter.

You should know that this was the first face-to-face conversation I'd had with my sister in eleven years. Certainly we had spoken on the phone, and Valerie wrote me birthday cards and Christmas cards. Two years ago, when our mother died, she sent me a letter and begged me to come to the funeral. But I had not seen her in person since she was fifteen. Don't get the idea that we had ever fought or that we'd had a falling out—I had simply not been back to Glenrock, and Valerie had never left it.

She stood up, and for a moment we looked at each other. I suppose she stared at my face the same way I stared at hers, looking for the marks time had left as it moved across. I thought about my nose, about the lines on my jaw and around my eyes. Valerie was kind not to mention my face. Thirty years old, and lines around my eyes. Thirty years old, no children of my own, a few friends from work, and these lines around my eyes and mouth like cracks in old rubber. Then Valerie took my hand in hers and pulled it across the foot and a half that separated us. Inside her I could feel vague stirrings, a kick, perhaps a body shifting in place. I looked up again at her face, my hand touching her body, connecting us like a ribbon of memory, and I understood that my younger sister had outgrown me. Sitting in this piss-pot town, on this uneven porch, my little sister had outgrown me.

When I pulled my hand away from her belly, it was with deliberation, as if I were trying to break something solid.

Her face was the face of our mother. She had the same forehead, the same low, close-set eyes, the same lips, the same uneven rows of teeth. Her eyebrows were full, close to touching in the middle, and the flesh that her cheeks provided seemed barely to cover the jut bones of her face. It looked as if everything that makes up a face—eyes, ears, mouth, skin—was being pulled toward a single definite point about six inches in front of her.

And of course there was the nose. The Prendergast nose—straight, pointed, perfectly even, right down to the tip. We were all born with it—my mother, my sister, me. No lumps, no bumps, and all of it striving for that same point just in front of the face that all the other features pushed toward. That was our mother's, too. Mother could wiggle it from left to right without moving the muscles in the rest of her face. When my mother was angry with me, she could make her nostrils flare out to the size of dimes and make her eyes swell in her head. When she yelled or cried, her face twisted, and her nose jerked violently. "Look at yourself, Helen," and the nose would go wild, as though someone had touched a live wire to it.

"Where is the father?" I asked.

If the break in my voice told her anything,



Stampographic Panorama, *a collage of postage stamps by Jonathan Herder, can be viewed at Pierogi, in Brooklyn.*

if the look that I had leveled on her face to catch the slightest twitch in her eyes betrayed my desire to shame her, she didn't let me know. She simply smiled naturally, her uneven teeth slanting out over her gums like Viking monuments. My sister with her mouth full of tombstones. "He's in the kitchen," she said.

The father was not in the kitchen. What was in the kitchen—and what Valerie showed me as if it would answer all my questions—was a long cardboard box that had originally belonged to a Braun Mix Master Deluxe. Now it contained what looked to be about 200 international airmail envelopes (296, Valerie told me) lined up by date of postmark, each one carefully opened, and each one containing a dried flower and a single, unsigned, tissue-thin letter written in brown ink. "Read one," Valerie said. "Read any of them." She smiled, and her eyes narrowed as her mouth spread wider. "They're beautiful."

My left hand moved toward the mole on my throat again, but I caught it before it got there. "Where is the father?" I repeated.

"Read one." She pulled a letter out of the middle of the box and held it toward me. "The father . . ." She faltered there, her smile wavering between what passed for joy and what looked like desperation. "I get one every day now, and you have to read one."

I read one. I read another. I read another and another. They were beautiful, filled with descriptions of remote countries, descriptions of jungles and canyons, of castles and palaces and labyrinths, of cities that floated like living monuments above rivers whose names spilled across the page like dreams, of cultures and peoples whose words and phrases trembled in the writing as if the words themselves whispered aloud: "I saw a bird today, locals here call it a browl-hen, with a head the color of fire and feathers that almost reach the ground. And when it flies, it is like a bright planet moving across the sky." "The river here turns silver in the moonlight, and the fishes in the river jump out of the water when the moon is full, and with the sound of their splashing and the light on the broken surface, it is hard to know whether the river is made of water or of burning ice." "When children here learn to speak they learn first in song, so that their word for mother is actually not a word at all, but a perfect melody, naive and innocent and beautiful to hear."

The letters described fruits so delicate that they had to be eaten the moment they fell from the tree, wines so subtle that you needed to drink them out of silver goblets to taste them. There were mushrooms that were dusky and dark and ripe and velvet to the touch, rich breads that baked without being put into the oven, cheeses aged in caverns for a hundred years, candies that were smoother than butterscotch, sweeter than chocolate, lighter than meringue. The letters were postmarked from cities and countries that I would never have

believed in and whose existence I had never thought to ask about. They were covered with stamps bearing faces that I had never seen, denoting currencies I didn't understand, printed in colors I cannot describe because the words for them do not exist in our language. And always, the single flower in the envelope—an iris, a hyacinth, an orchid, a lotus, a snapdragon—flowers that I recognized and even more that I didn't, carefully dried and pressed between the folds of the letters, delicate and fragile and flawless.

I looked up from the tenth, the fifteenth, the fortieth letter. I can't tell you how many I read without even stopping, and when I did stop I saw that Valerie was no longer smiling, but that her eyes had become worried and that she held her pregnant belly as if she were afraid of dropping it.

"The doctor," she said. "Dr. McCreedy. There's a carnival on Second and Maple. He'll be there."

I stepped outside into the dark, and I walked down North Street to Third, then turned right onto Third and left onto Maple. Not that the place would have been hard to find even if I didn't know the town—light radiated from around the house as if the second story were on fire, and the sounds of Dixieland jazz mixed with the low, indistinct rush of voices and the calls of vendors. When I got closer, I could see spotlights fixed on a window on the left side of Slocum Murray's house. A carousel filled with toddlers and young boys revolved in the distance, and lines of people ended in cotton-candy machines, dunk tanks, Porta Potties, hot-dog carts, pie-eating contests, tilt-o-whirls, wheels-of-fortune, and moonwalks.

"What is this?" I asked no one in particular, and a tall, pale man passed me with a cart and offered me popcorn. I leaned toward him and cupped my hands to my mouth. "What is this?"

Suddenly, he looked at me and became still. His eyes widened, and with no warning he took off his apron and started running toward the house, shielding his eyes from the garish carnival lights and looking up toward the window.

I wish I could tell you that the popcorn vendor's dash toward the Murray house was the only one I witnessed that night, but by the time I understood that the carnival revolved around the covered window of a naked woman-child, I had seen it seven or eight times: periodically within the swirl and throng of men, individuals or pairs would suddenly go wide-eyed, look at each other and then at the house, and then they would fling themselves toward it through the roll of the crowd like crazed horses.

It was at the fading edge of such a charge that I finally found Dr. McCreedy, staring up at the window and holding a half-eaten cheeseburger over his eyes to shade them from glare. I called his name twice, then a third time, and when he turned to look at me, his eyes looked like black marbles.

"Helen," he said, and turned back toward the window.

"My sister is having a baby," I said. "We need your help."

"She hasn't opened the blind in three days," he said.

I raised my voice in case he couldn't hear me over the hurdy-gurdy music and the dull throb of the crowd. "Valerie is in labor."

But he continued to stare at the window, black-marble eyes filled with something like pain and hope, joy and terror and want. I imagined that death was the color of those eyes; I have often thought it since, but I yelled at him to come anyway, that Valerie

[Poem]

WINDOW TO THE FUTURE

By Meir Wieseltier, from The Flower of Anarchy: Selected Poems, *published in September by the University of California Press. Translated from the Hebrew by Shirley Kaufman, with the author.*

In laced-up boots the nineteenth century
steps down from the carriage onto the stone pavement
covered with the fish market filth.

Her hand holds a portable brass telescope
her pocket silver coins with the emperor's profile
and her heart the dream of flying like a bird.

On the syphilis ulcer a mousseline hankie
(in the distance the broken groan of a coal locomotive)
in the brain the roar of the chorus from *Antigone*.

Soon the hieroglyphs will be deciphered
ah, to what end
and dust from Mars will be heaped on the desk.

was having a baby, that we needed him, that the baby was more important than this. "Help me," I said. "Help my sister." A tumult of words left my mouth, hard words, but they melted into the carnival.

Finally, desperate, I pulled on him physically, and he gave like syrup, like a raw egg sliding through a screen. We moved away from the carnival, past the lights, and then we rounded the corner, and I didn't need to pull anymore. He stared straight ahead, unwilling or unable to look at me, and his feet tapped an even cadence on the asphalt.

When we got to the house, Valerie had slumped into the recliner in the living room and was breathing quickly, her legs pushed apart over the arms of the chair. Dr. McCreedy moved toward her, asked her some questions, told her what he was going to do, and then touched her. He felt between her legs and talked to her softly in tones that meant calm, calm, calm.

I could describe the birth for you, but it would be a waste of time. I wasn't impressed with it, and I imagine that one birth is just like the next. I have often heard people talk about the moment that a new life enters into the world, the beautiful child arriving shiny and pure as rainwater on a bruise. But it didn't move me much. It took thirteen hours and quite a bit of wailing, and when it was over, Valerie had a baby girl she named Florence Tahiti. I boiled water, and later I held the baby, and I even think she tried to look at me. But she could never seem to do so for long. I cooed at her once, and I saw that Valerie smiled when I did that, but I only felt emptiness when I looked at her and when I whispered her name.

I was alone in the room when I first noticed the flowers, and I can't tell you exactly what drew my attention to them in the first place. Dr. McCreedy had walked my sister and Florence into the bedroom, when suddenly there they were, through the bay window in the kitchen, spilling out from the box of letters and onto the table. At first I thought it was a trick of the light, but when I moved to the kitchen door, they were still there. And these were not the dried flowers from the envelopes. These were live, full, ripe flowers, a heap of them that seemed to grow and billow, pushing off the table and spilling onto the floor, flower upon flower, blossom after petal, thick and heady and fecund. Flowers surged forth from the table like water overflowing a glass, perfumed and wild, birds-of-paradise and hollyhocks, anthurium and tea roses, thistle and heather and columbines and crocuses and daffodils and poppies and verbena and coxcombs and zinnias and sweet peas and wisteria and candytufts and ragged robins and larkspur and chrysanthemums and more that I couldn't name, but that spilled onto the floor anyway in waves and waves of colors and perfumes until I was dizzy.

At that moment, I pictured Old Man Bingen from Fainting Bear mowing his lawn with his teeth. I saw him again talking to his lawn jockey, saw the townsfolk talking about miracles and murmuring about redemption, and I knew I had to leave. I remembered things from childhood. I remembered catching butterflies and watching them turn back into caterpillars when the sun set; I remembered bailing out the basement because it had been raining on our house for six solid days while the rest of the town was drunk with sunlight; I remembered staying home from school because the ground was too unstable to walk on, because the trees had slumped down to the ground like they were made of rope, because there was a constant, ungodly cry coming from Glenrock's coal mine as if the earth itself were in pain. I remembered my parents too—my father off to work every day and then trudging home in the evening covered with black grime. "The mine was soft today," he would say, as if it were a living thing, as if it had hard days and soft days.

I clamped my eyes shut and felt my way through the kitchen to the front door. "I have to go," I called upstairs, but Valerie must have been asleep. And then I was gone, running toward the train station and back to Pittsburgh.

There's only one thing I have left to tell you. When I first moved to Pittsburgh, I saved the money I made working at a temp agency and had my nose fixed. "I want it to bend in the middle," I told the plastic surgeon. "I want it to have a lump on the top and then to hook down and fade away to the right like I accidentally mashed it into a wall." He asked a number of questions, mostly things like "are you sure?" but we agreed on a shape, and by the next weekend the operation was done. When the bandages came off, I told him it was beautiful. "It is a work of art," I said, and when I went home and looked in the mirror some more I could see how the new crooks and angles were accentuated when I turned my head to the left, how it almost looked stuck on backward if a strong light shone on it from above. "A work of art," I said to the mirror, and that night I ate chocolate-chip ice cream out of the tub until my apartment felt like home and I was full. ■

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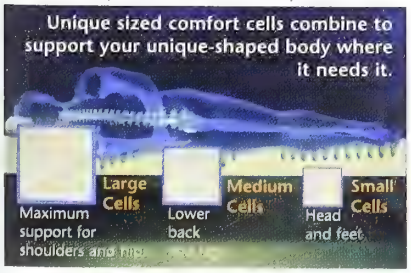
t's 3 a.m. You have exactly two hours until you have to get up for work, and you still can't seem to fall asleep. At this point, the phrase "tossing and turning" begins to take on a whole new meaning for people whose mattresses simply aren't giving proper support anymore. Your mattress may dictate your quality of sleep. Even if you merely suspect that your mattress may be outdated, that's when you need to take action. Some mattresses fail to support your spine properly, which can result in increased pressure on certain parts of your body. Other mattresses, sporting certain degrees of visco-elastic foam, can sometimes cost you well over $1000. Now, one of the world's leading manufacturers of foam products has developed an incredibly affordable mattress topper that can actually change the way you sleep. Introducing the future of a better night's sleep: The Memory Foam Ultra mattress topper.

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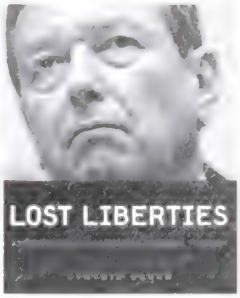
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WE'RE IN THE ARMY NOW

The G.O.P.'s plan to militarize our culture

By Kevin Baker

The nationalist apotheosis of George W. Bush reached its fruition last January 3, when the commander in chief of the United States' armed forces traveled to Fort Hood, Texas. He was there, ostensibly, to sell the idea of a war in Iraq to the American people and to rally the troops to the task ahead. But, more important, he was there to reclaim for himself and his party the mantle of the true keepers of the American identity.

Fort Hood is the most populous Army base in the country and the home of its heavy armor; 340 square miles of rugged Central Texas hill country, conveniently located 50 miles from Bush's vacation ranch in Crawford and housing some 42,000 soldiers. Most of these were the men and women of the First Cavalry Division and the Fourth Infantry Division, and their presence lent an added poignancy to the commander in chief's visitation. Both units were considered all but certain to be shipped out to the Gulf.

"For God and country is what I signed the paperwork for," Brad Hastings, a twenty-year-old private from Memphis, Tennessee, told a reporter from the *Dallas Morning News*. "If I'm called, I'm ready to go."

The *Morning News* and the *Houston Chronicle* reported that Bush spent most of the day meeting selected individuals such as Pfc. Hastings and inspecting specialized tanks with nicknames like "Burn, Baby, Burn" and "Anger Management." He then proceeded to a gymnasium off Tank Destroyer Boulevard, festooned with giant American flags and a banner proclaiming "*Fort Hood, Home of America's Hammer!!!*" where he spoke before a vast crowd of soldiers in black berets and camouflage uniforms waving small, plastic American flags. Behind him, serving as a backdrop for the TV cameras, sat the usual melting pot of men and women, blacks and whites and Hispanics and Asians, that seem to pop up like magic for Bush's every speech on a military base or airfield or warship.

"The Iraqi regime is a grave threat to the United States," he told them—and the rest of us. "Our country is in a great contest of will and

Kevin Baker is the author of the historical novel Paradise Alley *(HarperCollins, 2002) and was the chief historical researcher on* The American Century, *by Harold Evans.*

HUAH IS WHAT BUSH'S PRESIDENCY HAS BEEN FROM THE BEGINNING—AN APPROACH TO GOVERNANCE THAT REFUSES ANY HINT OF COMPROMISE

purpose. We're being tested. . . . We must, and we will, protect the Amer can people and our friends and allies from catastrophic violence wherev the source, whatever the threat."

It was very much the same sort of speech that Bush had been givi throughout his campaign to drum up support for war in Iraq. Indeed, it w much the same sort of vaguely Christian, news-bite-sized portentousne that has characterized his every address, beginning with his 2001 inaugur

It was the response that was startling. The soldiers answered their con mander in chief not with cheers or claps, or any sort of ordinary, civili applause, but with a sudden, violent roar of "Hu-AH! Hu-AH!" Shoute simultaneously from 4,500 throats, it came across on the evening news a primal, lusting sound; unexpected and voracious and thoroughly marti like something one might have expected to hear from the Spartans or Falangist street demonstration in the 1930s. It was not like anything I h ever heard at a rally convened by an American president.

The chant continued throughout the speech, turning Bush's addre into a churchy call-and-response. Individual cries of "Yeah!" and "Le go!" rose from the crowd when he explained why we would invade Ir though not North Korea, but again and again there was that same swi chant, sweeping all before it—"Hu-AH! Hu-AH! Hu-AH!"—reverbera ing around the gym until Bush, who just before the rally had exchang his dark suit coat for a green waist-length army jacket, held up his le hand, palm out, in grand, imperious acknowledgment.

The media came to dwell on a moment, four months later, when Bus took his now legendary turn across the carrier USS *Abraham Lincoln* declare Gulf War II over. But that was only a matching shot, a triumpha ist bookend, to his visit to the Home of America's Hammer. He had a ready become, at Fort Hood, something more than any other presider has ever been, which is to say the very avatar of American power. Th president of *huah*.

"*Huah* is an all-purpose expression," the journalist David Lipsky e plains in his instructive new study of West Point, *Absolutely America* "Want to describe a cadet who's very gung-ho, you call them *huah*. Un derstand instructions, say *huah*. Agree with what another cadet just sai murmur *huah*. Impressed by someone else's accomplishment, a soft, r flective *huah*."

And *huah* is exactly what George W. Bush's presidency has been fro the beginning—a gung-ho, in-your-face approach to governance that h refused any hint of compromise and that has already brought about a sei mic transformation of American politics. Bush appeared at Fort Hoo only four days before the swearing-in of the first truly Republican controlled Congress to serve under a Republican president in almost fift years, a stunning triumph achieved by an off-year electoral strategy th boldly repudiated the old notion that all politics are local an based the entire campaign on issues of national security—an on George Bush himself.

It was a strategy that depended in large part on deploying the militar as a campaign prop. Bush stumped at military bases throughout the 200 elections, blowing in dramatically on Air Force One to pump his late tax cut or the Homeland Security plan (indeed, he has spoken either at military facility or to a specifically military audience an astounding fort five times since March 2001). There was a tactical advantage to thes venues—no American president over the last seventy years has been le comfortable with unscripted appearances before the general public, and b campaigning on military bases Bush's handlers could assure that h crowds would always be restricted to jubilant, flag-waving supporters—bu above all there was the opportunity for the commander in chief to inte act personally with our men and women in uniform. He could throw h arms around their necks, shake their hands, hug them, dress up like them

ir physical presence and their *huah* approval erased any remaining lic memory of Bush's own adroit dodge of the Vietnam War, or the that he may officially be a deserter to this day after going AWOL n the Air National Guard unit he managed to join during that war, or n his rabbity scurry about the country on Air Force One in the imme- e aftermath of the September 11 terrorist attacks.

urmounting his largely pacific past, George W. Bush had made himself with what has become the most revered institution in the country. cording to a Gallup Poll published in the *New York Times* soon after "completion" of the war in Iraq, 76 percent of all Americans ex- ssed "a great deal" or "quite a lot" of confidence in their nation's mili- , as opposed to only 45 percent who had the same level of confidence he leaders of organized religion, and only 29 percent who believed so ently in the Congress. This sort of faith extended even to 64 percent he baby boomers' children aged eighteen to twenty-nine. A Harvard titute of Politics poll of 1,200 college students found that 75 percent sted the military "to do the right thing" either "all of the time" or ost of the time," and that they characterized themselves as hawks over es by a ratio of two to one.

Nor is this a new phenomenon. Confidence and trust in the American mil- y have been growing steadily since its nadir, back in the mid-seventies— ost exactly the moment, not so coincidentally, t the last compulsory military draft ended and our dern all-volunteer service began.

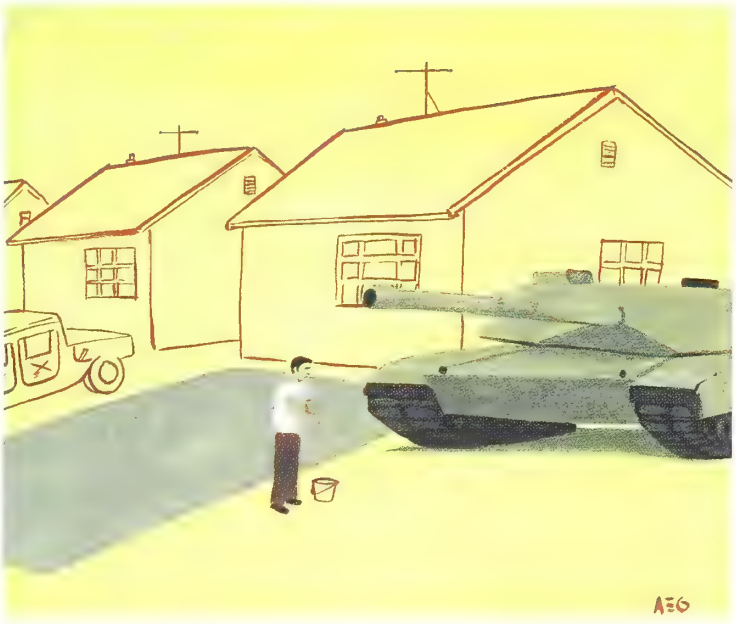
An even more salient fact, which Bush's advis- could not have missed, is that many—perhaps st—Americans now see the military as the last aining refuge of many *democratic* values in a so- y that seems ever more shallow and materialis- and ironic. David Lipsky, comparing the West nt cadets with the other students he had be- ne accustomed to in a career of writing about col- e campuses, found the America of the Army to what his liberal father had described when he ked about "his best hopes for the country. A ce where everyone tried their hardest. A place ere everybody—or at least most people—looked for each other. A place where people—intelli- nt, talented people—said honestly that money sn't what drove them."

There are, of course, other sides to the military, the rape scandal that emerged from the Air ce Academy around the time of the latest Gulf ar demonstrated. But even this seemed to be ndled in a direct, forthright way compared with scandals, real and invented, sexual and financial, Democratic and Re- olican, that have dominated Washington over the last decade. The mil- ry remains an institution that has integrated women and minorities into ranks more successfully than most—perhaps all—other public institutions. at gorgeous mosaic of faces behind Bush at every base may have been con- ved by his handlers, but it was only possible because the military is such nosaic.

It is no wonder that Bush—along with "the genius" Karl Rove and his ner advisers—has sought to identify himself so completely with this ning cultural icon. By again defying conventional wisdom and run- g right at what might be thought to have been Bush's Achilles' heel— hypocritical draft dodging—they managed to erase yet another chap- of what has to be the murkiest past in presidential history.

But there is more to Bush's identification with our armed forces than ply an effort to boost poll numbers. It signals both a reversion to the

AMERICANS NOW SEE THE MILITARY AS THE LAST REFUGE OF MANY DEMOCRATIC VALUES IN A SOCIETY THAT SEEMS EVER MORE SHALLOW AND MATERIALISTIC



strations by Arthur E. Giron

THE REPUBLICANS REMAIN THE PARTY OF UNCOMPROMISING SOLUTIONS, AND THEIR AGENDA HAS MOSTLY DRIVEN THE NATIONAL POLITICAL DEBATE

deepest, darkest roots of the Republican Party and the new political
to come. It marks the advent of the Party of Huah, an
dangerous and unprecedented confluence of our democr
ic institutions and the military.

For all of their supposed conservatism, the Republicans have always b
the true radical party in America. From its very inception in 1854 as a
joinder to the "Slave Power," the G.O.P. was a repository for all sorts of cra
pot notions and secret societies—the Know-Nothings and the Sons of S
and the anti-Masons, the Sabbatarians and the Prohibitionists. Their le
ing, shared characteristic, what brought them together as a movement in
first place, was their willingness to try to define for the first time just wha
true American was—and to enforce that definition by the sword if necessa

From its inception, the G.O.P. has been our party of blood and ir
the (Protestant) church militant. Their first martyr was John Brown,
thor of the Pottawatomie massacre and armed rebellion at Harpers Fe
During the 1860 electoral campaign, the first party activists, the "W
Awakes," marched through city streets in torchlight parades, weari
capes and singing, "They'll find what by felling and mauling/Our railm
er statesman can do . . ."

Lincoln himself saw the incredibly bloody conflict that they wo
fight and win as holy war, a divine redemption that would expunge t
great national sin and save not so much our individual souls but
Union. This would be worth any price in blood, as Lincoln made cl
in his second inaugural—in what is surely the most sanguinary pass
ever written by an American president—when he asserted that "if G
wills that it continue until . . . every drop of blood drawn with the l
shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was s
three thousand years ago, so still it must be said 'the ju
ments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.'"

Lincoln and the Republicans were right about the Civil War,
course. They not only abolished slavery but forged the United States i
what was truly one nation for the first time, upsetting the long, delic
series of compromises that the accommodationist antebellum Democr
had used to preserve the old half-slave, half-free Union.

In doing so, they set the casts of our two major parties. For better a
worse, the Democrats would remain the party of moderation and compromi
trying to reconcile the customs of the past with the inevitability of char
(for America has been a nation only during the modern age, and change
an intrinsic part of its character). Despite the common conception of the De
ocrats as the "left," all of the great liberation movements that have transform
our society over the last century and a half—populism, the labor moveme
civil rights, women's liberation, gay rights—originated *outside* the Democ
tic Party and were gradually absorbed.

The Republicans, by contrast, would remain the party of uncompro
ing, self-generated, draconian solutions—and it is their agenda that h
mostly driven the national political debate. As the political historian W
ter Karp wrote in *The Politics of War*, the Republicans shared a belief th
the party "'was not a faction, not a group, not a wing, [but] a synonym
patriotism, another name for the nation.'" Thus they have tended to cou
their arguments in terms of "conserving" essential American values while
tually embracing one radical nostrum after another, from social Darwini
to progressivism, from protectionism to laissez-faire to the corporate sta
from isolationism to the new imperialism.

None of these had much to do with traditional notions of conservatis
For all of the rhetoric about limited government, since the advent of R
gan and the current Republican hegemony the federal government has
almost all objective measures become larger, more intrusive, more coerci
less accountable, and more deeply indebted than ever before. It has m

pons, more soldiers, more police, more spies, more prisons. These trends e only accelerated under the present administration, whose stated agen- ncludes plans to privatize Social Security by forcing Americans to turn ir retirement savings over to private investment firms, to turn Medicare r to HMOs, to turn most other social welfare funds over to religious or- izations, and to place most American businesses under the regulation of iote, international—and unaccountable—bureaucracies.

What Republicans have really done, over the past quarter-century, is to rn to their roots. They once again presume to speak for the idea of k—for the larger, mistier notion of the American people, beyond any spe- c, coherent ideology, or even the bonds of the Constitution.

The problem with such an ambition is that, unlike Europe, America has mystic ties of blood. It did not have time to build a "race" before it was ded with immigrants. The early, nativist wing of the G.O.P. was largely iterated during the Civil War. And America as a mixed-race, multicultural, nsectarian country came to be an accepted—then a celebrated—fact of our ional character. Despite the power wielded by the G.O.P.'s white Protes- t clerics, and its perfection of the coded racial appeal, the party has nev- een able to sustain itself simply as a movement of racial identity.

Lagging hopelessly behind the urban, Democratic machines in recruiting new immigrant masses, Republicans were historically all the more anx- s to find a national zeitgeist that might substitute for blood. But here, too, y badly miscalculated, misreading the national will during the great, twen- h-century-long emergence of the United States as the world's foremost pow- The isolationist wing of the G.O.P. opposed America's entry into both world s, into the League of Nations, and even—under Robert Taft, the 1953 Sen- majority leader—the series of alliances that would contain the Soviet Union l win the Cold War. In each instance, the Republicans were forced to scram- and later come up with Red scares that sought to judge what true "Amer- nism" was. These had some initial success but ultimately proved too ugly be sustainable. Even the most frenetic examples of Republican activism, h as John Foster Dulles's stated determination to "roll back" Commu- m or Ronald Reagan's revived arms race, proved ultimately to be no more n variations on established, long-term Democratic strategies.

But all that changed on September 11, 2001. For the first time, Republi- ns found themselves more or less in charge of the federal government at noment when a stunning new foreign threat presented itself. They im- diately embraced the crisis as their own, applying the sorts of radical nedies—both at home and abroad—they have often advocated in the st but have never been able to fully put into effect. The destruction of the World Trade Center towers enabled Bush and the Republicans finally, fully, to reclaim the mantle of national identity—to become the Party of Huah.

Just what the Republicans' crowded hour portends has since become very ar, and it is disturbing for anyone who values our democratic institutions. keeping with his party's tradition of identifying itself with a "higher" no- n of the national will, Bush has not bothered to ask Congress to declare, icially, either of the two preemptive wars it has launched since 9/11, as is ndated in the Constitution. Instead, he has claimed unprecedented pow- to use whatever military force he deems necessary, for as long as he wants, this conflict of open-ended duration against terrorists and "evildoers."

At home, Bush used the *issue* of Homeland Security—as opposed to actu- homeland security—to personify the national will and to drive the Democrats m any remaining vestiges of power. He achieved this by insisting that the w Department of Homeland Security be exempted from the usual federal vernment standards regarding employee compensation and job security. Let us put aside the fact that Bush's requirements would automatically make meland Security the least desirable government department to work in, that it was revealed—after the 2002 elections—that it would take several

BUSH HAS USED THE *ISSUE* OF HOMELAND SECURITY—AS OPPOSED TO ACTUAL HOMELAND SECURITY—TO PERSONIFY THE NATIONAL WILL

POLITICAL FACE-SAVING HAS MEANT THAT THERE WILL BE NO WHOLESALE REASSESSMENT OF OUR INTELLIGENCE CAPABILITIES EVEN AFTER THE DISASTER OF 9/11

years to integrate all the parts of the new department, or that these would include the FBI, the CIA, or any other important segment of the nation security apparatus. Or that the latest report from Warren Rudman's In pendent Task Force for the Council on Foreign Relations found that our curity efforts were "underfunded" to the tune of $98 billion and that country "remains dangerously unprepared to handle a catastrophic att on American soil." But to understand just how much of a joke Homeland curity really is, it is necessary to live in a major urban area and see its for in action every day.

In New York's Pennsylvania Station, for instance, pairs of uniformed N tional Guardsmen sit all day behind desks at what seem to have become p manent posts. When a friend of mine approached one desk, to ask if Guardsmen would contact the police and have them remove a viole homeless man from the subway platform below, he was politely informed t the Guard's radios did not operate on the police bands.

Meanwhile, once a week or so, a helicopter comes and hovers over my M hattan neighborhood for an afternoon, apparently expecting to see Al Q da operatives moving freely about in their kaffiyehs. Out on Broadway a Ninety-sixth Street, a checkpoint is sometimes set up by the curb, with p lice waving over vans and small trucks for inspection. Of course, the fla ing police-car lights are visible for a good five blocks away, and, because t are close to a bus stop and have little space, the police wave any big trucks past—apparently hoping that Al Qaeda will not try to smuggle in *large* a weapon of mass destruction.



These are a few examples of our new national-security st in action; everyone I know has his or her own stories. One c scarcely imagine the sheer scale of this nonsense; the waste manpower and money multiplied many times over, at airpo and bus stations and bridges throughout the United States.

But of course Homeland Security, the issue, is less abo catching or deterring actual terrorists than about makin show of action—and of force. The men and women of national-security agencies—just like the men and women our armed forces—have been fetishized, made into anoth political prop for the Party of Huah. Homeland Security w not apprehend or deter any terrorist blessed with more tha sub-cretinous level of intelligence. But it has injected a co stant military presence into our lives. Already it has beco routine to see armed men in uniform roaming our streets, hear Air Force jets and military helicopt buzzing low over our homes—one more p tense of uniformed efficiency.

Where the Bush Administration fights its real nation security battles is in the subcommittee room or in the halls of Jo Ashcroft's Justice Department. The administration even went far as to try to hire Henry Kissinger in order to exculpate itself fr any blame during the long-delayed investigation of the Septe ber 11 attacks. Eventually, it had to settle for temporarily clas fying twenty-eight pages of the congressional investigating committee's port, in a pathetic attempt to obfuscate the leading role prominent Sa friends of the Bush family played in funding Al Qaeda. Such political fac saving means that, incredibly, there will be no wholesale re-assessment of o intelligence capabilities even after the disaster of 9/11.

Instead, the Bush Administration has decided that it is the Bill of Rig that needs to be reassessed. As our war machine was readying for action Iraq, Attorney General Ashcroft—far and away the most radical individ ever to sit in a U.S. cabinet—worked up an eighty-six-page legislative dr of the "Domestic Security Enhancement Act of 2003," or "Patriot II." T bill is designed to preclude any court challenges to the original Patriot A

law under which Ashcroft has already claimed the power to suspend the t of habeas corpus for any American citizen he deems to be a security risk. ection 201 of Patriot II, entitled "Prohibition of Disclosure of Terrorism estigation Detainee Information," would provide that "the government d not disclose information about individuals detained in investigations errorism until . . . the initiation of criminal charges." Another crucial clause ild give the government the wholly novel right to strip *any American of or her citizenship* if he or she "becomes a member of, or provides material port to, a group that the United States has designated as a 'terrorist or- ization,' if that group is engaged in hostilities against the United States." Until now," longtime civil-liberties champion Nat Hentoff pointed out *The Village Voice*, "an American could only lose his or her citizenship by laring a clear intent to abandon it." Under Section 501 of Patriot II, vever, "the intent to relinquish nationality need not be manifested in ds, but can be inferred from conduct." It would be Mr. Ashcroft and his ordinates in Justice who would be doing all the inferring and determin- just what "provides material support" to a terrorist group means.

The premature leaking of Patriot II has delayed its formal submission to Con- ss, but related ways of closing up Patriot I "loopholes" are already being dis- sed. Even the Pentagon's proposed "Total Information Awareness" (TIA) gram—a gargantuan intelligence operation under which almost every transaction Americans make would be electronically monitored—is back on the table, under the new, somewhat less Orwellian label of "Terrorist Information Awareness."

It is unclear just how any part of this purported technological fix is to stop Qaeda, an organization so adept at low-tech strategies that it reportedly learned to substitute personal messengers for cell phones. But then many our security programs seem to rely on similarly ineffectual tactics. A report ued this past June by the Clinton-appointed inspector general of the Jus- e Department, Glenn Fine, found that of 762 illegal immigrants caught up Ashcroft's nets since September 11, 2001, none were terrorists. Of course, ir innocence did not save them from being detained, incommunicado, for nths or, in some cases, subjected to "a pattern of physical and verbal use," and even threatened with death, before being deported.

Fine's report did not deal with our prison at Guantanamo, which is out- e his jurisdiction, being run by the U.S. military. In fact, Guantanamo's mp X-Ray seems to operate outside the jurisdiction of every national or in- national body of law. Its wardens answer only to their commander in ief, George W. Bush, making it the first detention center—or, for that tter, the first institution of any kind—to be run by a U.S. president with- t any judicial or congressional oversight. Despite all the reports of under- e captives at Camp X-Ray, despite the accounts of attempted suicides and ere psychological depression and deprivation on the part of the prisoners, e Pentagon still offers no information on when or how they will be tried— yond a vague promise of military tribunals, "when the time is right," that would not be bound by normal rules of evidence, would offer no independent right of appeal, and would place attorneys under a permanent gag order.

And it is unclear whether, even if they knew more about it, the nerican people would care much about the abuse of power being perpe- ted in their name. The greater question, though, is whether they *could* op them anymore even if they wanted to.

The war has largely succeeded in finishing off any effective opposition. The emocratic Party is a cobweb, waiting to be swept away. In a unique disas- , it has been simultaneously de-pedded and beheaded; bereft of a dedicated, tivist core and any meaningful leadership.

The Democrats' first presidential debate this spring, shown on tape delay, vealed its potential candidates to be perhaps the most singular array of

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THE UNFOCUSED LIBERAL LEFT HAS BEEN UNABLE TO MUSTER A CONVINCING WORLDVIEW TO COUNTER THAT PUT FORWARD BY THE PARTY OF HUAH

non-entities, curiosities, stalking horses, and outright charlatans ever brou together on a single stage. Most of them seem to quietly agree with the R publicans' basic worldview, and those who do not agree lack the will or ab ity to do anything about it or to offer any alternative vision of their own seems all but inconceivable that the likes of either Joe Lieberman or How Dean will get to wear the little green jacket at the Home of the Hammer

Unlike their counterparts in the G.O.P., political activists on the libe left are unfocused and badly organized. Above all, they have been unable muster a convincing worldview to counter that put forward by the Party Huah. For all that it has dwelled on the blatant lies told by the administ tion about Iraqi weapons of mass destruction and terrorist connections, t American left has been unable to fashion any effective response to the escapable conclusion that the war was the best possible (and I stress *possib* turn of events for the people of Iraq, providing them as it did with at leas chance for freedom.

The activist left lacks any real strategy for engaging with the world as it preferring to retreat into the usual Chomsky-Zinn-Vidal dreamworld of o raged American innocence. There was little or no acknowledgment fr the left that Afghanistan was a failed state that had become a haven for t rorists and would have to be invaded, or that destroying Al Qaeda and a related terrorist networks will involve a long-term campaign that will ha to include at least some military and intelligence operations, or that th should always be, in the modern world, an ongoing effort to dislodge, by o means or another, any and all dictators, including Saddam Hussein. In fa ing to develop a nuanced, engaged worldview that would both reject Bush a find a way to confront Saddam and Bin Laden, the success to the old, engaged Democratic liberalism have allowed the selves to be cast as hopelessly naive and ineffectual.

Nor can one expect any real defense of our democracy from the me any longer. The giant media conglomerates (created in good part by t Reagan-era gutting of the FCC's old anti-monopoly safeguards) have serv mostly as auxiliaries to the administration since 9/11, as exemplified by Cl Channel's persecution of the Dixie Chicks. During the latest Gulf War, t *New York Times*, for one, seemed to be recycling much of its vocabulary fr the 1960s, writing of a "long-haired" opponent of the war and a "sho haired" supporter. The paper of record granted that "the antiwar moveme today appears more diverse than it was during the early protests of the Vi nam War, when it often seemed hostile to 'anyone over thirty,'" but put all on notice that "disruptive demonstrations can wear out even the most t erant." Meanwhile, James Traub, writing in *The New York Times Magazi* denounced as "Weimar Whiners" those acquaintances of his who claimed th such little repressions proved the United States was becoming a fascist state as if there could be no gradations of authoritarianism.

Much more chilling than these exercises in denial has been the medi creeping acceptance of the concept, put forth for some time now by va ous Bush apparatchiks, that we are now an "empire." *The Atlantic Mon ly*, in its July/August 2003 issue, published one in what it threatens will a series of articles by Robert D. Kaplan intended to serve as "a kind user's manual for managing an unruly world"—a series that, in Kapla own description, "will be a ground-level portrait from the remotest a most exotic regions, not a broad overview from the imperial capital."

Kaplan finds military operations of the scale employed in Iraq to be u sustainable for very long, and estimates that in any case the American worl wide empire will probably not last beyond "a few decades from now." His use manual, though, is broken down into such indicative, and ominous, su headings as "Rule No. 3: Emulate Second-Century Rome," "Rule No. Use the Military to Promote Democracy," and "Rule No. 10: Speak Vict rian, Think Pagan," and suggests that we take our cues from "liberal empires like those of Venice, Great Britain . . . ," which he claims were "motivat

by an appetite for conquest per se but because it was thought necessary the security of the core homeland."

Kaplan urges us to borrow tactics from some of our bloodiest foreign adıtures, including the conquest of the Philippines, our foray into Central ıerica under Reagan, and our overthrow of the Chilean regime of Salvador lende. He advocates that the CIA and Special Forces teams revert to runıg coups and carrying out assassinations. He wants a corps of Roman-style litary tribunes who will make foreign policy as well as enforce it, and that become "more pagan" in our outlook. Most chillingly of all, he complains ıt "the media increasingly, and dramatically, affect policy yet bear no reonsibility for the outcome." Kaplan's solution for this problem is primarihat the government "find the budget and the will to hire away the best comınicators," but he insists that ultimately "our intelligence officers, backed commando detachments, should in the future be given as much leeway as ey require to get the job done, so that problems won't fester to the point ıere we have to act in front of a battery of television cameras."

Never mind, for a moment, that the idea of Rome or the British Empire liberal institutions of any sort would have come as a surprise to, say, the ıuls or the Carthaginians, or the Jews of Masada; or, respectively, the lus or the Boers or the North American Indians or the Maoris of New aland. Or that the dark side of these supposedly civilizing forces is, say, e Japanese Empire of the twentieth century, a venture that was also ınched on the excuse of national survival and soon spiraled down into e absolute "need" to take over half the world.

Much more demoralizing, for the American prospect, is the fact that a nerable publication of the liberal arts, such as the *Atlantic*, would give imprimatur to any screed suggesting that "intelligence officers" and ommando detachments" be empowered to get rid of journalists "as they require to get the job done." After such an immediate capitulation to secrecy and brute force, what can we look forward to in the future?

With their dominance of the national media, their vast advantages money and organization, their tactical ruthlessness, and the disarray of the pposition, George W. Bush and his party have positioned themselves for a ushing electoral victory in 2004, and most likely for some years to come. ne Republicans already control all three branches of the federal government, majority of the governors' mansions and statehouses, even—for the third rm in a row—the mayoralty of the nation's largest city. There, still anoth- ceremony of apotheosis is in store for us, on September 11, 2004, now that ıe genius, Karl Rove, has scheduled the Republican convention to coincide ith the third anniversary of the attack on the World Trade Center.

Rove likes to compare the Bush ascendancy to the election of William lcKinley in 1896, after which the Republicans controlled the presidency ıd remained the majority party for all but eight of the next thirty-six years, until they were finally ousted with the onset of the Great Depression. He ıay be more right than he knows. Soon after becoming president, McKin-y took the nation into its "splendid little war" with Spain, in which Amer-a took its first overseas colonies, and then waged a brutal, extended, not-splendid guerrilla struggle in the Philippines, one in which our armed rces—for all of Robert Kaplan's admiration—killed a larger percentage of ıe population than they would in Vietnam.

Currently, in Afghanistan and Iraq, we are occupying some 420,000 quare miles of the most fractious territory in Asian history. Our troops ıere are subjected to almost daily ambushes, and the cost of occupying aq alone has already doubled, to some $4 billion a month. By July the entagon was conceding that our ground forces had been stretched nearly their limit, with some 370,000 troops deployed in 120 countries around ıe world. Between our occupation forces, replacements for those troops, and roops being held in abeyance for emergency deployment in North Korea,

KARL ROVE, THE PRESIDENT'S ADVISER, COMPARES THE BUSH ASCENDANCY TO THE ELECTION OF MCKINLEY IN 1896. HE MAY BE MORE RIGHT THAN HE KNOWS

THE MILITARY IS—IRONICALLY, CONSIDERING OUR VICTORY IN THE COLD WAR—THE CLOSEST THING IN AMERICA TO THE COLLECTIVIST IDEAL

there were only three active-duty Army brigades available for potential ne missions—a situation that one official, in a beautifully evasive bit of Pen tagonese, lamented as "the tyranny of fixed numbers."

It is this tyranny of fixed numbers that provides the real threat to Karl Rove Republican millennium. They now seem to pop up everywhere. We simp cannot go on indefinitely waging war around the world while giving ourselv record tax cuts. And we cannot go on occupying vast swaths of Asia for yea without resorting to a military draft.

The administration has resolutely rejected any such suggestion. A fe months ago, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld even went so far as t ridicule the performance of America's old draft army before being forced t apologize. Others, such as longtime congressman Charles Rangel (D., N.Y. a Korean War veteran, have proposed that the draft should indeed be restore Rangel's suggestion was mostly facetious, a small protest against what he sa as the disproportionate burden that the poor and minorities currently be in our all-volunteer army. But it speaks very much to the hollowness of th whole politics of *huah*.

The Bush Administration rushes to repudiate even the idea of a draft be cause it realizes that such an eventuality would pose a mortal threat to its ow popularity. It is no coincidence that public confidence in the America military, as noted above, has grown exponentially since th armed forces returned to their all-volunteer status for th first time in a generation.

For all of its merits, our military is not, and cannot be, a democratic in stitution. The administration, and often the Army itself, try constantly t obscure this fact, most recently under the Thoreauvian rubric "An Army One." Surely this has to be one of the most disingenuous recruiting slogan that has ever been devised, for no army has ever been about promoting in dividualism but rather its exact opposite, bending the wills of many individua into a single, blunt instrument of incredible violence.

No doubt the young men and women at Fort Hood meant every word the said about defending freedom, and some have probably already paid the las full measure of their devotion to that cause. But the world that our soldier live in every day is one in which nearly every aspect of their lives is carefull controlled. It is—ironically, considering our victory in the Cold War—th closest thing in America to the collectivist ideal; over a million men and wom en working toward the same end, under the same, all-intrusive discipline Grow your hair too long, and you will receive a threatening letter. Let th grass grow too long around the house you live in on base, and you will ge another letter. Our servicemen and women shop at the same PX and BX mo nopolies, are subjected to a national health-care system whether they lik it or not. Even the personal behavior of their spouses is carefully scrut nized, and can be cause for official reprimands and other punishments.

The old draft did not make the military a democracy either, but it did con nect it organically to the democracy it was created to serve. Under the drat the armed forces were a levy of free citizens, taking up an onerous but tem porary duty in order to preserve their freedom. Any military commitment tha extended this duty had to be well thought out and truly important to our na tional security, or it was bound to founder on popular opposition.

It is well and good that this should have been so, for in a true democra cy the military should never be an end unto itself, or an isolated institu tion, but a necessary burden that we all share in, one way or another. W should always celebrate the heroism and dedication of ou troops, but we must never try to force upon them roles tha they are not equipped to play.

Under the Bush Administration, the all-volunteer military has be come a photo op, a fantasy; a feel-good television substitute for actual par ticipation in our democracy. Its troops can be shuttled around like toy sol

:s on an ever expanding game board, whisked to conflicts of every possi- size and duration, all around the globe. The Bush attempt to substitute)r our democracy has done a terrible disservice to both institutions. It has de each one a simulacrum of its true self, rendering our democracy pas- e and largely unengaged while our military is overburdened with all sorts asks and missions it is ultimately not suited for, such as nation-building l policing the streets of Baghdad.

This is the ultimate politics of *huah*—with Bush revealed as no more of a der than, say, Al Pacino's absurd characterization of a blind retired onel in the film *Scent of a Woman*, yelling out, "Hu-ah!" at every oppor- ity, in order to convince us that he had some connection with real ating men.

And yet we go on, making an ever greater commitment to our armed ces, $329 billion in 2002 alone—or more than China, Russia, Japan, q, North Korea, and all other NATO countries *combined*, according to the nter for Defense Information.

"No other military is even close to the United States," Gregg Easterbrook ote in the *New York Times* following the fall of Baghdad. "The American itary is now the strongest the world has ever known, both in absolute terms l relative to other nations; stronger than the Wehrmacht in 1940, stronger n the legions at the height of Roman power . . . the extent of American litary superiority has become almost impossible to overstate."

According to Easterbrook, our Navy now has nine supercarrier battle ups, with a tenth under construction; no other navy the world has a single supercarrier. Our Air Force has ore advanced fighters and bombers than those of all ner nations combined." We possess the world's only ealth aircraft; the world's largest aerial tanker fleet, to ject our air power around the world. We have far and ay the heaviest bombers, the most advanced tanks, e most deadly air-to-air and air-to-ground missiles; the st sophisticated military electronics, including armed one airplanes and space satellites . . .

As it is written in the Bible, where your treasure is, ere will your heart be also. We now substitute mili- y solutions for almost everything, including inter- tional alliances, diplomacy, effective intelligence encies, democratic institutions—even national se- rity. Although a mere five months and fewer than 270 alities in Iraq have our ground forces dangerously tended, we continue to rattle sabers at Syria, Iran, orth Korea.

The logic is inexorable. Having committed so many our resources to the military, at the cost of so much se, there is nothing else we can do. No previous na- nal dilemma compares with our current one. Even ietnam was, in the end, overreaching in pursuit of e basically sound policy of containment. Our current urse is no more than a blind stumbling forward, until we shall indeed run , once and for all, against the tyranny of fixed numbers.

For the fact is that we are not an empire, no matter how fashionable it has come to say so, on both the left and the right. We have no storied class of dicated, career civil servants; no vast surplus population, hungry for land betterment. Nor are we some ancient race of pagan warriors. A random sur- y of those undecided about Gulf War II drew such comments as "I think ey should finish the job fast and get out" and "I think it would be a mistake tie down American troops for years." For all of the conditioning that the dministration and the enthusiasts of empire have already subjected us to, merica remains at heart an isolationist country, willing to tolerate foreign ntures only for so long as they seem vital to actual homeland security.

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WHEN THE PARTY OF HUAH CAN NO LONGER KEEP UP ITS VARIOUS PRETENSES, WE WILL SEEK OUT AN EVEN STRONGER, MORE CONFIDENT HAND

Remember
It is the soldier, not the reporter,
Who has given us freedom of the press
It is the soldier, not the poet,
Who has given us freedom of speech.

—Father Denis Edward O'Brien, USM

These sentiments can be found on a poster, pasted on the side of one four little sheds near the foot of the Lincoln Memorial. They are staff by four different Vietnam POW/MIA groups: The Last Firebase, PO Outpost, Rolling Thunder, and Warriors. Their sheds—no bigger than average city newsstand—have been open twenty-four hours a day sin 1982, when Maya Lin's remarkable Vietnam Veterans Memorial was fi dedicated, keeping a round-the-clock vigil until all of the remaini American troops missing in action in Southeast Asia "come home."

For all of the bellicosity and the schmaltz, the individuals manning the sta are soft-spoken, polite, almost shy. They are not conspiracy nuts, and melodramatic as they often are—one shed bills itself as THE LAST FIREBA STANDING VIGIL UNTIL THEY ALL COME HOME WORLD WAR II, KORE COLD WAR, VIETNAM, GULF WAR—there is a certain dignity to their vig Standing in the sheds for all those long nights, more than twenty years no through the dead of winter. Alone out by the silent monuments, waiting what they expect to be mostly a few boxes of bones. It is a grand, roman gesture, and the sort associated only with the military among all our insti tions today.

By contrast, our civilian democratic culture at home is fading away. Slo ly, slowly, we are becoming conditioned to a military style of discipline. W live in a country now where anyone can be banned from flying, or detain and searched, or browbeaten and humiliated, or arrested and hauled off prison for as long as the Supreme Commander says so—and where so Americans may even be stripped of their citizenship at his discretion. W have become a nation of secret police raids that never make the papers, a of permanent gag orders; of military tribunals and perhaps even drumhe death sentences that cannot be appealed. In America today, federal ager can walk into a public library and confiscate any public records they choo They can also demand lists of who has taken out which books, and they c order the librarians, under the threat of criminal prosecution, to keep q et about it all.

We have not yet arrived at a point where we receive letters ordering to cut our hair or our grass. But we may well be told, in the very near futu what private firms we are to trust with our retirement savings and our heal care; what religious sect, or cult, the administration will turn us over to if fall upon hard times. Fewer and fewer men tell us what we may read, or wat or listen to, while on their television channels the *huah* heads shout do any dissent. Already, most democratic dialogue h vanished, replaced by personal insults and growi accusations of treason—even death threats.

When troubles arise in this new America, when we are no longer ab to escape the tyranny of fixed numbers, it is unlikely that we will return t befuddled, liberal opposition. Instead, we will probably look for the real thi

When the Party of Huah can no longer keep up its various pretenses, will seek out an even stronger, more confident hand. The one public ins tution we respect above all others—because most of us have never expe enced it. The one that more than three quarters of us have a great deal quite a lot of confidence in, and the one that has, after all, the longest e perience running a paternalistic, authoritarian society. The one that demographically the most like us, that does its job with startling efficien and without complaint; the one that captures our imagination to the poi that men hold twenty-one-year round-the-clock vigils to honor it.

In the end, we'll beg for the coup.

They're among the greatest minds the modern world has ever known—now *you* can study them with a great teacher...

If you believe that life should be a quest for values, reasons, and purpose—
filled with passion and governed by individual responsibility—
then *yours is the sort of mind to which the existentialist philosophers were speaking*

More than a half-century after it burst upon the intellectual scene—coming in the wake of rbulent decades marked by global war, assive ideological violence, and the rth of nuclear weapons—istentialism has continued to exert a ofound attraction for individuals dri-n to reexamine life's most fundamental estions of individual responsibility, orality, and personal freedom.

What *is* life? What is *my* place in it? hat *choices* does this obligate me to make?

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Robert Solomon is the Quincy Lee Centennial Professor of Philosophy at The University of Texas. A recipient of both the Standard Oil Outstanding Teaching Award and the President's Associates Teaching Award, he is the author of more than a dozen books in philosophy and psychology.

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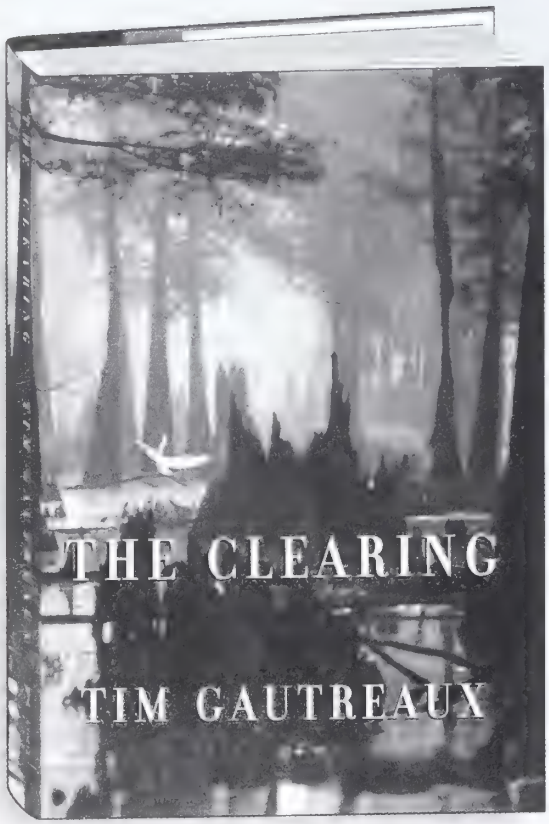
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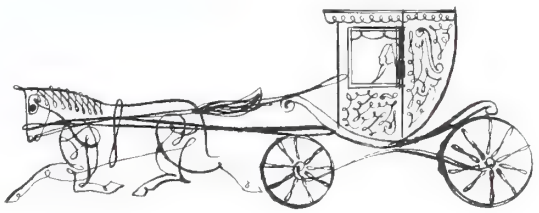
Driving briskly in a post chaise with a pretty woman

By Garret Keizer

I had no duties, and no reference to futurity, I ould spend my life in driving briskly in a post-chaise ith a pretty woman.

—Johnson to Boswell,
September 19, 1777

We know we have succumbed to hero worship by that irrepressible fascination, sometimes ordering on glee, with which we uncover the mplest human whimsy of a revered human beig. Had I no better vidence than the eer delight I take in ie quotation above, would have to know iat Samuel Johnson a hero of mine.



I hear him saying ie lines to Boswell, nd I feel the biogapher's relish in writing them down. I imagine ie great man's fancy as if it were an actual scene, nd of course it may have its origins in an actul scene, and I can see it all quite clearly: Johnon in his cockeyed wig and stained waistcoat acompanied by some eighteenth-century beauty ressed in white-and-blue Wedgwood ruffles and ounces, the two of them merrily taking in the ountryside at a good trot, the sway of his garantuan knees in the compartment, the slight remor in her décolletage as she reaches under the ostling seat for their lunch. "Claret is the liquor for boys; and port, for men," according to Johnson, "but he who aspires to be a hero . . . must drink brandy." I am sure she has brought brandy. In all this I recognize how much I need to keep my eye on the good doctor, lest in my reverence for him I fall victim to the very same soft-brained preciousness he is famous for detesting. "Clear your mind of cant," he once told Boswell; and many is the young man, including Boswell and including not-so-young me, who could follow that advice only by clearing his mind, at least somewhat, of Dr. Johnson.

But to leave the matter at that is also cant. In its most distilled contemporary form, cant comes down to two words: *So what?* So what that Johnson could conceive of no more pleasant activity than to drive briskly in a four-wheeled horse-drawn conveyance in company with a pretty woman? It's just a jazzier, slightly sexier version of Robert Frost's "Stopping By Woods on a Snowy Evening." But for the call of "duties" and "futurity," "promises to keep" and "miles to go before I sleep," one man could stand for quite a while watching the woods fill up with snow, and the other could spend his life racing about in company with a pretty woman. Same idea.



Garret Keizer is at work on a book about the paradoxes of helping others. His last essay for Harper's Magazine, *"How the Devil Falls in Love," appeared in the August 2002 issue*



But it's not the same idea. Frost's speaker will get cold in a few minutes—he knows that even before he stops and the puzzled horse gives its bells a shake. Frost's speaker has simply made the sentient courtesy call on the beautiful and the amazing that I imagine even cows must make every now and then, pausing momentarily in the manufacture of their cud as a cyclist

It is always important, I think, to be clear about what delights you—to know exactly what you'd do if you didn't have to do "everything else"

sheathed in fluorescent blue spandex whizzes by their pasture. *That was sort of interesting.* Frost is the paragon of earthbound poets: His birches always swing back to the ground. And although he tells us somewhat pontifically that "Earth's the right place for love," there is typically no one to love in his wintry reverie at the edge of the forest.

In contrast, Johnson's statement seems to open on another dimension, assured in part by the presence of another person. He is not only thinking about earth, the mobile contraption and the passing scenery; he is also thinking about the possibility of heaven on earth. At the very least he is giving a cant-free statement of what truly delights him. And that is always important, I think, to be clear about what delights you—important, and more easily said than done, to know exactly what you'd do if you didn't have to do "everything else." "Love God and do what you please," says Augustine, following up a lofty imperative with an elusive one, and Johnson boldly responds by saying, in effect, if God would release me from certain obligations and from the nagging consciousness of time, this is what I'd be most pleased to do: I would spend my days driving briskly in a post chaise with a pretty woman. It is perhaps not hero worship, then, but a deeper affinity, the confession of a shared delight, that inclines me to add, "So would I, Sam."

I am just back from a road trip spent driving briskly (usually about five to ten miles over the speed limit) in a rented Buick Concord with my eighty-one-year-old mother-in-law. I don't think that I would exactly call her a pretty woman, though she certainly looks pretty in her wedding dress in the fifty-two-year-old photograph on her piano, and there is a sweet beauty to her yet, part innocence and part fortitude—the first in spite of, the second because of, a rather tough life—which I come to appr
ciate more than ever before on our long ri
together. In the 400 miles between northea
ern New Jersey and northeastern Vermont sh
tells me stories of her girlhood and young wor
anhood, of the mother who abandoned her
the age of seven and ran off with the boarde
of the relatives who told her outraged father
put her in an orphanage, which he refused
do but wandered with her through an archipe
ago of Little Italys until an Albanian woman
New York came into their lives, gave them st
bility and tenderness, and quite literally min
ed the store. She tells me about working
defense factories in the forties, of taking th
bus into Manhattan to see Broadway sho
with her co-workers, all of them dressed to th
nines in lipstick and heels. I give my interje
tions in a loud voice, because those lathes a
presses have since repossessed the better part
her hearing.

But it was something she said about m
father-in-law, recently deceased, that struck m
most. We had just pulled out of the Jersey sub
urbs onto the interstate that would shoot u
north to where I live with her daughter an
granddaughter. High-tension wires crossed th
highway overhead, tractor trailers and SUV
fell back into our side mirrors, a northboun
train kept pace with us on the right, and sh
turned from watching it through the passenge
side window and said: "Walt used to tell m
when we were first going out, that he woul
have loved to hop a freight train and see th
country. But he'd gone into the army instead."

My father-in-law riding the rails. It is not a
altogether improbable image, no more tha
that of Johnson taking to the road with his pre
ty companion. Walter was a gregarious man; h
would have gotten along with hoboes and eve
railroad goons as easily as he got along with th
little rascals and hypochondriacs who cam
into his corner drugstore for half a century. Bu
my father-in-law was also the very soul
domestication and familial responsibility, a ma
of regular habits who tied up his garbage wit
the spare lengths of string he collected in
Maxwell House coffee can, a man who exasper
ated relatives and friends alike by his nearl
absolute refusal to accept any invitation to din
ner, though he had a good word and kept
modest supply of candy bars, antihistamine
and liquor for anyone who dropped by, an
quite a few did. A man I loved, I might add.
didn't need the tidbit about hopping a freigh
train to appreciate him or his complexities. Bu
all the way north, driving briskly with his onc
pretty woman alternately reminiscing and dab
bing at her eyes with a Kleenex in the sea
beside me, I smiled at the thought of this slight

y ex-G.I. hopping a freight somewhere in a erson railroad yard and chugging out to join k Kerouac and some other famous vagabonds ose names he'd never heard but whose his- ical moment and adventurous impulses he shared more than any of them, beat or square, could have realized.

I cannot know exactly what riding the ls meant to my father-in-law or might mean my day, and maybe that is a part of what rouac meant when he said that the days of "rucksack revolution" were over, though he s talking mainly about the burgeoning post- r middle class and its wariness of picking up tchhikers, and he might have been a bit unk too. It is easier to translate the *Phaedo* m classical Greek into English than to nslate Socrates from fourth-century B.C. thens to twenty-first-century New York. n't say they amount to the same task; they n't. The first is a matter of trying to find fair uivalents for what Socrates said. The second the much harder task of imagining what he *uld say* about things he could never have own. The first is a form of algebra; the sec- d, a form of divination.

Johnson himself is a good example of how dif- ult it is to translate across the centuries. I did t bother to read him til my late twenties be- use I had somewhere bibed the Victorian smissal of Johnson as e arch-reactionary, not wholly unreasonable inion of a man who be- eved in monarchy and ubordination," who fa- ously defined a Tory as ne who adheres to the ncient constitution of e state and the apos- lical hierarchy of the Church of England," as pposed to a Whig, hose party he denoted erely as "a faction."



The problem with all this is that the "progres- ivism" of Johnson's day included an unques- ioning faith in the rise of laissez-faire capitalism nd in the subjection of "backward" peoples by heir "enlightened" superiors. It was "reactionary" ohnson who opposed colonialism, raised his glass ithout irony "to the next insurrection of the egroes in the West Indies," and, in spite of his otoriously virulent opposition to the American Revolution, grounded his political philosophy n the firm faith that people always reserved for hemselves a right to chop off a tyrant's head.

Because Johnson enjoyed driving briskly in a horse-drawn coach, does that mean he would have liked the ride in that Buick I rented or in the less luxurious Subaru (200,000 miles and counting) I own? Can my imagination fairly manage to cram him into the same front seat with Neal Cassidy and his naked passengers (consisting of Cassidy's wife, "a golden beauty," and of course Jack, "driving west into the sun")? Would he have felt the same intestinal churning as I do at the mention of Route 66 or Highway 61? Would he have agreed with me that the single most American line of poetry is not Whitman's "I celebrate myself, and sing myself" but Robert Creeley's lesser known and more cryptic "drive, he sd"? Because he proposed carrying a brace of pistols on his journey to the Hebrides (convinced that the Scottish Highlands were rank with highwaymen), does that mean he would have packed a .357 on his excursions into New York City? At least we can translate *that* far: Anyone who could say, "When a man is tired of London, he is tired of life," would have had to visit New York. But would he have ♥ed it?

You may say that all of this is moot, that Johnson is completely a creature of his own time and defies "translation." He could no more exist as some recognizable version of himself in twenty-first-century America than a mullet could exist on the moon. But if one is religious in the way of "People of the Book" (the Koranic term for Jews, Christians, and Muslims), or if one is simply a believer in constitutional government (and I happen to be both), then the question of historical translation can be neither moot nor impossible. Hard, yes. Absolutely binding in its application, no. But useful and tenable, you bet.

What makes the translation of heroic biography or even the interpretation of a constitutional text such a challenge is that a challenge is the last thing most of us are looking for. We're looking for confirmation, which as often as not means looking for a familiar label. If we can simply determine whether Johnson was "conservative" or "liberal," for instance, we can use that comprehensive allegiance to determine where he would have stood on every issue, just as we make the same blanket determinations for ourselves. No need to look at particulars. In other words, we should like to know which sort of cant would best suit the man who



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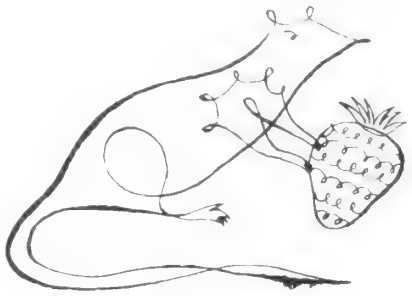


told us to clear our minds of cant. This is not simply a matter of trying to put a square peg into a round hole; it's a matter of having no place to put someone who refuses to think like a peg.

Even in so innocuous a thing as my identification with Johnson's casual remark, I find myself wanting to modify his sentiments to suit my own. I want my motorized coach to have a radio, for example, with a tape deck too, if that's possible. I want the pretty woman to be my wife, which I suppose might be interpreted as a concession to the "duties" that Johnson's quote clearly places out of bounds, but in the case of my wife I'm fully prepared to argue from pleasure. Johnson himself felt the need to follow the phrase "pretty woman" with an amendment: "but she should be one who could understand me, and would add something to the conversation." Another point for my wife. But even with her securely belted in the front seat and Aretha Franklin belting out a song from the speakers in back, I shall soon begin to feel that quintessentially American (but inherently human) itch for yet another option, which as often as not amounts to reducing all options to familiar common denominators, like "camping" in a Winnebago or "homesteading" with a fleet of gasoline-powered implements. I once glanced through a paperback manual of neo-pagan transformation, "Finding the Goddess Within," or "Becoming a Wiccan," or something of that ilk, in which the author described a complex series of ritual ablutions designed to awaken the latent power of the Divine Feminine. "But," she went on to assure her readers, "if you're too busy for all this, a nice warm shower will probably work just as well."

The boys who go barrel-assing down my dirt road have a big white decal they blazon on their windshields that says NO FEAR. I envy them their bravado, for I have all kinds of fears—I have gone so far as to imagine a decal for my own windshield that reads MORE FEARS THAN YOU EVER DREAMED OF, SONNY—and one of my biggest is that somehow and in spite of all historical translations and heroic precedents (or maybe because of them) I am going to wind up washing my brain out in that nice warm shower.

On the face of it, Dr. Johnson's fancy seems to be another version of the much touted ideal of "living in the moment," sometimes rendered in the more mystical language of "finding eternity in the ever present now." His hypothetical cance lation of duty and temporality is what rings th bell. To translate the doctor's statement into th best New Age language: If we could but get rid "should" and "shall" we could simply *be*, ar what we would be is happy. The cult of the Ete nal Now always gains currency when the crass forms of currency are also gaining; that is, whe times are good, when the odds are such that a b placed on any given m ment is likely to produce winner. Not that bad tim can't give us compellir reasons for trying to thir in the present tense.



The Buddha told a par ble about a man pursue by a hungry tiger. The ma fled for his life to the edg of a cliff, where he found vine hanging to the groun below. Without a minut to spare, he grabbed th vine and began to climb down—only to disco er another tiger on the ground below, leapin up at his feet. As he hung there wondering wha he was going to do, he noticed that two mice ha begun to gnaw away at the vine. Beside him a sir gle wild strawberry grew in the cliff face. H picked and ate it. "How sweet it tasted!" sai the Buddha.

I know of no more succinct expression of th meaning and value of momentary pleasure in th mortal life. But it's a far cry from Strawber Fields Forever. After the mice do their work, th only thing that's going to taste sweet is the mar And the last thing he'll want to find in the mo ment of his mauling is eternity.

Whenever I hear someone hold forth on th salutary benefits of living in the moment, always think of torture. This is doubtless th result of a certain contrariness on my part. Te me about finding eternity in the moment, an I'll tell you about the pain that can seem a eternity. Although cruelty is probably as un versal as art, I usually go for my examples to th Iroquois, who liked to start by slicing off the fin gers used to pull a bowstring (thus precludin any chance of intervention by some mercifu widow in search of a hunter-husband) and con cluded by roasting their victims alive and eatin the hearts of the more stoical. In this I am als being contrary, because to my knowledge th torture rites of Native American tribes are th only cases of sadism to be honored with apolo getics by multiculturally reverent historians We must understand, one of them will typicall write, that these ceremonies were not the sadis tic orgies of popular imagination but occasion of great religious solemnity. So was an auto-da

ack. So, too, are any number of outrages; all the most privately criminal have some reli- s or nationalistic cant for justification, and n the atrocities of individual madmen are ly to carry some Sadean rationale: liberating id or defying society's repressive taboos or hing bitches a lesson they've had coming a long time.

And here I arrive at one of those paradoxical sroads that inevitably stand in our way never we go off on some ideological trot. ging the history of inflicted pain into the fect teeth of those who glibly counsel us to in the moment, I am forced to remember v much of that pain was caused by persons o did no such thing; that is, by those so ated with duty and futurity that they puked over history. I must rein in my horses at the nt of collision (and intellectual collusion) h the sacred obligations of victorious war- s, the glorious destinies of the proletarian e and the master race, not to mention the rogatives of the one true faith.

Caught between these tigers, I catch a mentary glimpse of what I probably love most but what Johnson said, gleaming like a single d strawberry just within reach. I mean its dom from all malice and any agenda. Even woman seems to be desired for her company ne; he has no designs on her except to ride l talk. What does a liberal-minded person h as myself desire most but to enjoy as much he can of this life and to cause no harm. Give an unfinished sentence that begins with the rds "All I want . . ." and isn't that how most of would complete it? To have fun and to do no rm. And isn't that enough? we ask, especially we are of a certain age and a certain income d have just stepped, in a reflective mood, out or into a nice warm shower.

To answer those questions respectively: apparently no and apparently not, else we would have started having more fun a long time ago.

Johnson sounds as though he is being whimsical in his remark about the post chaise, but perhaps he is also being ironic. Perhaps he is not ly confessing his desire but mocking it. He uld be saying, Without the consciousness of orality and destiny that makes me a fully functioning human being, this is how ludicrous I'd be. his is what I'd be reduced to. A Hollywood ogul or a barrio drug dealer or a member of the itish royal family might spend his life doing uch the same.

There's a wonderful story about a young oman who accepted a friend's dare to walk er to Johnson and sit on his lap. It must have emed to them like the most deliciously preposterous of pranks: There he was, in all his elephantine pomposity, a man who seemed to have a rejoinder for everything, not to mention a reputation for scrupulous decorum and at times an almost comical gallantry in the company of ladies. Who could resist? The young woman didn't and promptly planted her bum on the writer's knees. Johnson's comment is for my money his most memorable retort, no modest claim for a man famous for retorts: "Do it again," he said, "and let us see who will tire first."

His remark contains the same ambiguity as the quote about the post chaise. On the one hand, he may be expressing his sincere and inexhaustible appreciation at having a pretty woman on his lap—"Do it again"—but on the other, he may be saying that the delights of any moment are inadequate to a creature with a sense of time passing. One of us will tire of this. Perhaps you will, young thing, and won't you feel foolish then? But should I, old coot that I am, be the one to tire first, won't you feel even *more* foolish?

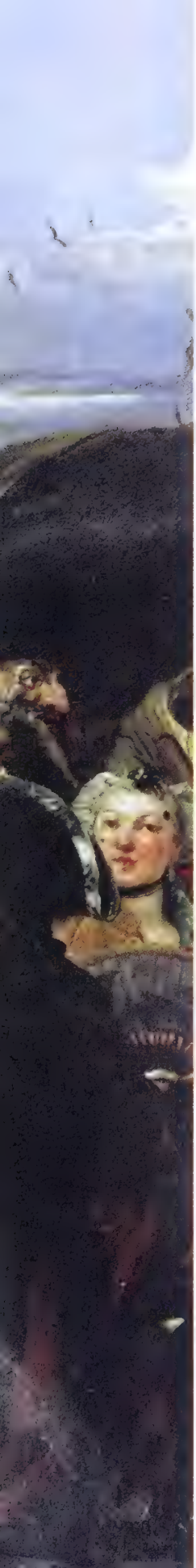
"Our hearts are restless till they rest in Thee"—this from the same saint who bid us do

What does a liberal-minded person such as myself desire most but to enjoy as much as he can of this life and to cause no harm

what we please, as if he, too, were daring us to discover for ourselves who will "tire first." In that sense, if only in that sense, Johnson is an Augustinian. I mean he is haunted by the awareness of a good thing gone terribly awry, of a world that begs for redemption more than explanation. This may be one reason that he is seldom named among the great philosophers. With few notable exceptions, philosophy belongs to the eternal now. Its watchword is detachment; its habitat, leisure. It does not drive briskly if it can avoid doing so. The passions of martyrdom and apocalypse are distasteful to it. St. Paul wrote from prison; Montaigne, from a chateau, and that is all ye know on earth and all ye need to know. The person who asks me, "But with whom would you rather spend your time, Montaigne or St. Paul?" is being impertinent. Except for posing a few pointed questions to the apostle, I would doubtless prefer to spend my time with Montaigne. The food would be better, for one thing.

But the question ever on my mind is which situation and point of view is more relevant to my predicament, and to the human predicament:





that of the prison or that of the château, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* or *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*. If you bristle at the question, you're probably one of those people who wandered about in the smoke and dust of September 12 congratulating yourself on your impeccable Western modernity, a bit like someone who reacted to the news of the Nat Turner massacres by glorying in the moral superiority of being white. The reason you can preach Paul to primitive tribes and civilized inebriates, but would have a somewhat harder time acquainting them with Montaigne, may have less to do with the degrees of relative sophistication between the apostle and the philosopher, or between the so-called savage and us, than with the differences between what issues from a prison and what issues from a château, or, if you prefer, what resonates in a Palestinian refugee camp and what resonates in the Algonquin Hotel lounge, not to forget which establishment is more crowded with your fellow human beings.

For me, annihilation is the fantasy. That we can make our little mess and then be flushed in its stead into the absolute innocence of perfect oblivion

The Johnson we think of as a philosopher is essentially Johnson on a pension. He received one from the king in honor of his groundbreaking dictionary and could thus give himself over to becoming the sitting-room sage we know and adore. A Grub Street hack cannot be a true philosopher. But Johnson was a Grub Street hack before he ever dreamed of receiving a pension, and I am convinced those years of poverty and hustle prevented him from ever achieving the reflective detachment that might have made him a more respected thinker but a less reliable guide for women and men. He was spoiled for philosophy by all those sleepless nights walking the London streets with the dissipated poet Richard Savage because neither could afford a flop for the night. Johnson could never have lived "the life of the mind" with full conviction; when Bishop Berkeley suggested that reality was all in our heads, Johnson kicked a large rock and said, "I refute [Berkeley] *thus*." He couldn't even bring himself to live in his own house alone but peopled it with a menagerie of unfortunates, an autodidactic physician to the destitute, a blind woman poet, a freed African slave, a querulous "reformed" prostitute. "The mind is its own place," says Milton's Satan, "and in itself/Can make a Heav'n of Hell, a Hell of Heav'n"—a prop philosophic statement if ever there was one, statement capable of suggesting all the possib ities that might attend a brilliant gentlem driving briskly in a post chaise with a pret woman. Johnson's gloss on the lines (perhaps reflection on the frequent pandemonium th erupted among his boarders): "the boast a fallen angel, that had learn to lie."

Nevertheless, Johnson was not abo quoting the devil, at least in Milton's languag though he was not given to overrating eith authority. Here is one of Satan's lines fro *Paradise Lost* that Johnson was given to rec ing: "for who would lose,/Though full of pai this intellectual being?" Johnson feared losi his mind, and with some reason. He suffer from debilitating fits of what was then call melancholy but would now be diagnosed clinical depression. He seems to have gone far as to purchase a chain in anticipation of h being carted off to Bedlam one day. He was al afraid of the eschatological madhouse her after. When he says "reference to futurity" he talking more along the lines of Jonath Edwards's "Sinners in the Hands of an Ang God" than Stephen Hawking's *A Brief Histo of Time*. He's talking about the destiny of h immortal soul.

There's a fond little fiction that says those us who believe in a life after this one do because we are incapable of facing death wit out that consolation. We need a soul because w lack a spine. Let me tell you something: Th only consolation I require in the face of my mo tality is the ironclad assurance that once I dr dead I won't have to listen to any more of th crap. For me, annihilation is the fantasy. Th we can make our little mess and then be flush in its stead into the absolute innocence of pe fect oblivion. There are days when I can co ceive of no more blissful thought than that being dead when I'm dead. Dissolved. No mo than a swirl of dust hanging above a road ov which a man and woman have just drive briskly in a post chaise or a Mazaratti. Som thing in me yearns to be utterly inconsequenti which I suppose is the same as being witho duty and futurity. It's not that I'm tired of life could ever be tired of London; it's that I'm ju plain tired, most of all at the spectacle unremitting brutality, what also tired the de heart of Montaigne, especially when he began read those accounts of Spanish adventurers wh had endeavored to introduce the Indians South America to the finer points of Paulin theology by slicing off their noses and chins.

The idea of eternity is sometimes frightenin

ne. I have trouble conceiving of eternity as thing other than a linear expanse of infinite e, and I have trouble believing that in all t vast duration I'm not going to screw up. I pose this is where faith comes in, the ount required depending on your source, as le as a mustard seed according to the spels, nothing less than a busload according Lou Reed. Historical context may explain rate of inflation. Faith is not so much a ief in a higher power or an afterlife—with notable exception of a few melancholy opean philosophers, most human beings and haps a few pre-human beings (consider the anderthal corpses buried with flowers and nts of meat) have believed in some version of h—but rather daring to believe that both are ign. That "all shall be well, and all manner things shall be well," as the medieval mystic ian of Norwich claimed. That, at the proverl end of the day, there is something in the ght worth driving home to.

Strangely, I find myself increasingly turning my Christian consolation to an atheistic ropean philosopher, Albert Camus, who ce said that "the world of today needs ristians who remain Christians" but who also d: "Real generosity toward the future lies in ing all to the present." In other words, duty the one incontrovertible answer to futurity. other words, living in the moment is not the me thing as living for the moment, though smug moralists (*mea culpa*) may sometimes try to conflate the two.

As for living in the moment, perhaps the st we can say is that as an achievement it, too, momentary. And that it n seldom be predicted, and hardly ever willed.

For instance: My wife is lling to me where I sit in flective tranquillity on the psided recliner in the living om. I am taking notes for is essay. She says there's meone in the back yard d he doesn't look good. he bloody fingerprints on e window over the kitchen nk don't look too good ei- er. I open the back door d there he is, standing in e first November snow, ineteen years old and shirtss, holding a shred of torn oth over a horribly deep gash in his arm, gasping and limping to meet me. He has rolled his uck somewhere up the road and put his arm rough the driver's-side window. He has run uphill for half a mile to our house, and by the time he reaches our back door his heart is throwing blood out of his body like a lawn sprinkler. The ground around him looks as though we have just butchered a moose. "I don't need to come in," he says, "if you could just . . ." "You're coming in," I tell him.



We work in a panting frenzy together, my wife and I. She dashes to the bedroom for sheets and a blanket while I call 911. He won't let us cover his bare torso; he's drenched with sweat—he wants water. He wants to lie down on the floor. We wrap a sheet around his arm and I straddle his prone body, using both my hands and forearms to exert pressure over the broadest area possible, for in our haste to stop the bleeding we neglected to locate the exact position of the wound and I dare not unwrap the sheet to find it. My wife wipes his brow with a damp cloth and asks if he has parents nearby. He doesn't live at home but we could call his mom, he says. There's blood on both of us by now, blood on her jeans, blood on my slippers, blood on the front of my writerly cardigan. Given the kid's look and his lingo, the duct-taped seams of his work pants and the ridge runner he was driving, the odds are pretty good that his drug of choice comes out of a can and not a syringe, but if he has hepatitis B or a weakness for unprotected sex, we're not in good shape here. Why didn't we put on rubber gloves? you ask. You mean the pair that most folks keep right next to the umbrella stand? I guess we forgot about those, along with almost everything we ever knew about first aid. Stupidly we give him all the water he wants, and he wants a lot. Can you die from a single wound in your arm? You can't do that, right? The hospital is sixteen miles away; we live a good five off the main drag. "For who would lose, though full of pain, this intellectual being?" No, I am not quoting Milton or the devil either on this occasion, though my prayers probably sound vaguely blasphemous. Christ, don't let him bleed to death. Christ, just stop the blood. It doesn't help to imagine that he looks a little like Christ, lean and full of resignation, translated into his twenty-first-century form by means of a few gratuitous body-piercings in addition to the traditional wounds, his eyes glazing over as he looks searchingly toward heaven. Not here you don't. Not on my goddamn floor.



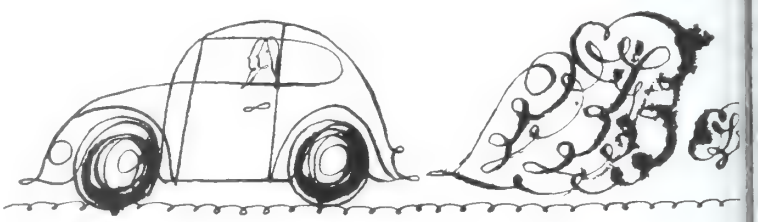


"I love the young dogs of this age." Dr. Johnson again.

What person is there of comparable stature who's saying that today? Then again, what person is there of comparable stature? I find that I am starting to love this young dog, and I sense the same emotion in my wife. In an absurd instant, he has become our son, our poor wounded son, who has somehow managed to limp home to us from the war. Mostly, though, I love my wife. She is so clearheaded and brave, though these poignant little exclamations keep escaping from her mouth that I recall her making when the doctor first handed her our blood-smeared baby daughter. I will think afterward that this may be one evolutionary reason why human beings make love so much more often than is required to reproduce or even to bond—that they might reconceive the world, child by child, and finally acknowledge it as their own; that they might master the rhythms of shared rescue, the way of anticipating each other's movements and following each other's commands, laying gesture gently on gesture, and wordlessly willing their partners as we are now both willing an ambulance to please come because we are ready right now for it to come, sirens and pulsing lights too. My whole mind and body lean toward the futurity of its arrival, I am nothing now but my duty, and yet, to my great amazement and, I must confess, to my great joy, I feel as if I am driving briskly in a post chaise with a pretty woman. Of course, this is not exactly the ride either of us would have planned.

I started going with my wife when we were both seventeen years old, so I have known the grip of a steering wheel for about as long as I have known the touch of her hand. The story of our lives together, like that of any number of American couples, can be told as a story of drives, of things that happened on drives, with images of whatever happened to be in the car at the time: concert tickets and fishing poles, secondhand furniture in the hatchback and baby bottles rolling around on the floor. In our college years we used to drive down Route 202 in New Jersey, out of the densely populated Northeast, down through the horse farms of Morris County, to a reconstructed colonial town called Flemington, where we'd eat a supposedly authentic colonial dish called "Buttons and Bows," then drive home again, sated and sunburned, to the cool porch of her house in Haledon, which was redolent in those days wit the smell of her father's Chesterfields. We hav two photographs, and I recall taking them, or of her and one of me—no third party around t take one of us both—each standing next to th wooden fence of a horse pasture. Both of us hav longer, darker hair than now, hers nearly to h waist, and I sport a scruffy goatee. The wind blowing. We have stopped our Volkswagen bu for no other reason than to snap a picture, like brief kiss on that morning. I remember the mo ment as exquisite. And I think I remember, too that we were not without reference to futurity bu rather with a sense of it as boundless, full of pos sibilities. We were going to live way out in th country someday in an old house, and I was go ing to be a writer. And that has actually hap pened: Here I sit in my old house writing, as we as waging a war of attrition with several varietie of varmint plus my own gnawing insecurities, bu we weren't too careful about what we wished fo and mostly I'm glad.

Then there was that drive to Nova Scotia first up the endless Gaspé Peninsula and the through long unremarkable sections of New Brunswick. All in all this was not a good vaca tion. Early on we realized we had laid out too long a trip, and that the getting there woul not be quite as scenic as we had hoped. Th weather was lousy and Nova Scotia was over priced. And yet it was wonderful to drive witl her, all hope washing away with the rain, al need reduced to each other's company—that and a little food and gas, places to lay ou heads and empty our bowels and bladder before rushing out again in the downpour t our car. I would take that trip again in a heart



beat, and with no better budget or weather simply for the twenty minutes when we backed off the road into the entrance of a cornfield and ate a package of Canadian "Oreo" cookies (they were called "Pandas," as I remember) and leaned our heads together with that sweet world-weariness that young people think is world-weariness but is really nothing more than doing something they like less than sleeping together, though they like what they're doing well enough. Then into first gear

belts fastened, and away into the storm. A few years later we drove to North Carolina visit with the late Amy Charles, biographer the metaphysical poet George Herbert (a pre-nson hero of mine), who turned out to be an nense Falstaffian woman who could barely fit ind a steering wheel but who in an hour's versation could take you almost anywhere wanted to go. My father had lent us his car, ch I would eventually inherit and have still, eavy, impossibly sluggish '78 Malibu, but a ride smoother than I've had in a Mer-es sedan. The doors on that thing are like gates Samson carried away from the city of Philistines. We glided down the highway ening to a song then popular on the radio, ne on One," by Hall and Oates, with its line ut love and its supposed abolition of duty futurity:

f it's really right,
There's nothing else.

cept perhaps air-conditioning, which we also in that car. It was early spring, still mud sea-in Vermont, with sugar snow on the ground, all the wisteria and the magnolias were in om as we drove through Virginia. We were of futurity then. I was thinking of enrolling a creative-writing program, and my wife of nsporting her experiences as a rural speech hologist to a different range of mountains. t what we were the most full of was the drive, scenery, and the springtime, the pavement ling away behind us. No frost heaves in those thern roads; even the gravel lanes we drove wn in search of obscure potteries were as ooth as bowling alleys.

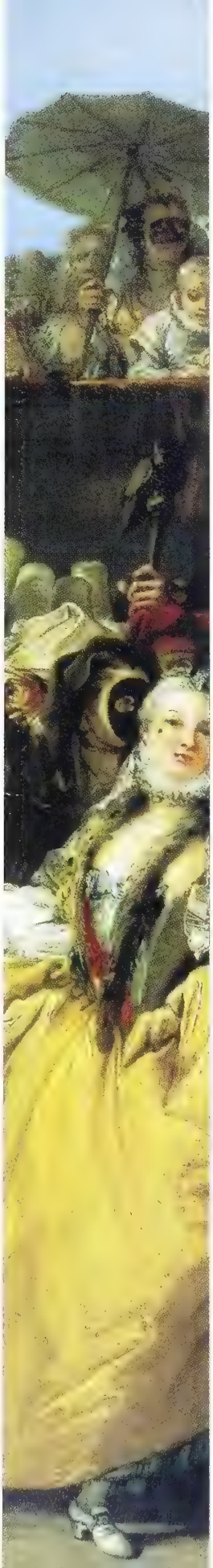
But fondest of all is the drive we took ough England in an Austin Mini, driving se to 2,000 miles in ten days. I remember joying every stop, every cathedral, pub, and or, but I remember a moment that always ne, when I sensed in the two of us a pull tween the duty to see more of some place 'd paid an admission to see and the desire to on the road again—and on a vacation espe-lly, duty should always bow to desire. Next ne, maybe. Back in the Mini, back on the ad, with the spires receding in the rearview rrors like history itself, and onto some wind-g lane—some so narrow that the bushes liter-y brushed our doors as we drove through. I uld glance again in the mirror to see them ving behind us like cheering villagers, glad our escape. The roof of the car was as high as wife's shoulder, whose head is only as high mine. One suitcase fit into the luggage com-rtment, and all the rest, toiletries and sou-nirs, went in the back seat. It was the com-ete, house-on-your-back turtle feel that must be the attraction of an RV, but so compact in that little circus-sized car. It was probably as close as we ever came or will come to riding on a motorcycle. "Or need to come," she will say, and as he is wont to do lately, Dr. Johnson will take her side.

Sometimes I wonder if speed is the original sin. "You will be like God," the serpent says to Eve, and thus begins our first, fatal end run around evolution's vegetable pace, a temptation that will lead us, zoom zoom zoom, to fast food, Wall Street, email, Cliffs Notes, blitzkrieg, hit-and-run love. Albert "Please Don't Leave Us Yet" Camus died at the age of forty-six in a car accident. He had said that his character Meursault was the only Christ we deserved, but perhaps his own death was the only crucifixion we can imagine. A messiah who came as an American and wished to die for our sins, the wars in the desert and the oil spills off the coasts of Alaska and Spain, could only do so, perhaps, by cracking up a car.

Speed not only abrogates pleasure; it is a pleasure in itself. As soon as man learned to run he began to imagine his own divinity

Speed is the consort of death, as pleasure is of life. Speed defies sensuality; it short-circuits ardor and shortchanges the palate. Speed is a thirst for life that in its haste keeps spilling the drink. Interestingly, the only admonition my father-in-law, Walt, ever ventured to give me was "You better slow down, boy, and smell the roses."

But I'm off on yet another trot and have come to yet another crossroads, for speed not only abrogates pleasure; it is a pleasure in itself. As soon as man learned to run he began to imagine his own divinity. In some of my most pleasurable dreams I run without tiring, sometimes without touching the ground. "You're dreaming about sex," say the Freudians. Maybe I'm dreaming about driving. Divide humanity how you will, into male and female, rich and poor, ancient and modern, and you will have arrived at no more telling a division than that which exists between those who've ridden in cars and those who haven't. To ride on horseback is a great historical leap, but to raise horsepower to an exponential power may prove to be nothing less than a mutation. To move faster than a cheetah while remaining as inert as the Buddha, to let the landscape flow by you and in





some ways through you—is this not an alteration of consciousness itself? Ask me my drug of choice, and I'll tell you gasoline. Very literal-minded people, including fundamentalists of several stripes, will tell you that military intervention in the Middle East is a recapitulation of the Crusades. I'd say it is the Opium War with a new twist: This time the imperialists want the opium for themselves. Be that as it may, we shall never care so much about defining a just war as executing a fast one.

Johnson's quote contains several points of irresolvable tension, and we're talking about one

To heighten pleasure we also are obliged to banish notions of futurity and duty; we must believe, at least for a moment, that the moment is everything

of them now: the fact that you cannot drive briskly and escape the imperatives of duty. You cannot drive briskly without reference to what one of the mobsters in the first *Godfather* movie refers to so touchingly as "pain-in-the-ass innocent bystanders." One thinks of an early scene in Dickens's *A Tale of Two Cities*, in which an aristocrat, driving too briskly, runs over a child. (He adds insult to injury by tossing a coin out of his window to the child's kin; it is flung back at him like a gift of bogus foreign aid.) When Cain says to God, after murdering his brother, Abel, "Am I my brother's keeper?" he is already revving our engines.

I cannot seem to put myself into Johnson's post chaise without feeling defensive, not only against the nagging call of duty but against the constant threat of chance. There is an instinct deep in us, as deep as collective memory, that associates pleasure with the fear of danger—and in certain perverse manifestations confuses them too. To know pleasure is to relax, and to relax is to let down one's guard, thus becoming easy prey. We find that to heighten pleasure we also are obliged to banish notions of futurity and duty; we must believe, at least for a moment, that the moment is everything—for to take in anything larger is to invite the nightmare. This must be some of the appeal of adultery, which requires an extreme measure of the renunciations common to all lovers, licit and otherwise: that they banish any thought of duty or of what's going to happen tomorrow.

Sometimes I try to imagine a whole tribe with that consciousness, *La Dolce Vita* recast as an anthropological study. It's hardly an original thought—Rousseau imagined and Margar Mead may (or may not) have encountered t same thing. These people live in a tempera valley, or on the coast of a temperate sea, or an island offshore. None of the predators th know feed off human flesh. In the midst abundance, they have no need to feed off o another. They take plenty for granted. Th have never heard of rape, torture, or murd They know only of accidental killing, which rare and grievous but immediately forgiven a soon forgotten. They are promiscuous witho jealousy, hedonistic without frenzy. Their ima inations make only the smallest forays into tir and space. As far as they know, they are t only human beings who inhabit the world, a they have always been here. They are parked the most remote of lovers' lanes, without refe ence to duty or futurity.

Then comes that morning when ships appe on the horizon, when men on horses ride in the glade. The shock that these others can ex is exceeded only by the horror of what they c do. The crusader and the conquistador alwa come as living proof of the darker tenets of th own lapsarian theology: They are not ir sistible, only irrefutable. The moment and t mind both burst open, like a child's he crushed under the post chaise's wheels. Hig waymen force the horses to a halt and p the pretty woman out of the coach her hair.

There is a case of a highwayman nam Claude Duval, who, after forcing a coach to st and robbing the occupants, struck a deal wi one of the female passengers to dance with h by the side of the road. She acquiesced, and returned her money and jewels, allowing t coach to continue on its way. I suppose that the standard of his peers he might have be considered gallant, but I think of the episo with a deep abhorrence.

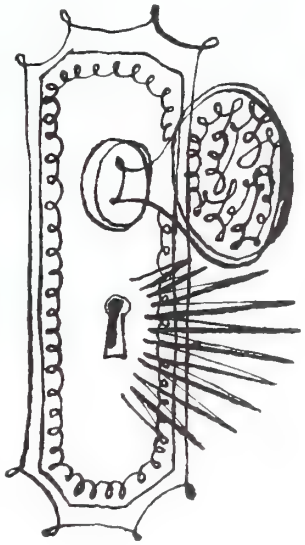
I have always been appalled by any attempt *compel* an action that ought to be a freely chos pleasure. Rape is the extreme form of this, b there are milder forms of rape. The highwa man's "request" is one: forcing someone to dan or to smile—as in those old cowboy movies: want to see you dance" (to avoid getting yo feet blown off by my six-shooter) or "Smile wh you say that, partner." To say "Wipe that smile your face" is one thing, but to demand that som one smile is to enter a whole other zone. It is t zone where a mother could be forced to nur her own child—or for that matter to give birth one, which is the dark side of the pro-life mov ment, not that it has a monopoly on darkness

When I was a kid, some of the bullies at grammar school forced an unpopular boy

. He was fat and his grandmother was a
ed substitute teacher. His family kept a farm
he midst of our suburban community. They
en't back to the land; they just hadn't left.
sight of him forced into the corner of a
ding, with the bullies leering into his tear-
abysmally lonely face like soldiers in a
ting of the mocking of Christ and a crowd
deliriously amused kids in their Carnaby
et knockoffs circling round, hushing one
ther to hear the sung words—it is terrible,
of the worst memories of my childhood. I
etimes played with this boy at his house. I
not remember if we were already compan-
s when this incident occurred or if that came
r. But even without that connection, even
he realm of abstraction, the mere *idea* of
eone being forced to sing—to perform that
alization we do mostly in joy, and love, and
entminded contentment—I would have
n less horrified had they forced him to eat
dung or kiss their pointy shoes.

ust last evening I paid a call on a renowned
st who has a passion for railroads. He took me
his basement and showed me an extensive
del-train layout. I was touched
he revelation; it awakened a
e of nostalgia in me and re-
led a tender side of him. He
e me a demonstration of the
ns moving under tunnels and
ough the tiny lit-up villages.
then he said, "I'm going to
e you work one of the trains."
meant this, I am almost pos-
e, as a gesture of generosity
l fellow feeling, analogous to
t of a nomad offering a stranger
use of his horse, and I was de-
nined to take it as such. But
n the merest hint that this
an offer I could not refuse—
int that, in my experience,
st usually accompanies the of-
of a second helping or a third
nk—gave me a shudder of re-
sion. It was fun to work the
n, actually, but I made a point
utting the juice when and where I chose, and
would have been a very grave mistake on this
d man's part to tell me to do any more.

So I find it necessary to hope that the pretty
man in Johnson's coach is under no compul-
n, not even that of fearing to hurt an old wid-
er's feelings, when he asks her to go for a
ve. I want her to have said, "If I had no duties
eference to futurity, I would spend my life in
ving briskly in a post chaise with a brilliant,
venly man given to pontification and bouts
ll temper. If he happened to have poor eyesight,



an assortment of nervous tics, and a face bearing the scars of childhood scrofula, so much the better." I want her to have said it *first,* before Johnson ever had a chance to share his fancy with Boswell. I want Johnson to have overheard her say it at some social gathering, and I want him to have crossed the room in several brisk strides and taken her hand in spontaneous sympathy and said, "Good, dear lady, lovely creature, your long wait is finished." What are the chances of all this happening, do you think? My idea of heaven is that of a space and a duration large enough to accommodate such a possibility.

But who is that dear lady, the pretty woman in Johnson's post chaise? Is it possible to give an answer, biographically or symbolically? In regard to the first, it is not unlikely that she is Johnson's wife, Elizabeth Jervis Porter, who predeceased his post-chaise remark by fifteen years. After her death, Johnson was known to follow the mention of his "Tetty" with one of his audible reveries in which he would call her, along with other endearments, "Pretty dear creature." She was a solvent widow of forty-six and he an awkward nobody of twenty-five when they married. Her family disowned her, thinking her choice ludicrous, but it was Johnson's choice that began to appear ludicrous as his reputation grew. By the time he was coming into his own, she was retiring to her bed, a faded beauty, addicted and depressed. The actor David Garrick, who had been Johnson's pupil during an early and ill-fated venture in school mastering, used to entertain his male guests with risqué impersonations of Johnson's amorous attentions toward his wife, as observed by Garrick years before through a keyhole. A good part of the mirth doubtless had to do with wondering aloud what the great man had ever seen in such a woman. But before almost anyone else, she had seen something in him. The English essayist Alice Meynell came belatedly to her defense in 1914 in a wonderful tribute called "Mrs. Johnson," in which she writes:

> Men who would trust Dr. Johnson with their orthodoxy, with their vocabulary, and with the most intimate vanity of their human wishes, refuse, with every mark of insolence, to trust him in regard to his wife. . . . [I]f England loves her great Englishman's memory, she owes not only courtesy, but gratitude, to the only woman who loved him while there was yet time.





She means Tetty's time, which ran out briskly enough. It has occurred to me that Samuel Johnson could be called "Doctor Johnson" for no better reason than the wife who "put him through school" when he was young and got put out the door once he was established, though in her case not by the doctor.

The pretty woman might also have been Hester Thrale, an intellectually ambitious hostess who, together with her husband, Henry, took Johnson into their home, thus making it a hub of brilliant society (and some real nuttiness too). He lived there as an avuncular presence for almost two decades. To Hester he owed the preservation of his health and sanity; we owe her the preservation of valuable biographical information not found in Boswell. Johnson knew a number of other women also. For a man whose oink could be very much of his age, who once said that a woman preaching was like a dog walking on its hind legs ("It is not done well; but you are surprised to find it done at all"), Johnson is nevertheless remarkable for his appreciation of female intelligence (he balked at the then popular notion that a man was prudent to marry a woman less gifted than himself) and assisted more than one woman writer in getting published. His last recorded words were spoken to a young and perhaps pretty woman who had called on him for his benediction: "God bless you, my dear." I like to think she was Alice Meynell's ancestor; in some sense she was.

If we would go beyond what we have of biography, and beyond the projections of our own fantasy, we must look for the identity of the pretty woman in the writings of the American philosopher Roy Orbison—American because his most profound insights remain largely inarticulate, and because his one great theme, which he shares with Melville, Fitzgerald, Wharton, and Arthur Miller, is unrequited yearning. The voice of Roy Orbison is nothing less than its audible masculine form, and if you tell me, "That's a bit corny," I can only respond by saying, so is Roy Orbison, and so is masculine yearning, and so (to use the sentence of summation most favored by us corny men) there you go.

Orbison explicitly tells us the identity of the pretty woman in a song no less explicitly entitled "Pretty Woman." Seemingly without thinking, when the pretty woman in his song is still walking by, still coolly weighing the merits of his proposition, before she reverses all expectation and walks back to him, he tells us who she is: Mercy. That's what he calls her, *mercy*. You may have thought he was merely exclaiming, but no, he's naming. That's who the pretty woman in Dr. Johnson's post chaise is; it is certainly who Tetty Porter was in H questing youth, and who Hester Thrale was his troubled middle age, and who the Pret Woman is to every man I know, even if sh not so pretty and even if he's gay; she's merc She's Eleanor Roosevelt, you better believe driving briskly in a limousine with FDR a telling him that he's got to start paying m attention to the Negroes. She is that Itali housewife in Bensonhurst who ran out of h house and went to her knees in the middle the street and held the bleeding head of Yus Hawkins in her lap after the white boys h used baseball bats and a bullet to bring h down, and if I could paint, I would paint th image, and if I did not call it "American Piet I would call it "Mercy." She is even my moth in-law, whose Mediterranean face actua resembles that of the woman in my imagina painting, laying aside her Kleenex and fu bling for her change purse every time we sl down for a toll, and she is my solicitous you daughter, who overhears Dad telling Mom th the car he has rented to fetch Grandma fe tures something Dad has never had in a c before, which is a CD player, and so on the d of my departure I find two compact discs s discreetly beside my keys and wallet, and wh has she chosen for me, dear thoughtful chi but Bruce Springsteen and Chris Isaak, t Sons of Roy.

She is also—and for someone with r cranky karma, she is ultimately—the New A sorceress who suddenly sees in her mystic e the actual women who are going to buy t arcane manual she is writing, their chores a their chances, both fairly dismal when s forces herself to look, and so she says to herse "Why this tedious ritual of anointing? Why n let them off with a nice warm shower? For t love of the sweet Isis, just tell the to take a nice warm shower."

But the mercy that qualifies our sufferi must itself be qualified, just as everything I ha written thus far and can ever write must qualified. Mercy is almost always a mix review. It is the news that the tumor is less th three centimeters, that the pretty woman w not require a mastectomy, or that she w require only one, or that she will require a do ble but with better than half a chance to live, that at her age she will require nothing but tir because something else will probably kill h first. Mercy is the moment that takes an eter ty to come, when they will tell her she is free go, though of course if she must wait for them tell her, she is not really free. Illness is a type bondage; treatment is something to which t patient is said to "submit," and be the physici

annerly as the most gallant of highwaymen, is still under compulsion. She is still danc- for her life.

nd if you are her husband or her lover or sister or her committed lesbian partner nowledged by the legal mercies of only one fty American states) or even her clueless hbor, what can you do? Drive, he said. You e. Seventy miles each way for those people ur area who elect to take the interstate n to the big hospital at Dartmouth, which is t many will do when "it's cancer." I know road by heart, every exit and every place re the state troopers hide, and when my comes to take what a friend of mine emistically calls "your last ride to Hano- ' I shall be consoled, if I am conscious gh for consolation, to know that it is in y sense my last ride to Hanover. I have gone e as a visitor, and I have gone as a chauffeur, virtual strangers and with my dearest ds, and more than once have walked back he parking lot in a pathetic fantasy of res- of driving her or him or them a thousand s away, a hundred miles an hour, out of the and the radiation, out of this one-horse n with its pale green horse.

is funny how we think of our cars as havens afety and a means of escape, though we are ably more likely to get killed in them than place else. We hurry to the parking lot as inctively as we once scrambled for the eval trees. After screams and blood, what ge belongs more to a horror movie than the nd of a starter motor turning in vain? And notion of safety may not be such a delusion r all, because the worst thing that anyone do to you while driving is to kill you or m you, usually without malice or a single guided thought for your own good—and kly. All things considered, that is not such a deal. That is mercy, too.

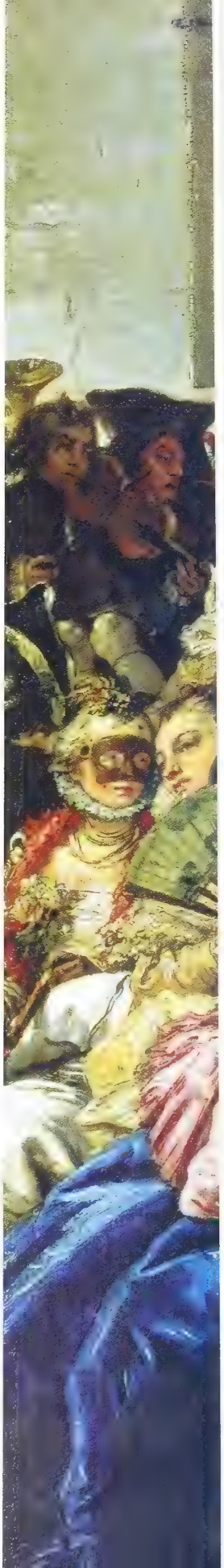
nd this is truth, Dr. Johnson, as much as I e learned thus far, in the best translation I give from my time to yours: The pretty nan who completes your sentence also oes it, because you cannot have her in r post chaise without the risk of duty and rity, the twin liabilities of love, which is lf a liability, as well as the only reason er heaven that any sane person ever had wanting a life after death or before death er. At the end of Philip Roth's novel *The ng Animal*, after the protagonist Kepesh learned that his voluptuous old flame has anced breast cancer, his friend warns him nst going to see her. "If you go," he says, 're finished." That is surely one of the t sublime last sentences of any work of lit- ure I know—and the sublimity is all in what it implies, in what calls to us from a silence every bit as significant as the empty space in a landscape of Chinese ink:

> If you *don't* go, you're unfinished. Forever.

I forget where we were and where we were going; I only remember the moment itself. It was two or three years before we took the drive down to Jersey to bury Walt, and I would think of it then, and have made a point of recalling it during any number of sober relays up and down the road. To live without reference to futurity is one thing, but who could endure without some reference to the past? We had a cassette tape playing when suddenly, without any warning or pretext, my wife began to sing with the chorus of one of the songs, reaching across the seat to tap my thigh in time to the music. I was mildly stunned. I don't hear her sing very often. In fact, I know her to shy away from any occasion that might oblige her to "sing along." But there she was, in full throat, almost a scandal with our ever observant daughter in the back seat, rock-and-rolling the thigh of her lawfully wedded husband, and harmonizing with Tom Petty and who else but the Heartbreakers:

> You wreck me, baby.
> You break me in two.
> But you move me, honey.
> Yes, you do.

She was telling me, perhaps, what had struck her in that instant as the whole truth of our relationship: that I had wrecked her (and having read as much of this as you could bear, can you imagine what it must be like to live with someone like me day in and day out?), broken her in two, but also moved her—enough, I am hoping, to make it worth the grief. Or else she was simply telling me, through the medium of the lyric, the twofold meaning of mortal life itself. Maybe she wasn't telling me anything—maybe the "you" on her mind was the Thou Before All Worlds, and the hand drumming my leg was just an invitation to join in the hymn. Did I need to know? At first I felt an adolescent impulse to say my amen with the gas, to make my speedometer double as a blood-pressure gauge, pedal to the metal, NO FEAR and the whole bit, but I knew at once how silly that would be. Speed was utterly beside the point. For in that single moment of candor, mercy, and completely voluntary song, driving briskly but no more than briskly in a you-know-what with my you-know-who (and toward the ever looming God-knows-where), I was right at the place I had always wanted to be. ■



THE REVISION THING

A history of the Iraq war, told entirely in lies

By Sam Smith

All text is verbatim from senior Bush Administration officials and advisers. In places, tenses have been changed for clarity.

Once again, we were defending both ourselves and the safety and survival of civilization itself. September 11 signaled the arrival of an entirely different era. We faced perils we had never thought about, perils we had never seen before. For decades, terrorists had waged war against this country. Now, under the leadership of President Bush, America would wage war against them. It was a struggle between good and it was a struggle between evil.

It was absolutely clear that the number-one threat facing America was from Saddam Hussein. We know that Iraq and Al Qaeda had high-level contacts that went back a decade. We learned that Iraq had trained Al Qaeda members in bomb making and deadly gases. The regime had long-standing and continuing ties to terrorist organizations. Iraq and Al Qaeda had discussed safe-haven opportunities in Iraq. Iraqi officials denied accusations of ties with Al Qaeda. These denials simply were not credible. You couldn't distinguish between Al Qaeda and Saddam when you talked about the war on terror.

The fundamental question was, did Saddam Hussein have a weapons program? And the answer was, absolutely. His regime had large, unaccounted-for stockpiles of chemical and biological weapons—including VX, sarin, cyclosarin, and mustard gas, anthrax, botulism, and possibly smallpox. Our conservative estimate was that Iraq then had a stockpile of between 100 and 500 tons of chemical-weapons agent. That was enough agent to fill 16,000 battlefield rockets. We had sources that told us that Saddam Hussein recently authorized Iraqi field commanders to use chemical weapons—the very weapons the dictator told the world he did not have. And according to the British government, the Iraqi regime could launch a biological or chemical attack in as little as forty-five minutes after the orders were given. There could be no doubt that Saddam Hussein had biological weapons and the capability to rapidly produce more, many more.

Iraq possessed ballistic missiles with a likely range of hundreds of miles—far enough to strike Saudi Arabia, Israel, Turkey, and other nations. We also discovered through intelligence that Iraq had a growi fleet of manned and unmanned ae al vehicles that could be used to d perse chemical or biological weapo across broad areas. We were co cerned that Iraq was exploring wa of using UAVs for missio targeting the United Stat

Saddam Hussein was determin to get his hands on a nuclear bom We knew he'd been absolutely d voted to trying to acquire nucle weapons, and we believed he had, fact, reconstituted nuclear weapo The British government learn that Saddam Hussein had recen sought significant quantities of u nium from Africa. Our intelligen sources told us that he had attem ed to purchase high-strength a minum tubes suitable for nucle weapons production. When t inspectors first went into Iraq a were denied—finally denied acce a report came out of the [Intern tional Atomic Energy Agency] th they were six months away from veloping a weapon. I didn't kn what more evidence we needed.

Facing clear evidence of peril, could not wait for the final pr that could come in the form o mushroom cloud. The Iraqi dicta could not be permitted to threat America and the world with horri

Sam Smith is editor of the Progressive Review.

sons and diseases and gases and mic weapons. Inspections would t work. We gave him a chance to ow the inspectors in, and he uldn't let them in. The burden s on those people who thought he n't have weapons of mass destruction to tell the world where they were.

We waged a war to save civilizan itself. We did not seek it, but we ught it, and we prevailed. We ght them and imposed our will on m and we captured or, if necesy, killed them until we had imsed law and order. The Iraqi ople were well on their way to edom. The scenes of free Iraqis lebrating in the streets, riding nerican tanks, tearing down the tues of Saddam Hussein in the nter of Baghdad were breathtak-



g. Watching them, one could not lp but think of the fall of the rlin Wall and the collapse of the n Curtain.

It was entirely possible that in q you had the most pro-American pulation that could be found anyere in the Arab world. If you re looking for a historical analo, it was probably closer to posteration France. We had the overwhelming support of the Iraqi people. Once we won, we got great support from everywhere.

The people of Iraq knew that every effort was made to spare innocent life, and to help Iraq recover from three decades of totalitarian rule. And plans were in place to provide Iraqis with massive amounts of food, as well as medicine and other essential supplies. The U.S. devoted unprecedented attention to humanitarian relief and the prevention of excessive damage to infrastructure and to unnecessary casualties.

The United States approached its postwar work with a two-part resolve: a commitment to stay and a commitment to leave. The United States had no intention of determining the precise form of Iraq's new government. That choice belonged to the Iraqi people. We have never been a colonial power. We do not leave behind occupying armies. We leave behind constitutions and parliaments. We don't take our force and go around the world and try to take other people's real estate or other people's resources, their oil. We never have and we never will.

The United States was not interested in the oil in that region. We were intent on ensuring that Iraq's oil resources remained under national Iraqi control, with the proceeds made available to support Iraqis in all parts of the country. The oil fields belonged to the people of Iraq, the government of Iraq, all of Iraq. We estimated that the potential income to the Iraqi people as a result of their oil could be somewhere in the $20 [billion] to $30 billion a year [range], and obviously, that would be money that would be used for their well-being. In other words, all of Iraq's oil belonged to all the people of Iraq.

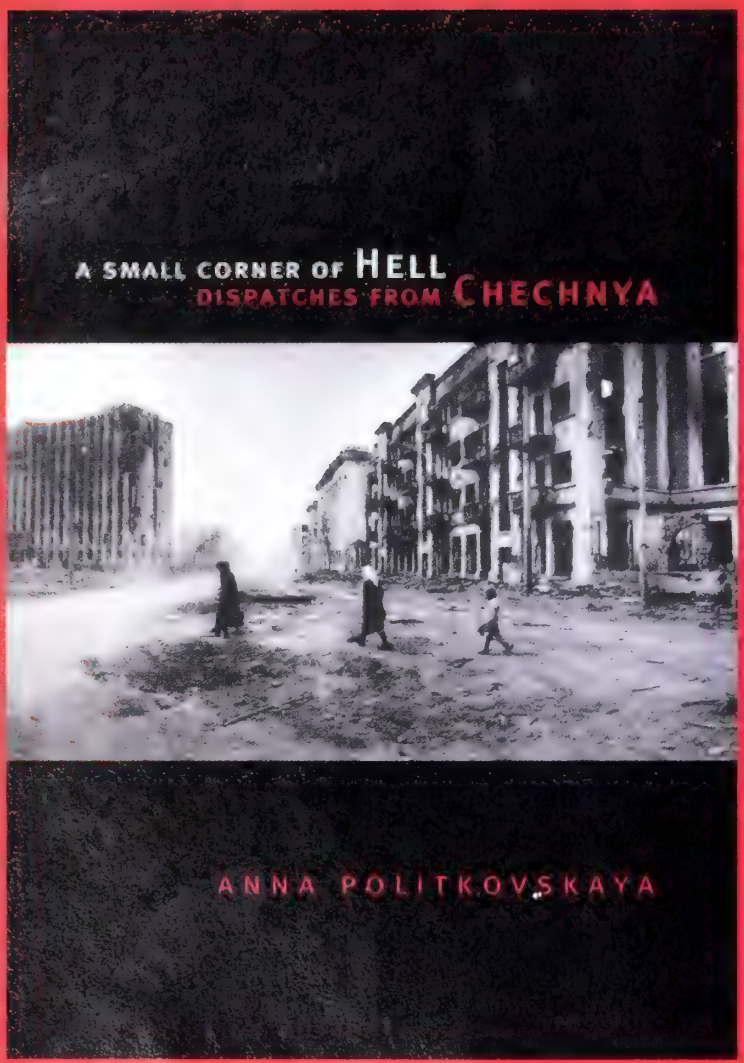
We found the weapons of mass destruction. We found biological laboratories. And we found more weapons as time went on. I never believed that we'd just tumble over weapons of mass destruction in that country. But for those who said we hadn't found the banned manufacturing devices or banned weapons, they were wrong, we found them. We knew where they were.

We changed the regime of Iraq for the good of the Iraqi people. We didn't want to occupy Iraq. War is a terrible thing. We've tried every other means to achieve objectives without a war because we understood what the price of a war can be and what it is. We sought peace. We strove for peace. Nobody, but nobody, was more reluctant to go to war than President Bush.

It is not right to assume that any current problems in Iraq can be attributed to poor planning. The number of U.S. forces in the Persian Gulf region dropped as a result of Operation Iraqi Freedom. This nation acted to a threat from the dictator of Iraq. There is a lot of revisionist history now going on, but one thing is certain—he is no longer a threat to the free world, and the people of Iraq are free. There's no doubt in my mind when it's all said and done, the facts will show the world the truth. There is absolutely no doubt in my mind. ■

tograph by Molly Bingham/WorldPictureNews

A new book by "Russia's least wanted journalist"



Translated by Alexander Burry and Tatiana Tulchinsky
With an Introduction by Georgi Derluguian

CLOTH $25.00

"In Chechnya, there is now just one lone Russian voice remaining to chronicle the lives of those embroiled in the killing and corruption that have become the hallmark of President Putin's efforts to bring the province under the control of Moscow. Her name is Anna Politkovskaya, and she is not about to give up the fight. . . . Few Russians want to read about how 75,000 of their crack troops are mired in a conflict against 3,000 active rebel fighters. Still less do they want to hear of atrocities carried out in their name by their own army."

David Hearst, *The Guardian**

"Often Anna Politkovskaya has been a solitary witness to a conflict in which there is no victory and no defeat, just a steady stream of misery and death, brutality and betrayal. . . . Ms. Politkovskaya is working for a Russian newspaper at a time when the Russian government has actively discouraged any independent reporting on the war. As a result, most other Russian reports are sporadic and tilted toward the official line. But she has gone back to Chechnya again and again, trying to perfect a method of war reporting that is difficult in the best of circumstances: getting both sides of the story."

Celestine Bohlen, *New York Times*

"Anna Politkovskaya is not a name known outside Russia. If President Putin had his way, she would not be known inside the country either."

***The Times*, London**

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FAT OF THE LAND

Dale Boone at the frontiers of gluttony

By Frederick Kaufman

. . . an hungry man dreameth, and, be-ld, he eateth; but he awaketh, and his ul is empty . . .

—Isaiah, 29:8

Dale Boone can eat anything, and ts of it. He holds titles in reindeer usage (28 in ten min-es) and Russian beef mplings (274 in six inutes). On this eautiful morning in hattanooga, Ten-essee, it's hot dogs. oone is supremely nfident. Last night e prepped himself at a ffet: boiled cabbage, rnip greens, carrots, rn, nothing heavy. ow his stomach is retched and ready. is boots are shiny ew, his overalls fresh-ironed. Because he a showman, and be-use he is in the line Daniel Boone, he ears a coonskin cap.

"Yeeeeee-haw!" he says. "This is the st I've felt in a long time."

The camera crews have already egun to assemble in front of the ree long tables pulled across the rking lot of Coney's Deli Cafe. anners stamped with the Nathan's mous logo cover the tables, which have not been set with mustard, relish, or anything remotely resembling the fixings for a hot dog. All that's on these tables is a dozen clear plastic pitchers of water, there to augment the competitive saliva.

Boone, six feet tall and 280 pounds, struts around Coney's parking lot, pausing only to jawbone the TV crews or pose for snapshots. Meanwhile, behind the Nathan's tables, a sound guy fiddles with banks of speakers as George Shea, chairman of the International Federation of Competitive Eating, presses his straw boater onto his slick black hair and smooths his golden tie.

"This is the beginning of the journey," he says.



What Shea means is that today's contest in Chattanooga is the first of an eighteen-event international qualifying series in which amateurs and professionals from Europe, the Pacific Rim, and America can qualify for the 88th Annual Fourth of July Hot Dog Eating Contest held on the Boardwalk of Coney Island—the World Cup of food bolting. The gurgitator who emerges victorious in Coney's parking lot in Chattanooga today will get the chance to battle for the mustard-colored world-championship belt at the real Coney Island. There they will also face the current champion, a five foot seven, 132-pound Japanese "food fighter" named Takeru Kobayashi, who, as far as anyone knows, has eaten more hot dogs faster than anyone else on earth: fifty and a half hot dogs and buns in twelve minutes.

For Shea, the yearly calendar revolves around that Fourth of July contest. A long-time public-relations guy, Shea has been on the Nathan's account since 1988, when he began assisting legendary Coney Island press agent Max Rosey (the man who married couples in diving bells, crowned gefilte-fish queens, put

rederick Kaufman's review "Our Daily read" appeared in the January 2000 issue.

ustration by Olivier Kugler

elephants on water skis). When Rosey died in 1990, Shea took over the hot-dog eating contest, and in 1997, when Shea opened his own firm, he took Nathan's with him. That same year, Shea and his brother, Rich, created the IFOCE, which now sanctions more than 150 annual eating events worldwide. Under the guardianship of the Sheas, corporate sponsorship of competitive eating has increased and multiplied. For the Fourth alone, Nathan's has been joined by French's Mustard, Orbitz.com, and an online gaming casino called Betwwts.com, which handicaps the event.

Some might compare the Shea brothers' IFOCE to Vince McMahon's WWF. According to George Shea, nothing could be further from the truth: "It's uncontrolled," he insists, and what emerges from all his talk of "long-distance eaters," "cross-discipline competitors," "good hands," and "stomach strength" is that he really believes competitive eating is a sport. More to Shea's liking than the WWF comparison is the analogy to professional basketball in its early days.

Either way, competitive eating has just begun to glimpse its own gaudy future. Over the past two years, front-page stories have appeared in the *Wall Street Journal* and the *Los Angeles Times*. *The Glutton Bowl* premiered on Fox Television, *Gutbusters* and *Battle of the Buffets* on the Discovery Channel and the Travel Channel, respectively. When Eric "Badlands" Booker set the new world record in matzo balls (twenty-one in five minutes), it made the CNN news crawl. Disciplines now include chicken wings in Philadelphia, jalapeños in Laredo, crawfish in Baton Rouge, oysters in New Orleans, conch fritters in Key West, and chili in Reno. It is a continent-wide spectacle of self-immolating power. Not since the glory days of goldfish-swallowing has the sport annexed such a large portion of the country's collective delirium. And so the IFOCE sanctions a gamut of increasingly baroque competitions in fields such as cow brains, sticks of butter, and straight mayonnaise.

Shea Communications operates out of a loft space in Manhattan replete with hardwood floors and black-turtlenecked staff in ergonomic chairs, the typical offices of a boutique ad agency or some actor's production company (the IFOCE is itself represented by the William Morris Agency). "Seven million people watched *The Glutton Bowl*," Rich Shea noted two weeks before Chattanooga, as we sat around the conference table.

"There's a reverence for this as history," said George.

"These are the pioneers," said Rich.

Dale Boone has come to Tennessee with his mother. She stands off to the side of Coney's parking lot, beaming as her boy makes the rounds.

"I have three sons, and he's the youngest," Cathy Boone says. "One's with antique furniture, the other with the government, in small arms. Getting all those guns and things ready to go."

Dale is more of a talker, getting all those reporters and things ready to go. "Dale Boone has offended the entire city," George Shea informs the herd of local press. "He has told me in private conversation, 'I'm gonna open up a can of whup-ass on these dyspeptics and stomach staplers in Chattanooga.'"

Scribble, scribble, go the reporters. Yet Shea is careful to let them know that Chattanooga does indeed have hope in the form of a hometown hero—James "Chew Chew" Phillips—who will be here any minute now for exclusive interviews.

"I can't wait to see Chew Chew," snarls Boone. But Chew Chew isn't anywhere to be seen. In fact, Coney's parking lot is surprisingly devoid of eaters. Dale Boone may have to compete against himself, which is just fine with him.

Then, a sideshow. The dented, honking Toyota Camry of Kevin Lipsitz pulls into the lot. He has driven down from Staten Island, thirteen hours straight. Two years ago, Lipsitz reigned as pickle-eating champion of the world. Pickles are one of the most demanding foods to eat fast. Aside from pH issues, they require a strong jaw, sharp teeth.

"I can't believe he's here," mutte
Boone. "Oh, that really hurts me
thought this would be a simple one

First thing Lipsitz does is let t
dogs out of the back. Although t
IFOCE has refused Lipsitz's requ
for a sanctioned event between h
mans and canines, Lipsitz still trai
with his dogs. Only after Sabri
and Rascal have marked the corn
of Coney's parking lot does Lips
approach Boone. They exchan
gunslinger scowls.

"What you doin' in my territor
asks Boone.

"You went to Philadelphia," cou
ters Lipsitz, citing what was clear
to aficionados, a well-known offen
"It's payback time."

The cameras swarm for mc
bravado, but Boone and Lipsitz a
running out of invective. Lucki
Chew Chew Phillips chooses th
moment to show up. Tall, thin, a
bearded, from East Ridge, Te
nessee, Chew Chew has pulled h
long, straight blond hair back int
ponytail. Last night, he took do
eight plates from a Biloxi buffet a
two large pizzas, just to keep l
edge. There is a term that descril
such a solitary eater. Teeth sharp
razors, hands like mandibles, he
known as The Locust. "He's t
eater who doesn't come into t
fold," George Shea says. "He's out
the hinterlands. He eats for himsel

Every once in a while an eating c
test in the middle of nowhere will
tract a genuine Locust. He is the p
fessional gurgitator's greatest fear.

Plates with five hot dogs ea
have begun to emerge from Cone
kitchen. A few more amateur eat
have shown up, signed IFOCE
leases, and dutifully begun to m
behind the tables. A paltry crowd
Eastgate Mall refugees, attracted
the TV cameras, shuffles into pla
Two oxygen-tank-toting EMS g
stand by, just in case. Shea switch
on his microphone.

"In these uncertain times of terr
ism and economic malaise, fundam
tal sports allow us to show our love
nation. I was saddened to hear D
Boone's long diatribe of hate and
riol against the good people of Ch
tanooga. The braggadocio and tone
disdain disappointed me." Shea paus

ıope we can use the competitive-
ng table to heal the wounds."
The small crowd actually breaks into
ronic cheers. The producers from
and the NBC affiliate zoom in.
I think Chew Chew is a great
ıerican," proclaims Shea. "And
t is the most fundamental quality
competitive eater."
The gurgitators line up behind the
le. Standing increases capacity, so
re are no chairs. Now they begin
ir final warmups: Lipsitz the pickle
mp smears his face and neck with
er from each of the dozen plastic
chers. Chew Chew, reveling in
netown adoration, holds clenched
; above his head like a prizefighter.

Dale Boone leans down,
licks a hot dog, and sneers.

n the last five months, Dale Boone
traveled to Anchorage, Alaska,
ıed a documentary for Discovery,
:n to New York several times,
ladelphia, St. Louis. He flew to Los
geles to tape a game show.
Ie now counts among his friends
h IFOCE circuit luminaries as "Cookie" Jarvis, who can inhale twenty-one cannoli in six minutes; "Hungry" Charles Hardy, who works in Corrections at Rikers Island and can devour fifteen feet of sushi in 120 minutes; Eric "Badlands" Booker, a six six, 460-pound New York City subway conductor who can demolish fifteen burritos in eight minutes; "Gentleman" Joe Menchetti, who holds the world conch-fritter record (forty-five in six minutes); and griddle king Jason "Crazy Legs" Conti (three pounds, seven ounces, of sourdough pancakes in twelve minutes).

"I'm living one of my secret dreams right now," Boone says. "It's awesome. It's indescribable."

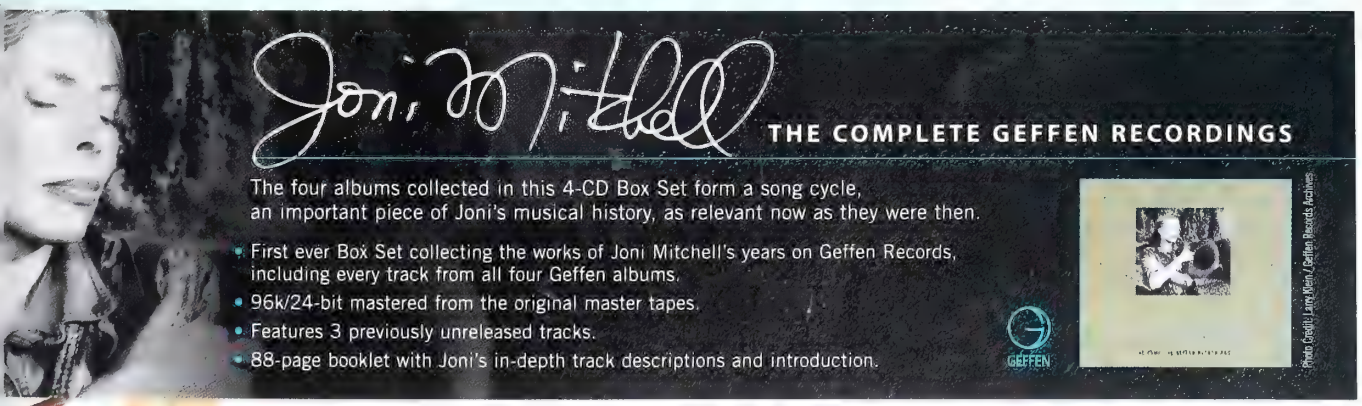
Ever since he was a little boy, everyone had told him to slow down and taste his food. Everyone, that is, except his uncle. Daniel Homer Boone was a tremendous eater, so thorough and unmerciful in his feedings that he was banned from several buffets in Asheville, North Carolina. Daniel Homer measured six feet eleven inches tall and weighed 435 pounds. His wife, on the other hand, was one inch shy of four feet.

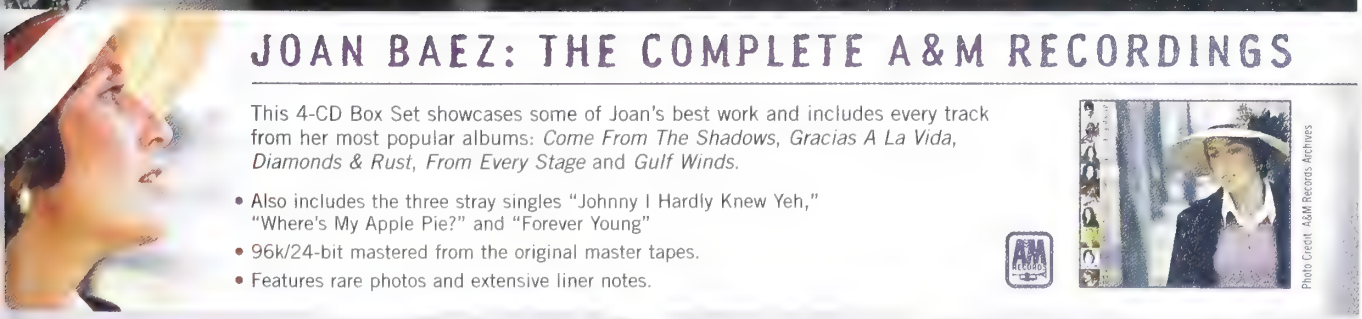
Dale Boone was the only person who could keep up with his uncle. "He taught me how to hold a lot of capacity. He was a very big fried-chicken eater. Like I am today."

Watermelon was Dale Boone's first competitive event, at the annual Locust Grove Day in Locust Grove, Georgia. Grand prize: a six-pack of Coca-Cola. The year was 1991, and Boone had just graduated from Georgia Tech with a degree in electrical engineering. He lost to a twelve-year-old. "It got me going. I had to come back and prove myself the next year and the next year. And here's a little known fact. I have never won the Locust Grove watermelon eating contest."

Dale Boone believes he reached peak eating speeds at twenty-one, and he won pizza eating contests and wild-turkey eating contests and whatever else could be put on a plate eating contests in and around Atlanta until he retired from stunt eating, married, opened his own business, and became a vegetarian.

Music That Matters

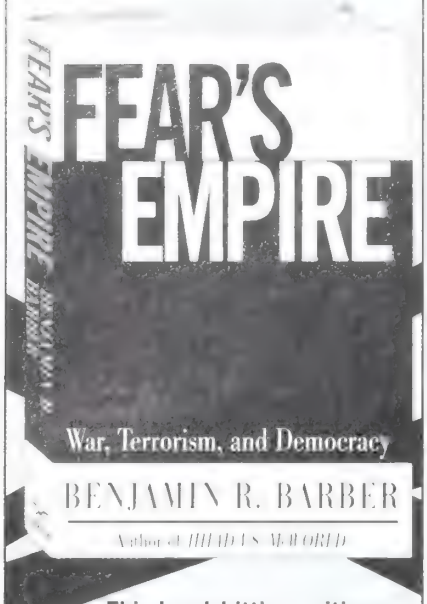




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But just as the pioneer Daniel Boone abandoned Boonesboro late in life to settle ever newer territories, the gurgitator Dale Boone could not deny the imperatives of his roving metabolism. In April 2002, Atlanta's 790 AM, "The Zone," announced three eating contests in a single day, to take place right there at the station, broadcast to the world. Doughnuts in the morning, pigs' feet in the afternoon, chicken wings at night. Dale Boone had made no conscious decision to come out of retirement. Still, it was inevitable that on the day of the contest the infamous "Mouth from the South" would somehow, some way, be impelled to the broadcast studio. "I just happened to show up for the doughnut contest, and I guarantee you, the people at the table did not weigh under 300 pounds. Very big boys. They were ready to eat."

Dale Boone discovered his old form was intact. He devastated a dozen Krispy Kremes in two minutes, walked away with the prize, and that afternoon returned for contest number two.

"It was one pig's foot and sixteen ounces of very sour buttermilk. Next thing I know, contest started, bang! It took me nine seconds. *Nine seconds!*"

After two straight wins he *had* to hang around for the hot wings. He knew he could eat faster than anyone else in the state and wasn't the least bit intimidated by the 350-pounder from the University of Georgia who rolled into the studio. And everything went according to plan. Dale Boone was swallowing number twenty-nine while the opposition was still gnawing number five. "The hot sauce was hitting him," Boone reminisced. "His face was like five or six shades of red. I took the last one, I wiggled it in his face. I said, 'Come on, fat boy,' and then just finished it off and threw it down." Dale Boone thus became the undisputed AM-radio champion eater of Atlanta.

Still, he was not satisfied. He had heard of other eating contests, brimming tables beyond the borders of Georgia and the Carolinas. America's borders might be set, our forests and their inhabitants destroyed, but, deep in his gut, Dale Boone knew howling wilderness of American fro tier was still out there, waiting to conquered. So he enlisted in a legi of other stunted avatars of indust alists, frontiersmen, and founders w journey from state to state despi their knowledge that the frontier is longer an exterior but an interi space. Freak product of Americ evolution, they are the gestive imperialists.

Boone got on the Internet a soon discovered www.ifoce.com. luck would have it, the Shea broth were organizing a Coney Island qu ifier in Atlanta later that year, Boone began to prepare. He imagin himself the incarnation of Americ eating, so he put together a spec uniform: A shirt and a pair of pa made up entirely of American flag

Boone rented a limousine w screech horns, and on the day of lanta's first IFOCE-sanctioned h dog eating contest, he emerged fr that limo brandishing Americ flags in each hand. "All the came focused on me," he recalled. "Eve body was rooting me on."

He looked and sounded unst pable, but the fact was that Dale Bo had made a rookie mistake. He h not eaten the night before. His sto ach was not, as professional gurgi tors like to say, stretched and ready

"The contest started and it was v hot. I was feeling really giddy. L thing I remembered I did fifteen h dogs and I think he said I was on f minutes. The grease hit me. It hit very hard. And I mean very hard got so nauseated I couldn't even straight. I couldn't even think straig

The excitement and the heat h put too much stress on Dale Boon system. And stomachs have a mind their own. True, he had no one blame but himself. Still, it was brut Rich Shea remembers one of the jud commenting that Boone was eati "in an unsafe fashion." Next thing a one knew, it was—to quote D Boone—"regurgitation at the tabl

"Everybody's heart just sank. Y could hear it in the crowd. Th couldn't believe what happened."

Boone retreated to his limousi in disgrace. And that evening,

his wife had a long, serious dis-
ion about his future as an eater.
old her, 'Look, I really have a
nce to win this thing.'" But there
only one qualifier for Coney Is-
l left in 2002, and it would be
l in Philadelphia.

oone had vowed not to give up
hat mustard-yellow belt, and he
embered his heroic ancestor,
) never lost hope. Taken prisoner
Indians in May 1769, Daniel
ne escaped in the middle of the
nt to wander the "wildness" of
ntucky, stricken with "dreadful
rehensions." But one morning,
n the summit of Pilot Knob, he
red through the blue haze down
he banks of the Ohio and vowed
nake the land his own.

)ale Boone told his wife, "I'm go-
to fly myself to Philadelphia."

n the weeks before the event,
)ne trained hard at a place on Bu-
l Highway called the Old Coun-
Buffet. Here, between gallons of
er and endless servings of boiled
bage, he ruminated over his de-
. Skipping dinner had done him
so he determined never to let
n a thing happen again. He ap-
ached the manager of the Old
ntry Buffet and learned to his re-
that there was an Old Country
fet in Philadelphia too. Right
)ss the street from the Home De-
where the hot-dog eating contest
ld be held.

They arranged everything for
" said Boone. "So I got a chance
at."

t was in Philadelphia that Boone
encountered the then reigning
kle-eating world champion,
vin Lipsitz—and pounded him
l everyone else at the table. It
k eighteen hot dogs and buns, but
)ne left town with a trophy and a
ranteed spot at the table on Inde-
dence Day.

)n the Fourth, Boone demon-
ted a capacity for greatness. In
gitator parlance, he hit the
ce—twenty hot dogs and buns in
lve minutes. He did not beat
keru Kobayashi, but to call
bayashi the Tiger Woods of his
rt would be to insult Takeru
)ayashi. Kobayashi eats on a level
eternal grandeur. No one

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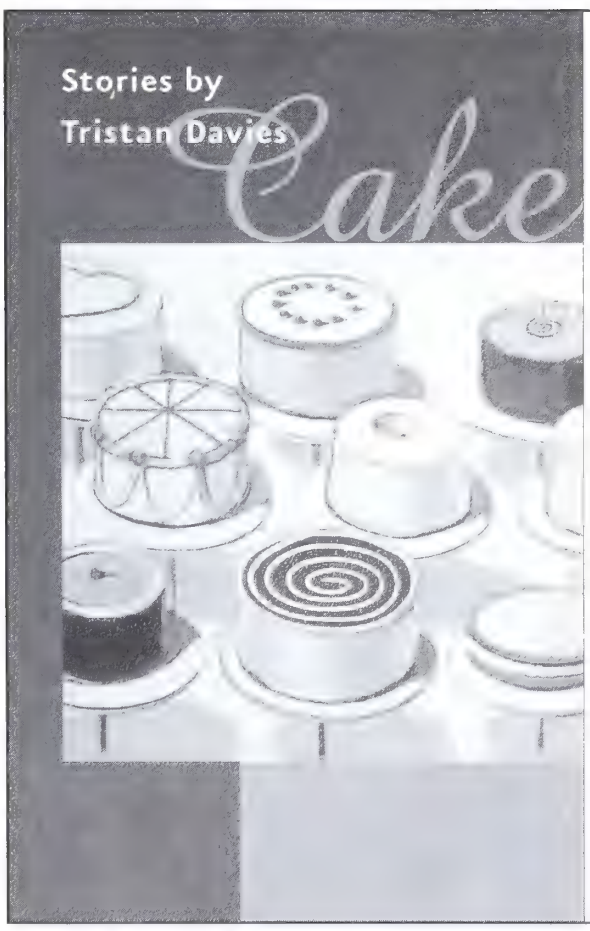


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appetite he's lost. If beating Kobayashi were what drove competitive eaters, there would be no sport.

Boone now ranks ninth worldwide in the latest issue of *The Gurgitator*, the IFOCE's official newsletter (circulation: forty-three), and is the front-runner for IFOCE "Rookie of the Year" honors. His colleagues are the greatest eaters in America. He's learned all the secrets. He doesn't make rookie mistakes. And he has come to Chattanooga because it is the business of his life to eat as many hot dogs as he possibly can as fast as he possibly can. Dale Boone's dream—the dream he is living—is the dream of endless, involuntary process. When he eats, he touches the infinite.

Noon, and dogs are on the table. George Shea goes over the rules: As many hot dogs as possible in twelve minutes. Hot dogs may be eaten separately from buns, but in order to "count," both hot dog and hot-dog bun must be consumed. No utensils, no "unsafe" eating, no "sleepers" (abandoning a hot dog in the middle of the competition table), no "mules" (placing a hot dog on the plate of an accomplice), no drugs. "Even a Zantac is forbidden," Shea says.

The contest begins. Immediately, Dale Boone's cold-blooded mastery of the art and science of eating hot dogs becomes evident. He scoops up a dog, snaps it in two (the "Solomon method"), and gobbles both halves at once while dunking the bun with a quick twist of the wrist. As he eats he dances to some secret rhythm, shaking his booty as he clears his first plate.

He's smiling, confident, the old pro. He eats so quickly and so smoothly the food does not seem to be in any way foreign to his body. "When I'm thirsty," roared Mark Twain's Mississippi River man, "I reach up and suck a cloud dry like a sponge."

Kevin Lipsitz stuffs three hot dogs into his mouth as murky water pours down his chin and arms. "I eat very healthy at home," he said before the contest. "Carrot juice, organic salads. It's like a treat when I come do this."

The photographers close in.

Boone, who has evaporated ten dogs and buns in the first four minutes of the contest, has already moved on to his third plate. He pulls up his sleeves as he chews and peers at Lipsitz. Boone knows ten hot dogs will not be enough, but he still needs to gauge the opposition. No need to go too fast, no need to press the nausea, no need to hit the deuce if sixteen or seventeen will do.

Another minute goes by. The spectators have grown quiet, expectant.

"Concentration . . . ," Shea whispers into the microphone. He, too, remembers that terrible afternoon in Atlanta. "Dale has a hair-trigger stomach. I wish it weren't so."

Now children clutch their parents' necks, suck their pacifiers, turn away.

"Mount Boone may erupt!"

A fear-laced fascination envelops the crowd, and they watch the table as they would the fateful proceedings of calamity. The seething and gurgling Mount Boone, like the frontier's legendary Billy Earthquake and Colonel Nimrod Wildfire, has become natural disaster incarnate.

He's downed more than a dozen dogs.

The unforgiving eight-minute mark arrives and, after swallowing a mere four and a half hot dogs and buns, a discouraged and thoroughly discredited Chew Chew stops eating. The betrayed crowd jeers, but Chew Chew just looks at Dale Boone, shakes his head, turns his back to the table, and walks away.

Only one of the amateurs remains. His name is Kelvin Bedford, and he received his gastronomic education and training in classic imperialist style, as a gunner's mate in the United States Navy. Bedford is focused, efficient, and brutal. No matter how many hot dogs Boone crams down his throat, Kelvin Bedford keeps up. He matches number thirteen with number thirteen. Boone immediately begins to press number fourteen past his lips as he scowls at Bedford, but Bedford's not looking at anyone. He has closed his eyes. Now Boone realizes he is facing a Locust, and turns his own eyes to the clear, blue, indifferent sky.

Kevin Lipsitz, meanwhile, is holding third place. But he has entered a separate realm. His jaws crank open and shut like automated pincers, his hands clench decomposing, dripping buns.

Is this disgusting? No matter. P fessional gurgitators personify disg It is their job to channel the wh vengeful host of homicidal Ameri eaters, the fabled legions of Wolveri and Suckers and Corncrackers, fr the infamous and despicable fr tiersman Mike Fink ("I can swal niggers whole, raw, or cooked") to legendary man on William Street v "ate beef till he had horns grow ou his forehead."

One minute, eighteen seconds main, but neither Boone, Bedfo nor Lipsitz will quit. The Navy n stands at attention, lips purs cheeks swollen to the bursting po seeking some way to power do number fourteen.

He is Chattanooga's only rema ing hope. The crowd pleads, t scream desperate encouragem but Kelvin Bedford is drowning fourteen hot dogs and there is n ing anyone can do to help.

Dale Boone lurches forward, s lows, and thrusts hot dog number teen past his lips. His hands slam table, his head flops down, and coonskin cap rolls to the pavem Yet somehow, some way, he h his food. Bowed in peristaltic pra his bald head shines wet and w in the southern sun.

Twelve minutes are up. The c test is over. First comes silence, a g awful silence. Then a ferocious wh rises and reverberates from Blockbu to Kinko's to Blimpie's to Chili's.

"Yeeeeee-haw!"

And then Daniel Boone's gr great-great-great-great-great-gr grandson becomes the center of t parking lot in Tennessee. Surrou ed by television cameras, mic phones, and newspaper reporters kisses the huge, four-column multi-tiered trophy. "I was in tro until I caught that burp," he says was making me cry."

Finally, his last interview o Dale Boone walks through the d of Coney's Deli Cafe. George S sits in a corner booth, eating lu talking business with Stuart Ros thal, the owner of Coney's. Rosen is pleased. "I think we're going t this semi-annually," he says. S suggests beef tongue in the spr no utensils. Or giant hard-boiled

h eggs, which make an excellent ual. Rosenthal nods. Then they ice Boone.

Congratulations, Dale," says Shea. Want something to eat?" asks senthal.

Boone surveys the restaurant, n the revolving displays of white- sted strawberry cheesecake to the at, glass-encased wedges of ned beef, pastrami, and smoked key. On top of a shiny metal grill ate dozens of Nathan's Famous dogs. "America's Favorite Hot g," reads the sign. Metabolism akes. The world is all before it. le Boone's dream revives, and his uth, slave to involuntary im- se, murmurs its unfailing desire.

"You got ice cream?" ■

tober Index Sources

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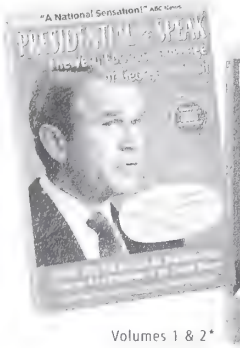


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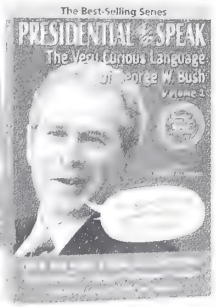
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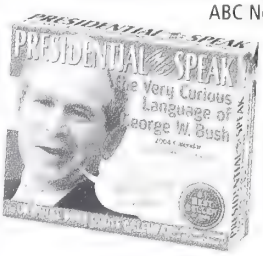
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Throughout its much-touted missions in Afghanistan and Iraq, the U.S. military has enjoyed perhaps its greatest acclaim among Americans since the Greatest Generation shipped off to World War II. But seldom recognized are the more than 21,000 workers who manufacture much of what the U.S. fighting man wears into battle—from the helmet on his head to the shirt on his back, to his underwear and his pajamas, to the robes of his military pastor and the gowns of his battlefield surgeon. If one peers closely into the clothes and accoutrements of a U.S. soldier, one might perceive, in the seams and hems and weaves, the unflagging endeavor of the workers back home who construct them. One might scent the sweat of the men and women who, in 111 facilities from Miami to Phoenix to Sandstone, Minnesota, work in the service of their country not for glory, or for personal gain, but simply because they are compelled to do so.



These craftspeople work ceaselessly, never pausing to savor victory. In April, as U.S. soldiers helped to pull down the statue of Saddam in Baghdad's al-Fardus Square, 265 federal prisoners in the sleepy burg of Greenville, Illinois, near the shores of Governor Bond Lake, continued to produce 1,000 of these battle-dress uniform shirts every single day. Scores of inmates at the prison shop in Edgefield, in South Carolina peach country, spend their days repairing uniforms that have been torn. At prison laundries in Florida, Alabama, and Texas, soiled uniforms are cleaned and pressed, then returned to nearby bases. When necessary, prisoners have been engaged to make flak jackets and even to repair damaged parachutes. The men and women who do this work expect little reward: their pay is 23¢ to $1.15 per hour. With the nation at war, they have only freedom on their minds.

"City of Opportunity" is the apt motto of Seagoville, Texas, where the low-security federal prison bestows on its residents, roughly three fourths of whom are in on drug charges, the opportunity to churn out these desert battle trousers. The mobilization of such men and women nationwide is accomplished by Federal Prison Industries (FPI), a for-profit corporation owned by the U.S. government. FPI, the federal government's thirty-ninth largest contractor, sells more than $400 million worth of products annually to the military. Since its founding in 1934, FPI has enjoyed "mandatory source" status, which means that federal agencies are required to buy from the company even if the same item can be purchased cheaper elsewhere. FPI's goal is to keep 25 percent of the federal prison population as busy as possible, and as that population has grown—by a factor of five, in fact, since 1984, due in large part to the War on Drugs—both FPI's product lines and its sales have expanded admirably.

TRIPES

ction, *by Ian Urbina*



In Beaumont, Texas, amid lush Gulf Coast rice fields, 300 inmates have made 150,000 of these Kevlar helmets in the past two years, more than $11 million worth. Despite such valuable contributions, there are some who denigrate the work of these men and women as bad for America. One critic is Propper International, a St. Louis–based company whose non-incarcerated workers make the same trousers as FPI, and offer them to the military for $2.39 less per pair. Another is organized labor, which complains that jobs are being lost to an employer that pays its workers a sub-minimum wage; does not pay taxes, benefits, or Social Security; and is not bound by OSHA guidelines. But former attorney general Edwin Meese, now chairman of an organization called the Enterprise Prison Institute, disagrees, noting that prisoners need something "constructive to do." Meese is a natural mentor for these workers, in that he helped to create the federal drug policy that has allowed so many of them to land their jobs in the first place.

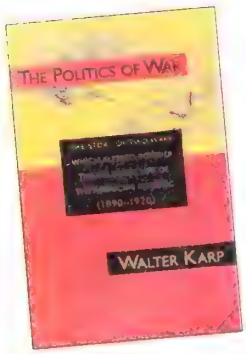
One area of growth has been electronics, such as components for these microphone headsets. Electronics are made in fourteen FPI factories, employing some 3,000 men and women from Lompoc, on California's Central Coast, all the way up to Otisville, New York, in the foothills of the Catskills. FPI's factories are the ultimate American melting pot. For example, two of the conspirators in the 1993 World Trade Center bombing—Mohammad Salameh and Mahmud Abouhalima—say that even they were pressed to serve in the FPI factories at Leavenworth. Like Salameh and Abouhalima, three in ten federal inmates are not legal residents of the United States. Some people have alleged that the U.S. war effort in Iraq received inadequate support from citizens of other nations; but such cynics might consider the demonstrable support that foreign nationals lent that effort inside the nation's own prisons.

Although our prisoners are not yet allowed to manufacture guns, they do supply components for artillery, from 30mm pistols all the way up to 300mm antiaircraft weapons. In Marion, Illinois, inmates manufactured cable assemblies for the Patriot missiles that proved so decisive in the 1991 Gulf War. Having removed regimes in Afghanistan and Iraq, the United States nevertheless faces a world still fraught with danger, and in the subduing of that world, the prison workers of FPI form a secure line of supply. Today, new foes lurk on the horizon, some of which possess even more secure lines of supply than we—North Korea, for example, with hundreds of thousands of prison laborers, or China, with millions. In the face of such adversaries, one cannot doubt that America's prisons will grow to meet the challenge.

Ian Urbina is a reporter at the New York Times. *Previously he was an associate editor at the Middle East Research and Information Project.*

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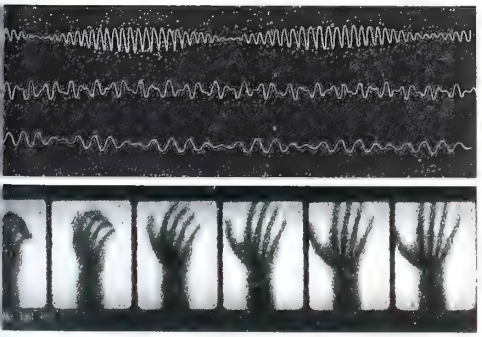
EW BOOKS

John Leonard



et us begin this month's sermon by thinking big. In BIOCOSM: THE NEW SCIENTIFIC THEOF EVOLUTION: INTELLIGENT IS THE ARCHITECT OF THE VERSE (Inner Ocean, $17.95), es N. Gardner, on his excited way black hole where a "baby uni-" will shortly be hatched to house anshuman rapture," rhapsodizes it everything from the explosive ation of stars, planets, and "autolytic webs of complex carbon-based mers" to string theory, wormholes, death, and "symbiogenesis."

efore editing reviews of science ks for *The Sunday Oregonian* and ing articles for the *Wall Street Jour*the *Journal of the British Interplany Society*, and *WIRED*, Gardner a student of biology and philosoat Yale, a law clerk, and a state sen. He describes himself now as an ateur cosmologist." And his par-



ılar cosmos is not in the least ran- or contingent; it is emphatically posseful: "finely tuned," "just-so," dly hospitable," "too perfectly suit-" "adhering with unreasonable precision to beautifully ordered and intricately interrelated mathematical principles," "cunningly structured in such a way as to coax the emergence of life and intelligence from inanimate matter," and "literally in the process of coming to life."

This is the best popular account I've seen of the argument for "intelligent design": So many odds were against us, surely we weren't just lucky! (Never mind for a moment that this argument, which is also what creationists wear after they've gone to a good college, is narcissistic: Look how wonderfully complex we are, with nobody to notice except our brilliant selves! How can we not embody a transcendent meaning?) Gardner writes while strapped into a pair of jet-propelled sneakers, fueled by his own enthusiasms. Even when, in order to rehabilitate Teilhard de Chardin's noosphere and Henri Bergson's élan vital, he must badmouth such betters as Peter Medawar and Stephen Jay Gould, his tap dance makes an agreeable commotion. He is a *fan* of the universe—of Big Bangs and Point Omegas, parsecs and Calabi-Yau spaces, mitochondria and memes—and his pep rallies are contagious.

But he goes too far. After promoting a convergence of complexity theory, computer simulation, artificial life, meat/machine interface (a "hybridization of biology and engineering"), and biospheric Gaia guff, he speculates himself into a radiant evolutionary future. It's a brand-new six-dimensional universe, and it's entirely populated by "superminds" who come into sudden brilliant being after some *Homo sap* experiment in the distant primitive past—a botched try, maybe, at tapping a black hole for cheap energy—implodes all over the space-time continuum. Intelligence will go on, but without us.

Well, it is certainly pretty to think so. But wishful thinking is more theology than it is science. Every scrap of evidence marshaled in *Biocosm* for intelligent design can be read as evidence of the opposite: We might equally suppose that—as an accidental by-product, or a meaningless epiphenomenon, or maybe even a consequence of a lack of antiseptic precautions on the part of the cosmos—this particular physical universe permitted the weedy development of carbon-based life-forms that grew up to ask

ting of a spiral of galaxies, 1907 © Mary Evans Picture Library. Diagram of patterns made by sound waves from *onde physique*, 1882, and an X ray of a hand in motion from *La Nature*, 1911, published in *Exploring the Invisi-Art, Science, and the Spiritual*, by Lynn Gamwell, Princeton University Press, 2002.

[illegible] patterns, and fear death. Why is it so hard to imagine ourselves alone, and obliged to make up meaning as we go along? Sunsets, Ingrid Bergmans, and Bach cantatas are no less beautiful if they're not God's fault. And if our career in conscious time is brief, then it ought to be more precious, and our stewardship more steadfast, and our mercies more numerous, and our grace more abounding, before the big sleep.

Grace is what Elisabeth Sifton's remarkable new book is all about. And wisdom. And courage. THE SERENITY PRAYER: FAITH AND POLITICS IN TIMES OF PEACE AND WAR (Norton, $24.95) is partly a biographical sketch of Sifton's father, Reinhold Niebuhr, the scholar and theologian who, although born in the American Midwest, didn't speak English till junior high school and dreamed in German into his twenties; partly an account of the famous prayer he wrote in 1943, which has been wrongly attributed since to Stoics, rabbis, Swabian Pietists, and St. Francis of Assisi; partly a memoir of Sifton's childhood summers in a New England farming village she seems to have preferred to her wintry digs near the Union Theological Seminary in New York City; partly a group portrait of liberal intellectuals who agitated against social injustice wherever they found it before everybody went "public" for a cable-TV gig; and partly a meditation on Protestantism in America (stirring hymns, artless churches, dogma, and "sloth") that includes Sifton's own spiritual exercise (a kind of "patient vigilance") down through the decades during which, at publishing houses like Viking, Knopf, and Farrar, Straus and Giroux, she has edited some of the smartest books of our time.



These are too many territories for one volume. Even as we want to linger over and argue about the back of the hand she gives to Catholicism, pacifism, and "people with no religious imagination," we are wondering how many years of useful work her father lost from the strokes that began in 1952, while we are being distracted by an ox draw and a hammer throw and Reinhold's quixotic campaign for the New York state legislature on the Socialist Party ticket in 1930—not to mention the sudden appearances of W. H. Auden, Alan Paton, Felix Frankfurter, Willy Brandt, T. S. Eliot, Isaiah Berlin, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, about whom Sifton has a peculiar diffidence. And all this is punctuated and parenthesized with her dutiful summaries of "Pa's" lectures, books, causes, and prayers. One of these prayers is good enough to convert the heathen:

> Nothing worth doing can be achieved in a lifetime, therefore we must be saved by hope. Nothing that is true or beautiful or good makes complete sense in any immediate context of history; therefore we must be saved by faith. Nothing that we do, however virtuous, can be accomplished alone; therefore we are saved by love.

Although Studs Terkel does talk to the occasional priest in HOPE DIES LAST: KEEPING THE FAITH IN DIFFICULT TIMES (The New Press, $25.95)—plus two ex-seminarians, a couple of members of Congress, a retired rear admiral, one novelist (Clancy Sigal), and one mayor (Jerry Brown)—he's much more comfortable, as usual, with farmworkers, union organizers, teachers in the inner city, doctors and nurses in public health, greens and peaceniks, janitors and cooks, folksingers, bike messengers, and death-row ex-cons: anybody who still thinks that the world can be changed for the better and who is out there trying to do so. One of his favorites is a peace worker who went to prison for a year on a criminal-trespass charge, for planting corn on a nuclear-missile site. One of my favorites is Arlo Guthrie, who prays out loud at each of his shows: "Somewhere there's somebody ducking for cover. Somewhere somebody's shooting at somebody that's hiding in a hole, hoping that somewhere in the world somebody's singing, somebody's playing, and life is worth living." And one of Arlo's favorite[s] the Dalai Lama, whose reply w[hen] asked why he meditates so much is w[or]thy of a Niebuhr: "Well, there migh[t] an afterlife and there might not be[,] when I meditate, I put myself in tha[t] terlife right now so that if I ever h[ave] to die, I won't even notice it."

There is nothing that the grand [old] man with the cranky tape recorder [and] the magic hearing aid doesn't not[ice]. And nowhere he won't go to hear w[hat] people have to say. According to [the] late television journalist Charles K[u]ralt, who also had an ear on h[is] "when Studs Terkel listens, everyb[ody] talks." Whether he is quizzing us on [the] age or the Great Depression, work, race or death or dreams, Studs is our [na]atorio historian. He hears Amer[ica] singing. But people who get on w[ith] work they believe in are the only o[nes] worth his time. Who else could fi[nd] retired Chicago schoolteacher wh[ose] grandfather had been a slave but wh[ose] son attended the Phillips Ando[ver] Academy? a recovering-alcoholic n[un] who advocates for rape victims fr[om] her wheelchair? an eighty-four-ye[ar]-old swimming champ from the 19[36] Berlin Olympics, who taught 2 m[il]lion U.S. sailors how to swim? a [re]tired brigadier general who piloted [the] *Enola Gay* over Hiroshima and w[ho] tells Studs that there was, ready to [go] a *third* atomic bomb? We even me[et] Teamster for a Democratic Union.

To come back to that novelist, Cl[an]cy Sigal: You should know that his [au]tobiographical *Going Away* (196[2]) which followed a still-young rad[ical] driving across the country in 1956 [on] his way to a nervous breakdown, wh[en] the Soviet Union crushed Hung[ary] and all of his illusions on the car ra[dio] was one of the great forlorn texts [of] the American Left, almost a liturg[y] hopelessness. And yet he says in *H[ope] Dies Last* that pop songs, Hollywo[od] movies, and his sweatshop mother's [so]cialist optimism preserved his poli[tics] and saved his sanity. Clancy [is] seventy-five years old, the father [of] seven-year-old, and brooding about [the] courage of conscientious object[ors] when he confides these things to Stu[ds] who is ninety-one. Maybe we becc[me] better human beings because we['re] afraid to say something to Studs that[] won't want to hear.

Photograph © [illegible]

HE MEDIA IS THE ESSAGE

otes on our decadent press

Gene Lyons

ıssed in this essay:

t Liberal Media? The Truth About Bias *and the News*, by Eric Alterman. Basic ooks, 2003. 322 pages. $25.



araphrasing Winston Churchill on the Germans, Pete Townshend, the presiding genius of English rock band The Who, once ke scornfully to me about music ics. "They're either at your trouser tons," he complained, "or at your oat." Having famously observed that dolf Hitler discovered rock and roll," he sense of manipulating the pas- ıs of alienated, angry young men ough mass media and stadium-sized atrical spectacles, Townshend may e taken his own role as a genera- ıal pied piper a bit too seriously. he understood perfectly the function of the idolaters and character assassins of the rock-and-roll press.

American political journalism—it occurred to me several times while reading Eric Alterman's provocative, if somewhat structureless, *What Liberal Media?*—has gone the way of *Rolling Stone*, *Creem*, *Crawdaddy*, and about a million contemporary rock zines. In Washington the hidebound rules of professionalism and "objectivity" taught in J-school classrooms have increasingly succumbed to the more flamboyant practices associated with the cult of celebrity. (That Alterman himself composes worshipful paeans to Bruce Springsteen on his MSNBC weblog, Altercation, is merely coincidental.) Conceived as the antidote, if not the answer, to right-wing tracts such as Bernard Goldberg's *Bias* (2001) and Ann Coulter's *Slander* (2002), *What Liberal Media?* cites an array of quantitative studies demonstrating that, if anything, something closer to the opposite is true. Far from exhibiting liberal bias, the press is drifting ever rightward. "According to one study," Alterman writes, "beginning January 1, 2002, CNN carried 157 live events featuring [Bush] administration officials. Over the same time, the network carried only seven events featuring elected leaders of the Democratic Party." Doubtless there are defensible reasons for such an imbalance. Covert liberalism, however, is not among them.

Alterman's argument notwithstanding, "bias," left or right, isn't an adequate word for what's taken place over the last decade or thereabouts. Claiming the moral authority of a code of professional ethics it idealizes in the abstract but repudiates in practice, today's Washington press corps has grown as decadent and self-protective as any politician or interest group whose behavior it purports to monitor. In theory, the press is supposed to function in a free market of ideas, a self-regulating and relentlessly competitive quest for what the old Superman comics called "truth, justice, and the American way." (Clark Kent was, after all, a newspaper reporter.) Particularly flagrant and unlucky transgressors are sternly punished. Fabulators such as Janet Cooke, the *Washington Post* reporter who won a Pulitzer Prize by inventing an eight-year-old heroin addict, or Jayson Blair, whose imaginary datelines and fictive interviews turned the *New York Times* upside down, are purged from the profession; the ritual defenestrations of minor plagiarists in Boston or Des Moines are well publicized.

In practice, however, big-time political journalism has become a subdivision of the entertainment industry, and news itself a form of politicized "infotainment." Chasing "upmarket" subscribers and advertising dollars, the corporate media provide to target demographics the kind of "news" they think those people want to hear. Cable TV networks treat national politics as an ongoing melodrama whose protagonists—Bill and Hillary Clinton, Al Gore, John McCain, George W. Bush—are sym-

ıe Lyons is the author of Fools for ndal *and the co-author, with Joe Cona- of* The Hunting of the President.

ration by Matt Dennis

bolic figures to be loved or loathed by millions. Reporters and pundits can achieve a sublunary, albeit quite lucrative, kind of stardom by appearing on TV and copping an attitude.

James Fallows aptly described the developing situation in his 1996 book *Breaking the News*:

> The most immediate payoff [of TV appearances] is the simple thrill of being noticed and known. Political-journalistic Washington functions much like a big high school, with cliques of the popular kids, the nerds, the rebels, the left-outs, and so on. To be on TV is to become very quickly a cool kid. Friends call to say they've seen you. People recognize you in stores. Whether people agree or disagree with what you said (or whether they even remember) they treat you as "realer" and bigger than you were before. . . . In short, many would love being on the talk shows even if no money were involved. But money is. The number of lecture bookings and the size of lecture fees vary directly with the number of hours you have spent on TV.

As, of course, do the sizes of the book contracts, not to mention the salaries of such onetime print-journalists-turned-TV-show hosts as FOX News's Bill O'Reilly or MSNBC's Chris Matthews. Fallows nevertheless wrote this before the Clinton-Lewinsky saga—before the ratings-building repetition of the magical phrase "oral sex" at thirty-second intervals surpassed in career-enhancing potential even the recent hostilities in Iraq. Michael Isikoff's advance for his astonishingly disingenuous book *Uncovering Clinton*, for example, was a reported $500,000, stemming partly from the author's frequent appearances as a TV talking head.* *Newsweek* now accompanies his news stories with a photograph of the celebrated pundit in a cocksure pose, peering menacingly over the rim of his glasses.

Once a degree of celebrity is attained, the star system functions to protect even the most egregious offenses. In Washington, "truth," in the journalistic sense, is determined largely by the institutional prestige of those first staking a claim in a given story. The reporters, editors, and TV producers who do so are understood to hold a kind of intellectual-property right not unlike J. K. Rowling's ownership of Harry Potter. By the time major news organizations and individual reporters come to have a stake of their own, even the most compelling evidence can be rearranged as necessary to keep a story alive. Anybody who diminishes a tale's value by debunking its premises isn't seen as a rival so much as a vandal.

During the "Clinton scandals" of legend and song, name-brand journalists at some of the most prestigious "mainstream" media outlets in the country brazenly violated the profession's ethical norms with impunity, apparently deriving their notions of how reporters behave from rogue-cop movies.* Marvin Kalb's conscientious, if timid, book *One Scandalous Story: Clinton, Lewinsky, & 13 Days That Tarnished American Journalism* (2001) depicts a scandal-crazed Washington press running open throttle, fueled by anonymous one-source leaks from Kenneth Starr's prosecutors that often turned out to be false. But Kalb, like Alterman, doesn't know the half of it.

Bill Clinton's spectacular folly notw
standing, reporters pursuing him c
ited the "revelations" of paid sou
altered video clips to make inno
remarks appear suspect; allowed p
ical operatives to take part in in
views; routinely hid exculpatory
formation; intervened with
Department of Justice on behalf o
individual under indictment; acti
assisted prosecutors trying to "flip"
nesses against the president; publi
nonexistent "FBI testimony" und
fake byline; even gathered infor
tion from sources and turned it ov
prosecutors. The details of these i
dents are not in dispute; they are
ply ignored. Journalists who d
mented them were labeled "Clin
apologists," and disregarded.

Celebrity journalists have e
ed since the invention of n
papers. It's been more th
generation since reporters ditched
snap-brim fedoras, took the whi
bottles out of their bottom drav
and started "doing lunch" instea
hanging out in boxing gyms and dr
ing with cops. Uneasiness about t
own fame is nevertheless a com
theme in the memoirs of journa
who came of age during the Sec
World War. Even in chronicling
own journalistic and amorous exp
in his autobiography, *A Good Life*,
mer *Washington Post* editor Ben Bra
expressed discomfort with "the g
new American urge to celebrate
men and women involved in
news." Walter Cronkite voiced sim
misgivings in his memoir, *A Repor
Life*. Having begun his career as
dio and print journalist covering st
crime, school fires, and local politi
Houston and Kansas City, he profe
to find aspects of TV stardom disc
certing. The late Katharine Grah
Personal History lamented that the
lywood version of *All the Presid
Men* provoked bitter feuding and
tured lifelong friendships at the

For Alterman, however, it's the
identity of upwardly mobile pur
that is most problematic:

> No longer the working-class hero
> the *Front Page*/*His Gal Friday* lore,
> journalists in Washington and New
> are rock-solid members of the pol
> and financial Establishment about w

Telling his own story, Isikoff is as loopily oblivious as a Nabokov narrator; solemnly recounting an anonymous caller's intimate revelations about Clinton on one page, high-mindedly denouncing Internet gossip Matt Drudge for spreading "unverified reporting" on the next. Among other absurdities, Isikoff reveals in a footnote that he had documentary evidence on the day Paula Jones's lawsuit was filed in 1994 that her claims of job discrimination against Bill Clinton were false—the precise reason it was subsequently dismissed. His motives for revealing it in the footnote are as puzzling as his failure to report it in the first place: in the text itself, he praises her lawyers' shrewdness for making the bogus claim.

* *On December 19, 1995, ABC News's* Nightline *aired a deceptively edited video clip of a Hillary Clinton statement about Whitewater, accusing her of dissembling about the very information excised from her remarks. On May 4, 1996, the* New York Times *published an article with an Associated Press byline falsely stating that an FBI agent's trial testimony described a $50,000 windfall to Whitewater from an illegal loan. In fact, as the actual AP dispatch stipulated, the agent gave no such testimony. The invented story with the deceptive byline inspired numerous accusatory editorials and columns in the* Times *and elsewhere, causing considerably more damage than Jayson Blair's fictions. Yet* Times *editors have refused comment. It was by such chicanery that the Whitewater hoax was sustained for several years.*

y write. They dine at the same restau-
nts and take their vacations on the
ne Caribbean islands.... What's more,
e the politicians, their jobs are not
ject to export to China or Bangladesh.

es about textile factories closing in
h Carolina's hick towns or Mexi-
armers driven off the land by com-
ion with government-subsidized
corn are apt to strike such persons
dious: hence, he concludes, the
's near unanimous support for
TA in the face of labor-union op-
ion. And he is surely correct that
preening sophisticates have little
athy for losers with low SAT
s, not to mention for lesser breeds
never took the test at all.

it Alterman worries a lot more
he needs to about the potential for
licts of interest in ever larger media
lomerates. "When AOL took over
eWarner," he notes,

also took over: Warner Brothers Pic-
res, Morgan Creek, New Regency,
arner Brothers Animation, a partial
ake in Savoy Pictures, Little Brown &
o., Bulfinch, Back Bay, Time-Life
ooks, Oxmoor House, Sunset Books,
arner Books, the Book-of-the-Month
lub, Warner/Chappell Music, Atlantic
ecords, Warner Audio Books, Elektra,
arner Brothers Records, Time-Life
lusic, Columbia House, a 40 percent
ake in Seattle's Sub-Pop records, *Time*
agazine, *Fortune*, *Life*, *Sports Illustrat-
l*, *Vibe*, *People*, *Entertainment Weekly*,
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tlanta Hawks, World Championship
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urner Classic Movies, Turner Pictures,
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ie Cartoon Network.

art from its sheer size, what's most
king about the list is its amor-
usness. Demographically speak-
you could slip the state of New
ey or the Whirlpool Corporation

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into the AOL/TimeWarner mix [illegible] the ensuing anonymity tends to mitigate conflicts of the ordinary kind. While I was a humble *Entertainment Weekly* book reviewer, for example, it never occurred to me to puff Book-of-the-Month Club selections, nor even to note their existence; and the magazine's movie reviews appeared untainted by any standard other than what the mass market would bear. Simply put, *Entertainment Weekly*'s own survival within the multimedia empire depends upon retaining reader credibility. Praising too many stinkers would rapidly erode it.

History records, moreover, that it was a CNN/*Sports Illustrated* writer who wrecked Atlanta pitcher John Rocker's career by publicizing his inane remarks about "foreigners," "queer[s] with AIDS," and New York City. I'd be astonished if it ever occurred to either man that they were theoretically colleagues. (And Atlanta Braves games are televised nationally by WTBS, making it a three-way tie-up.) A self-described Georgia redneck, Rocker had simply failed to recognize that feed-store knee-slappers might not suit *Sports Illustrated*'s audience, nor did he realize that the same publicity machine that made him a twenty-five-year-old millionaire for throwing a ball 95 mph was equally capable of turning him into a symbol of bigotry overnight.

Ordinary AOL/TimeWarner employees know better. They understand the boundaries of permissible opinion in pretty much the same way race horses know to run counterclockwise when they take the track. Snaffle bits and blinders aren't required. Simply because HBO caters to exhibitionists and voyeurs on *Real Sex* doesn't mean a relief pitcher can get away with exhibiting his posterior in the presence of an ambitious sportswriter, any more than Clinton could avoid the consequences of turning the Oval Office into the set for Cinemax's series *The Best Sex Ever*. The test is what sells magazines or moves cable TV ratings upward. In essence, that's what the phrase "mainstream journalism" means. It's what's acceptable to a mass-market audience, period.

In Washington, careerism has so trumped professionalism among political journalists as to render Alterman's ethical concerns almost quaint. Take his objections to *Washington Post* and CNN media critic Howard Kurtz's self-evident conflicts of interest. Yes, it's true that Kurtz doesn't make a habit of excoriating CNN in his newspaper column or the *Washington Post* on TV. (Although he doesn't give them a complete free pass either: Kurtz was one of a very few journalists—the *New York Times*'s Anthony Lewis was another—to criticize his own newspaper's reporting of the Whitewater hoax, albeit mildly, and only once.) And yes, almost every episode of Kurtz's Sunday-afternoon chat show, *Reliable Sources*, features a panel of Washington chums chuckling its way to the conclusion that politician X or issue Y has received precisely the amount of press coverage it deserves. What Alterman fails to grasp, however, is that Kurtz's real allegiance, like most of his TV guests', is to the star system.

Ponder the implications of the following, a highly revealing colloquy that took place on *Reliable Sources* August 10, 2002, some of which is quoted in *What Liberal Media?* Kurtz asked *Washington Post* reporter Dana Milbank to explain the press corp's unremitting hostility to Al Gore during and after the 2000 campaign. Milbank explained:

> You know what it is, Howie? I think that Gore is sanctimonious and that's sort of the worst thing you can be in the eyes of the press. And he has been disliked all along and it was because he gives a sense that he's better than us—he's better than everybody, for that matter, but the sense that he's better than us as reporters. Whereas President Bush probably is sure that he's better than us—he's probably right, but he does not convey that sense. He does not seem to be dripping with contempt when he looks at us, and I think that has something to do with the coverage.

As White House correspondent for one of the most important newspapers in the country, Milbank was one of a handful of reporters who wrote about Bush's problems with the truth before it became fashionable. Although "embroidering key assertions" was as strong as it got, Milbank was deemed sufficiently hostile that Karl Rove repeatedly phoned *Post* editors to protest assignment. Yet Milbank appeared have no compunctions about re ing a presidential election to a school popularity contest.

The occasion of Milbank's rem was a *New York Times* column had written criticizing Bush's tax cies, criticisms that Gore's erstw running mate, Senator Joe Lieber had charged with excess "populis

"Is the press covering a serious bate about populism and takin corporate interest," Kurtz asked, " it really just about a slogan and guys slapping each other around?

The reporter opined that popu was temporarily in vogue with p cians who would soon have their h out for corporate campaign contr tions. "But I think you have somet else going on here," he added, " that the press is in an anything bu Al Gore–George Bush rema [mood]. You know I've requested in the food section, if that occurs, I think . . ."

"Because of a fear of terminal b dom?" Kurtz asked.

"Oh, absolutely."

"And that influences the covera the presidential race for the U States White House?"

"We've seen that movie alrea Milbank said. "I'm afraid so. . . . I t the press as a group has to pul Howard Dean from Vermont i want some excitement."

No doubt Milbank was merely b frank. Comments like his, howe have become increasingly com among the stars and starlets of Washington press. Bob Somerby's liantly iconoclastic website, *The ly Howler*, has compiled them by dozen. Never mind the sweaty h out in flyover country. Politic real constituents are held to be th porters who cover the race, and t reporters' concerns could hardl more trivial. During the 2000 elec campaign, Somerby heard *Time* co nist and CNN *Capital Gang* re Margaret Carlson make a remark admission on Don Imus's radio gram: "You can actually disprove s of what [George W.] Bush is sayi you really get in the weeds and get your calculator, or you look at

l in Texas. But it's really easy, 's fun, to disprove Gore. . . . As and as our enterprise, Gore com- with another whopper is great- ertaining to us."

re, it will be recalled, was being ted as a dreadful phony given to venting" himself, largely on the of false or exaggerated anecdotes. bsurd notion that Gore claimed ad "invented the Internet," for ple, was itself invented by the blican National Committee. *Time* ted matter-of-factly that a room- f journalists covering a New pshire primary debate between nd Bill Bradley on closed-circuit ooed and hissed the vice president a gang of fifteen-year-old hers cutting down some hapless " (By way of comparison, a sports- r who acts like a fan in the press s scorned as a fool.)

some observers, it appeared that Washington clique had simply ferred its collective loathing for linton to his successor. Carlson's *me Can Grow Up*, however, hints otives that are even more childish. e elicited in us [i.e., the press] the ish urge to poke a stick in the eye e smarty-pants," whereas Bush, e "inner child hovers near the ce," shrewdly treated reporters VIPs. "Gore wanted the snacks to vironmentally and nutritionally ct," Carlson gripes,

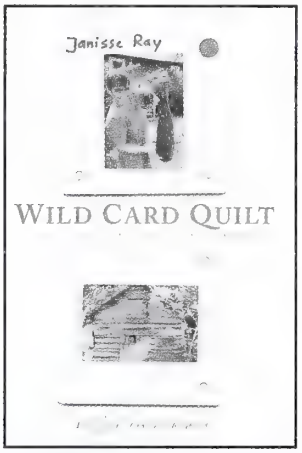
> somehow granola bars ended up giv- g way to Fruit Roll-Ups and the sand- ches came wrapped and looked long st their sell-by date. On a lucky day, meone would remember to buy super- arket doughnuts. By contrast, a typical y of food on Air Bush . . . consisted of e meals with access to a sixth, if you unt grazing at a cocktail bar. Break- t one was French toast, scrambled eggs, con. . . . There were Dove bars and de- ner water on demand, and a bathroom cked like Martha Stewart's guest suite. inner at seven featured lobster ravioli.

arlson's unwitting self-parody came g several months too late to be ded in *What Liberal Media?* but rman still managed to find similar nples of reporters who treated the race like a prolonged episode of *Dating Game*. In his campaign oir, *Ambling into History*, *New Times* reporter Frank Bruni—dubbed "Panchito" by the flirtatious George W. Bush—confided that he thought the G.O.P. candidate's "ridiculous statements" and "eerie blankness" during his first debate with Gore doomed his election hopes. Bruni's contemporaneous *Times* article, however, ridiculed Gore's "crisp pronunciation of [the name] Milosevic," mocked his encyclopedic knowledge of Balkan geography, and chided him for being "barely able to suppress his self-satisfied grin." Sneering like a teen anarchist trashing a Pearl Jam concert or lampooning the new Radiohead album, Bruni accomplished two things: he helped his editors offer readers something they hadn't already seen on TV—which is always a concern in the newspaper business—and he generated talk-show buzz. And buzz, dudes, is what it's all about. Not fucking Kosovo and Montenegro, that's for sure.

Analyzing this nonsense, Alterman unaccountably wimps out. He professes to find himself at a loss to explain why "mainstream" news accounts read like RNC blast faxes from the 2002 primaries or the Supreme Court decision that appointed Bush president. Was the Gore campaign simply incompetent? "The more obvious, and explosive, conclusion, that the disparity in coverage was due to a political bias in favor of Bush and against Gore," he writes, "is one I'm not comfortable arguing. I have no evidence, and I do not believe, that reporters prefer a conservative Republican to a centrist Democrat in the White House. Rather, ideology does not really enter into it."

Of course not, silly. To most high-flying Washington pundits, the election is about *them* and their careers. Even so, many readers will find themselves wishing the author could be compelled to submit a book report on his own chapters two through six. Hint: follow the money. There must be five paying gigs in low-circulation, high-dollar "little magazines," Washington think tanks, and propaganda mills such as Brent Bozell's Media Research Center for every opportunity to impoverish oneself scribbling for tiny audiences of bickering professors in *The Nation*. Or Alterman might ponder all the big bucks changing hands in his chapter

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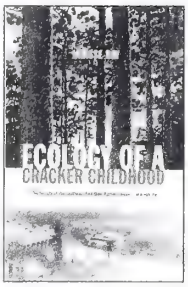
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Janisse Ray, author of ECOLOGY OF A CRACKER CHILDHOOD and WILD CARD QUILT



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thirteen, "The (Really) Conservative Media," which centers on the Reverend Moon's *Washington Times*, the *Wall Street Journal* editorial page, and Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation empire: the FOX News Channel, Fox Broadcasting Network, the *New York Post*, *TV Guide*, *The Weekly Standard*, Regan Books, and the Los Angeles Dodgers, all but the last busily churning out conservative dogma.

These organizations don't merely advance right-wing politicians and causes. They also attack institutions and individuals in the media deemed guilty of "liberal bias"—often on the most absurd evidence imaginable. How vigorously "mainstream" organizations defend themselves can be deduced from a wry profile of right-wing pundette Ann Coulter (who is more of a sit-down comic, actually) in the *New York Times* Style section coincident with the publication of her book *Treason* in the summer of 2003. On the triumphal last page of her previous tome, *Slander*, Coulter had accused the *Times* of displaying contempt for Real Americans by failing to report the death of NASCAR driver Dale Earnhardt on its front page: "Liberals have absolutely no contact with the society they decry from their Park Avenue redoubts." In fact, as Somerby's *Daily Howler* pointed out, the newspaper had run not one but two front-page articles (the second a teary lament by professional Southerner Rick Bragg). And not long after *Slander* was published, Coulter told a worshipful interviewer for the *New York Observer* that she regretted Timothy McVeigh hadn't set off a truck bomb outside the *New York Times* building instead of in Oklahoma City. The *Times* profile tastefully avoided mention of either incident.

It took the dreadful events of September 11, however, to fully merge the Washington media's relentless quest for stardom with Republican Party dogma. Seemingly awed by George W. Bush's tragedy-influenced poll numbers, the Washington press took their fawning over him to near-cultlike levels. Pundits compared him favorably with Churchill, and with wartime presidents such as Lincoln, FDR, and Truman. Some grew so reverent and worshipful that it wouldn't have been astonishing to see them turn up on *Meet the Press* or ABC News's *This Week* wearing powdered periwigs and flourishing gilded snuffboxes. MSNBC's Chris Matthews spoke of Bush being "anointed," remarked on his transformation from "a Prince Hal to a warrior King Henry," and made unembarrassed references to his regal bearing. A cover story by *Newsweek*'s Howard Fineman praised Bush as "astute," "eloquent," "commanding," and "a model of unblinking, eyes-on-the-prize decisiveness." Even the president's taste in clothing gave evidence of his genuine nobility. "He's a boomer product of the '60s," Fineman gushed, "but doesn't mind ermine robes."

So pure a convergence, of the press with the Republican point of view, cannot possibly last. Regardless of its pro-Establishment leanings, the news media has an inherent need for novelty and conflict that takes precedence over all competing loyalties. Like ma disappointed progressive, Alter laments the American people's for entertaining fables instead o sober responsibilities of citizenh Their intellectual laziness and la sustained interest in public affairs it very hard to produce high-qu reporting and analysis at a profi "apparently insoluble Catch-22 [endangers not only the journa profession, but also the democ world power that depends upo No doubt that is so. But the m media cult of celebrity also has mistakably pagan and Dionysia pects that make it more volatile unpredictable than political ra neurs can easily imagine. It ele its temporary wise men and w kings alike for the sheer chthoni of tearing them down. Publishers, dits, and financiers only imagine they control it. Whom the gods w destroy, they first make famous.

THE REAWAKENING

Kate Chopin and the wages of liberation

By Joyce Hackett

Discussed in this essay:

Kate Chopin: Complete Novels and Stories, edited by Sandra M. Gilbert. Li of America, 2002. 1,071 pages. $35.

At this point, it seems safe to say that the debate about what belongs in the American literary canon has been won definitively by the barbarians at the gate. The New Critics' formalist criteria for a masterpiece, which once excluded slave narratives, eighteenth-century memoirs by women, and travel writing on the grounds that they did not qualify as s ciently literary, have had the p cal core of their aesthetic judgm exposed to the degree that the idea of aesthetic excellence is rarely even invoked. The New toricist school, which values li ture for what it says about the sciousness of a cultural epoch resuscitated such popular wor Susan Warner's *Wide, Wide Wo* book that went through four editions in the mid-nineteenth tury. And in an essay publish this magazine by Jane Smiley, w

Joyce Hackett is the author of a novel, Disturbance of the Inner Ear, *which will be published in paperback by Carroll & Graf next month.*

een widely taught and discussed
ıe academy during the last
de, Smiley argued that *Uncle*
's *Cabin* was a greater novel
. *Huck Finn* because it de-
ces the institution of slavery.
rhaps our most interesting redis-
ries, though, are books that by
riteria—political vision, cultural
sentativeness, even the old
Critical benchmarks of
plexity, ambiguity, and
—qualify as great yet were
how passed over. Writers
. as Charlotte Perkins
ıan and Zora Neale Hurston
been seized upon by critics,
ırticular the trauma theo-
who psychoanalyze history
ing for cultural ruptures, re-
ions, disassociations. To
way of thinking, these writ-
ooks fell into oblivion not
use their natural reading
mes had elapsed but because
mounted social critiques so
atening that the cultures
sought to engage could not
in their message, and so ac-
y repressed them.
f these newly canonized nov-
Kate Chopin's phoenix, *The*
kening—the story of an or-
ry woman who tries to step
of the narrative that society
written for her—is *prima sui*
ris. Published in 1899, it has
e from being an out-of-print book
ı no critical listings in the *MLA*
ography to being one of the most of-
taught works of American litera-
. Now widely recognized as the first
rterpiece written by an American
ıan—a feat celebrated in the Li-
y of America's recent edition of
pin's complete works—*The Awak-*
g is the book that both culminated
pin's career and ended it.

Born to a Missouri family in
1851, Kate Chopin came to
writing late, as a thirty-nine-
-old widow with a large family to
port. She had been a reader of
vantes and Dostoevsky, of
ethe in German and Hugo in
ıch, and once she began writing,
work erupted. From 1889 until
1, she published two novels, thir-
ı essays, translations of Maupas-
sant, poems, and more than a hundred stories.

Her own marriage, by all accounts amicable, produced six children in nine years. But what her fiction explores, to paraphrase Tolstoy, is how every unhappy marriage is unhappy in its own way. In her first novel, *At Fault*, a widow reproves a Northern man who is farming her estate, after discovering that he has divorced his alcoholic wife; when he tries to resuscitate the doomed marriage, it collapses a second time, and his wife, fleeing the knowledge that her husband has fallen in love with his employer, drowns in a flood. Although Chopin's stories contain the occasional episode of connubial bliss, more representative is "In Sabine," which depicts a young neglected wife who cunningly escapes her spouse, or "The Storm," in which an hour-long adulterous romp is more satisfying to the two lovers involved than anything in their marriages. In "The Story of an Hour," the protagonist nearly faints with joy when she believes her husband to have been killed in a train wreck, only to collapse of a heart attack when he walks through the door.



The self-published *At Fault* was well received, and the seeds of Chopin's distinguishing strength, a nuanced morality, are already notable; although critics interpreted the tale as a judgment of the havoc wreaked by a drunken wife, Chopin leaves open the question of who is to blame for the tragedy. But *At Fault* is a work that creaks with too many characters and too much plot, and after her second novel, *Young Dr. Gosse*, was rejected by publishers, Chopin destroyed the manuscript and began to hone her craft to match her sophisticated vision. She set the short stories of her next two collections among the Cajuns of Natchitoches, where Chopin and her family had moved from New Orleans in 1879 after her husband's cotton business failed. The first collection, *Bayou Folk*, earned her a broad, enthusiastic readership that welcomed her as a talented regionalist. Chopin was a gifted mime, who entertained family and friends by imitating others, and she translated her effortless mimicry onto the page; the stories evoke an outsider with a glass to her ear, leaning against the walls of Louisiana's cabins and shacks. Although the dialogue is, at times, so orthographically mangled that reading it is like hiking on boulders, the concise form of the short story enabled Chopin to dispense with the sitting-duck social satire, dangling subplots, and, in most cases, the melodrama of her first novel. What remained was her determination to shuck the hulls of convention, to observe closely the world outside herself, and to explore the inner lives of her characters—regardless of their station, color, or moral fiber.

Although there are a few racist chestnuts in *Bayou Folk*—such as "The Bênitous' Slave," about a man who is determined to find and serve the family to whom he once belonged—Chopin had begun to examine the nuances of power, the problem of resisting the roles that a biased culture imposes upon individuals. In the guise of an amicable character sketch, "A Gentleman of Bayou Têche" explores the fundamental

ration by Leigh Wells

right to self-definition of Evariste, a Cajun trapper whom a visiting artist wants to paint. Evariste is all too aware of the condescending exoticism that the artist, trawling for bits of "local color," is trying to fake: "He want' me like I come out de swamp. So much betta if my pant'loon an' coat is tore, he say, an' color' like de mud." When Evariste learns that the painting is to be titled *A 'Cajun o' the Bayou Têche*, he is appalled enough to return the substantial two-dollar payment. Eventually, however, he exacts an agreement from the artist to be painted as he himself wants to be seen—in his good clothes: "'You will put on'neat' de picture,' he said deliberately, 'Dis is one picture of Mista Evariste Anatole Bonamour, a gent'man of de Bayou Têche.'"

In *A Night in Acadie*, a second short-story collection that was published in 1897, Chopin's artistry had nearly caught up with her eye. Her sentences became more fluid; her language less likely to succumb to terms like "picaninny" and "darkies." With "At Chêniére Caminada," "Athénaïse," and other stories, she began to cultivate the rich thematic and stylistic terrain of *The Awakening*. In "Athénaïse," a woman leaves her new husband because, in Chopin's wry circumlocution, she can't stand to have "his ugly bare feet . . . in [her] tub." The husband, Cazeau, who seems more concerned for the pony she has ridden off with than for his wife, retrieves Athénaïse and demands her return. On their way home, however, Cazeau is unpleasantly reminded of when he and his father hunted down an escaped slave whom everyone had deemed a fool for running away from such a considerate master. The next time Athénaïse leaves, Cazeau writes her a letter explaining that he will not force her to come back unless she can return his affection. Only after Cazeau abandons the role of master can Athénaïse begin to love him.

Strong as they are, the stories lack the precision and daring of *The Awakening*, a book so masterful that it makes all of Chopin's previous efforts seem like a rehearsal. Whereas *At Fault* explored a marriage doomed by alcoholism, and the stories were primarily set among the exotic, mixed-race, French-speaking denizens of distant Louisiana, *The Awakening* skewers a stable marriage in Chopin's own elite, white milieu.

At a beach resort where Edna Pontellier and her children are vacationing, the Creole hotel keeper's son, Robert Lebrun, picks Edna as this summer's flirtation partner. Twenty-eight years old, Edna learns how to swim and comes to a Whitmanesque sensual awakening. After a near encounter with death out in the water, she begins to recognize her own dissatisfaction and to conceive of a life bigger than her bourgeois marriage can contain. But Robert, who had not expected Edna to take him seriously, flees to Mexico when their growing love for each other threatens to compromise Edna's social position.

Had Chopin stopped there, and condemned Edna to regretful longing or to a punishing Karenina-type suicide, her novel might have fared better with its original audience. But Chopin refused to immolate her heroine on anyone's morality. Instead, Edna, who has been reading Emerson, responds to her custody by extricating herself from it with calculated deliberation. She stops sleeping with her husband, sends him away on an extended business trip, and packs the children off to their grandmother. She begins sketching, sells her sketches, and moves into a house she can afford on her earnings. With "neither shame nor remorse," she enters into an affair with a roué, Alcée Arobin, which is about desire rather than love. When Robert returns, offering to "save" Edna from her fate as a fallen woman, Edna finds his marriage proposal risible. Never again, she says, will she belong to anyone except herself. Unlike any of Chopin's previous heroines, Edna forgoes love because she cannot accept what she would have to do in order to get it. With the revelation that she cannot find a place for the person she has become, nothing is left for Edna but to return to Grand Isle and drown herself in the sea.

Chopin's intended title, *A Sol* *Soul*, elegantly suggested the w of Edna's liberation. But her pub er—perhaps hoping to attract en siasts of the religious-conversion ratives that were enormously po toward the end of the nineteen century—preferred *The Awaker* As a result, the title of the n promised something quite diffe from the bleak, existential narra Chopin delivered, and readers decidedly not amused. Altho critics acknowledged that the was well written, they assaile from two, seemingly opposite, tions. *The Awakening*'s subvers ness was attacked as "morbid," sentially vulgar," and "gilded The novel, according to one c "leaves one sick of human nat At the same time, the book wa soundingly drubbed for adding t tired genre of female romantic fa sy. A young Willa Cather, who erwise admired Chopin's writing proached the novel's theme as and sordid," and accused Edna o longing to a "forever clamor class of women "that demands romance out of life than God into it." "We are all well satisf another critic remarked, "when Pontellier deliberately swims o her death." There were two genres of fiction permitted to A can women authors: morality and romance novels. *The Awak* failed on both counts.

As more critics misread her terpiece as a tale about failed dom or failed romance, Chopi into a depressive decline. After *Awakening*, she could not go ba writing less provocative, more ceptable books. But without cri or popular recognition, neither she build on her achievement. royalty statements for *The Awak* succinctly document Cho downward spiral: in 1899, she ea $109; in 1900, $40; and in 1901 Cather expressed the hope "next time . . . Miss Chopin wil vote that flexible iridescent sty hers to a better cause." But t wouldn't be a next time. The p cation of a third collection of st *A Vocation and a Voice*, which been accepted in 1898, was can

900 after *The Awakening* dered. Chopin's health de- l, and in 1904 she died at fifty- of a brain hemorrhage.

Contrary to popular lore, Chopin's chef d'oeuvre was not banned—though a ban have done her a service, as it wain, Nabokov, Lawrence, and , by trumpeting the work's nous power to disturb. Instead, years of oblivion befell it. Not 1956 did anyone write about *Awakening* again, and not until a h translation was published did nd Wilson praise it as an "un- ited and beautifully written k] which anticipates D. H. ence." But even then, *The kening* continued to be read American *Bovary*, as a ro- e novel rather than an existen- one. As late as 1971, Jean ord wrote that Chopin was onstrating the obvious: that ied women could indeed have h, unchaste thoughts that might them to trample upon marriage notherhood.

the late 1980s some feminist crit- who, in the decade before, had pioned the book as a feminist an- and Edna as a classic victim of archy—began to turn on *The kening*, criticizing the way that fails to bond with the other wom- the novel. Rather than departing tradition, they argued, Edna was le reiteration of a long masculine tion of seeing independence, and in isolation. In 1988, Elaine walter posited in *Tradition and the ale Talent* that Edna's solitude is eason her emancipation fails, be- e she never moves beyond "her questioning to the larger social ment that is feminism." Andrew anco went further, arguing that novel "is about a woman passing for an." Katherine Kearns derided a as somebody who "systematical- llifies herself as she nullifies oth- her search for the masculinely de- d grail." Even the novelist ilynne Robinson, in a more posi- take, maintained that Chopin had owed Edna with "a compulsion to over her self by isolating it from onds." Lloyd Daigrepont echoed

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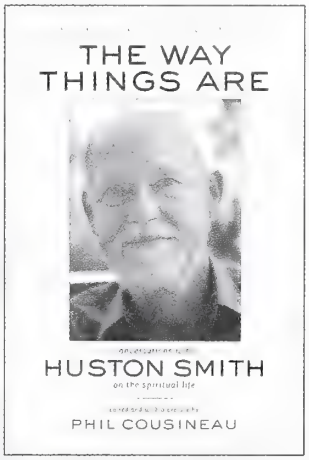
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the critique of Chopin's time, condemning Edna's quest as unhealthy, and arguing that she has "a somewhat immature and self-centered personality" because she cannot cherish the ideal of "marital friendship" exemplified by Edna's friends, the Ratignolles. Marriage must, Daigrepont seems to suggest, be happy somewhere.

To be sure, Chopin's hostility toward certain aspects of "women's culture" was evident. In 1889, the first year in which she was published, Chopin echoed the spirit of Hawthorne's famous jab about those "d—d . . . scribbling women" with "Miss Witherwell's Mistake." The story parodies the career of an unmarried journalist who contributes to the Boredomville *Battery* with hackneyed trinkets such as "Security Against the Moth," "A Word to Mothers," and "The Use and Abuse of the Corset." Chopin derides not just the literature of the women's page but the matrons who read it as Bible. When a niece seeking advice for an ill-fated love affair pretends she needs a resolution for a story, Miss Witherwell advises her that the hero must "perform some act to ingratiate himself with the obdurate parent." Not surprisingly, Miss Witherwell adores tidying up, claiming that her "most pungent conceptions" came to her while sprinkling camphor in the folds of winter curtains, or while lining the trunks with tar paper.

In an autobiographical essay written six months after *The Awakening* was published, Chopin takes the social critique implicit in "Miss Witherwell's Mistake" and turns it upon her own world. Writing is now an occupation Chopin pursues "when not too strongly drawn to struggle with the intricacies of a pattern" and "if the temptation to try a new furniture polish on an old table leg is not too powerful to be denied." Given the cold reception of *The Awakening*, Chopin's irony rings with sardonic bitterness. As a provocation of the old guard, it is difficult to imagine a more self-immolating remark.

Any suicide prompts unanswerable questions from those who find life too precious to abandon. Was Edna's drowning a narcissistic refusal to cope with life, or was it an indictment of that world? As supporting characters who embody other possible lives for the protagonist, the women of *The Awakening* compose a dismal trio of variations. Edna's closest friend, Adèle Ratignolle, is the consummate "mother-woman," with a passel of children and a blissful marriage, who avoids Edna's introspection and abandons Edna so as not to jeopardize her own reputation. Miss Mayblunt, a "professional" writer, is another Miss Witherwell: a shallow ninny whose opinions affirm the system that dismisses her. Mademoiselle Reisz—who is the only self-realized female artist in the novel—is depicted as ugly, unpleasant, pushy, and celibate. The talented pianist is the size of a child, and she cannot bring herself to love a man of less than the highest stature. Instead, she pours what she cannot live into her art, and advises Edna to do the same.

But just as Edna cannot endure love at the price of possession, she cannot pursue a vocation at the price of arid exile. What she seeks is to be cherished and recognized, to be both desired and seen. Edna's well-meaning husband cannot see her awakened body and soul; her calculating lover, Alcée, will never cherish them; and when her beloved Robert fails her, his failure of vision becomes not that of a man but of a world.

With Edna's quest, Chopin defined the modern female odyssey—not the impeded journey home from work and back again but the impeded journey from home, past domestic bonds, in search of a place in the world. Why work and love so often seem mutually exclusive for women is a question that was posed throughout the last century by women writers from Cather to Ann Patchett, and it has been taken up by the popular media as well. In the 1991 movie *Thelma & Louise*, the women go on the road to flee their oppression at home; as they search for a world where they can live with integrity, they bond with each other, just like the feminists of the 1970s would have encouraged them to do. Like Edna, however, they still [illegible] love, and when the men they [illegible] counter regard them only as an [illegible] portunity for rape, theft, or cap[illegible] they end their journey by drivin[illegible] a cliff. Nearly a hundred years [illegible] *The Awakening*, Thelma and L[illegible] reach Edna's conclusion: in a so[illegible] that cannot recognize them, the [illegible] mate act of desperation is the [illegible] liberation available.

More recently, in his adapta[illegible] of Michael Cunningham's novel *[illegible] Hours*, Stephen Daldry surveyed [illegible] conflict between female self an[illegible] ciety through the experience[illegible] three women over the course [illegible] century. As a progress report, [illegible] film is disconcerting. Virg[illegible] Woolf, the great artist, takes E[illegible] cue in the River Ouse; the fi[illegible] housewife, after a consciousn[illegible] raising read of *Mrs. Dalloway*, a[illegible] dons her family in order to [illegible] vive—a move that is never t[illegible] forgiven by her son, whose ir[illegible] nent death by AIDS seems an[illegible] plicit punishment for his mot[illegible] choice; and the contempo[illegible] Clarissa, who has all the trappin[illegible] liberation—a powerful editing j[illegible] gorgeous Manhattan brownsto[illegible] supportive lesbian partner, an[illegible] intelligent, healthy daughter [illegible] tionally abandons her life and[illegible] prizes the women in it so that[illegible] can care for the gay poet who, [illegible] leaving her thirty years bef[illegible] openly fails to return her reg[illegible] And it is only in his presence [illegible] confesses to her daughter, that[illegible] feels truly alive.

What Chopin and her des[illegible] dants suggest is that taking ac[illegible] can earn a person an indepen[illegible] self, but gaining a place in socie[illegible] quires recognition from thos[illegible] value; and for women, this us[illegible] means recognition from men. [illegible] haps this is why the classic mod[illegible] a successful revolution—th[illegible] amassing strength in solidarity, [illegible] then demanding recognition [illegible] masse, from those in power—r[illegible] quite works for women. In as[illegible] why it is so difficult for wome[illegible] find both a home and a wo[illegible] Chopin threw down the challen[illegible] the century. A hundred years l[illegible] we're still repeating the questio[illegible]

SONG

By Stuart Dybek



Before my Uncle Lefty
oped off for Korea, he'd
ved sax and clarinet in the
nts, a combo he started in
n school. He described it
bebop polka band. They
yed at neighborhood tav-
s for parties and weddings.
nen Lefty was finally re-
ed from a Korean POW
np and, after a six-month
our at a VA psychiatric
spital in California, re-
ned to Chicago, everyone
ected he'd resume playing
band. But the only thing
cle Lefty seemed interest-
in playing anymore was
ponies.

My parents never would
ve allowed him to take me
he track, so sometimes on
turday afternoons Uncle
ty would tell them we were
ng across town to a Cubs game. In-
ad, we'd head for Cicero, where the
kies were running at Sportsman's
k. And after Sportsman's we'd cel-
rate our winnings, if there were any
not, by hitting the taverns on Cer-
k Road. We'd worked out a routine
which Uncle Lefty would hoist me
to the wooden bar, where I'd care-
fully plant my feet among the beer bot-
tles, steins, and shot glasses, and, tak-
ing a breath of whiskey air, belt out
"Old Man River." I'd learned the song
by listening to my father's mournful
baritone while he shaved for work. It
wasn't a popular song of the time, but
the men in those taverns had all tot-
ed that barge and lifted that bale and
got a little drunk and landed in jail
too, and had the scars to prove it. The
noisy bar would quiet, small talk de-
ferring to lyrics.

"He's sure got a deep voice
for his age," someone would
invariably comment.

When I finished the song,
holding the last note as if I
dove down to the dark river
bottom for it, they cheered
and showered me with loose
change.

"What's the little man
drinking?" they asked Uncle
Lefty.

"What'll it be, champ?"
Lefty would relay to me.

"Root beer," I'd shout, and
root beer it was.

I'd sit in my short pants,
with my feet dangling over
the bar, slugging from a heavy
stein. Singing gave one a
thirst. Then Uncle Lefty,
who'd also had a few on the
house, would comb his nico-
tine-stained fingers through
my hair, straighten my buttons as if
tuning me up, and lift me from the
bar, gently, like a musical instrument
he was packing away, an instrument
that he carried with him—one that
sometimes rode his shoulders—as he
made the rounds from tavern to tavern.

It was such a Saturday in summer—
earlier that afternoon I'd hit a winner
with a horse named You Bet Your
Dupa—when Uncle Lefty told me he
was leaving town, moving to Califor-
nia. I'm glad we weren't at a tavern or

art Dybek's new book, I Sailed with Ma-
lan *(Farrar, Straus and Giroux), a novel*
tories, will be published in November.

-tration by Steven Dana

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HARPER'S MAGAZINE

at Sportsman's when he told me I c
cause before I could stop myself I start-
ed to cry. We were at Uncle Lefty's
flat on Blue Island Avenue, a busy,
downtrodden street that didn't live up
to the promise of its name. It was the
first time I'd ever been to his place.
He never invited anyone over. Even
my mother—his older sister—had nev-
er been there. It was a single room
with a blue linoleum floor, a small
stove and fridge in one corner, and a
single bed, neatly made, in the other.

"Come on, champ, don't feel that
way. Hey! I got something for you,"
he said. From beneath the bed he slid
out a compact leather case and laid it
on the tightly tucked army blanket.
"Know what this is?"

I shook my head no, afraid if I tried
to talk I'd blubber.

"The suitcase of one of the Seven
Dwarves—Drooly, maybe," Lefty said.
"Flick it open."

I snapped the golden latches. In-
side, set in green velvet, was a dis-
assembled clarinet.

"Cool, huh?" he asked. "I'll show
you how to put it together now, and
when I come back from California, I'll
teach you how to play it. See, first you
gotta wet the reed like this." He wet
the reed in his mouth, then carefully
clamped it on the mouthpiece, which
he'd yet to attach to the rest of the
horn. He blew into the mouthpiece
and it honked like a Happy New Year
party horn. "Give it a try," he told me.

I was still snuffling and couldn't get
a sound out of it.

"Here's a tip," he said. "Don't puff
out your cheeks like you're blowing up
a balloon. When you put the mouth-
piece in your mouth it's like you make
a smile around it. Can you do that for
me, champ? Let me
see you smile."

"Make like you're smiling," Sid
Sovereign told me. "Not like that! Did
I say make like a shit-eating grin? What
are you, retarded? Pay attention. *This*
is a smile!"

I watched him demonstrate the
proper smile. Eyes fierce, he smiled
without showing his teeth. That was a
relief because he had small, rotten-
looking teeth—tobacco stained like
his bristly gray mustache, which was
yellowed where the smoke blew from
his nostrils. He balanced his L
Strike on a cigarette-tarred music
and into his tight-lipped smile fi
mouthpiece of his clarinet and exh
an open-fingered G. I almost exp
ed to see cigarette smoke puff fro
bell of the horn.

"You see *my* cheeks bulging? I'm
blowing up a goddamn balloon
playing the clarinet. You try. S
straight, how do you expect to bre
with posture like that? Now, s
No, dammit! This is a smile.
jabbed his fingers into the corn
my mouth, remolding my face. I c
feel my face not cooperating wit
ther of us, and I tried to concen
and disregard my hurt feelings. M
clarinet lesson was not going the
I'd anticipated.

My father had decided that
Uncle Lefty had given me the
inet, the time had come for m
take lessons.

"Someone who can play can al
make a buck on the side," he reas
and for my father a buck on the
was reason enough. My father hat
see things wasted and that inclu
clarinet sitting unutilized in a
But maybe there was more to it
that. In his way, my father loved
sic. On Saturday nights he rec
The Lawrence Welk Hour on his
reel-to-reel tape deck, an expen
justified because he'd never ha
buy another record. He sang
every morning as he got ready for
sang with a lugubrious resonance
woke up the house. "The voice c
Volga Boat Man is heard in the l
my mother would say. He sang w
gravity that caused him to cut hi
shaving. He shaved with a straigh
zor rather than waste money on bl
and he bled as he sang, his face
up with bloody dots of toilet pa
was always afraid that reaching
note he'd cut his throat. The son
sang were from a lamentable p
could only imagine—"Old Man
er," "Buddy Can You Spare a D
"That Lucky Old Sun":

Up in the mornin', out on the job,
work like a devil for my pay,
but that lucky ole sun, got nothin' t
but roll around heaven all day

When I was little I used to th

ne son he was singing about. cle Lefty had said he'd teach me y, but, my father pointed out, ıad been several years ago, and ıly had Uncle Lefty never come rom California, we didn't even where he was anymore. Besides, ord was out from Johnny Sover- hat his older brother, Sid, had released from jail and needed oney. Whether it was a cheap ıt or cut-rate music lessons, my couldn't pass up a deal.

Sovereign had done time in ıa for passing bad checks. Now ıs back in Chicago, trying to go ht. Sid's brother, Johnny, lived ıis wife and their twins, Judy and ıy Jr., in a two-flat around the r from us. Johnny Jr. and my er brother, Mick, were playmates. ıy Sovereign ran the numbers in eighborhood, Little Village. That s him sound like a big shot, but one knew he was just a small- hood, which in Little Village attract much more notice than d been a mailman. Johnny Sov- n was well connected enough, ver, to get Sid the patronage job nd director for the Marshall re Boys Club. There, in a room ing of liniment, where basket- and boxing gear were stored in a cked cage along with drums and , Sid gave private lessons.

I hated giving lessons. He hated He kept cotton balls in the cel- ane sleeve around his pack of ies. He opened his Luckies with culous care and utilized the cel- ane sleeve to hold matches, loose ge, business cards, phone num- on shreds of paper, and cotton During a lesson, after the first shrieks on the horn, he'd yell, caduck, kid! Are you trying to ru- y hearing?" and reach for the cot- balls. A few more shrieks and he'd up as if to smack you, then in- open a locker stuffed with box- loves and take a swig from a half- bottle. When I first saw him do it, ought he was drinking liniment. at back down smelling of booze. ough I'd yet to master smiling, we on to breathing.

n little sips," he said, "and don't let goddamn horn waggle in your th. The mouthpiece just rests on your bottom lip and the upper teeth bite down." He tested my embouchure by grabbing the horn and giving it a shake that made me feel as if my bottom teeth cut through my lip. "It should be firm so I can't jiggle it around like this. Little sips and then exhale, just touching the reed with your tongue like saying *thoo*." He demonstrated without his horn and boozy spit sprayed in my face. "Little sips! You're trying to eat the horn. You're not playing a wiener. Did you think you were at a wiener lesson?" He rammed the mouthpiece down my throat so that the reed scraped the roof of my mouth. "Can you play like that? Well? It's a question. Are you deaf? Maybe that's the problem here."

I tried to answer with the horn in my mouth. It was like trying to talk at the dentist's. I shook my head no. I was sweating. My face threatened to betray me, but no way was I going to further humiliate myself before this man. I wasn't a wuss, I hadn't cried since the time way back in Uncle Lefty's apartment.

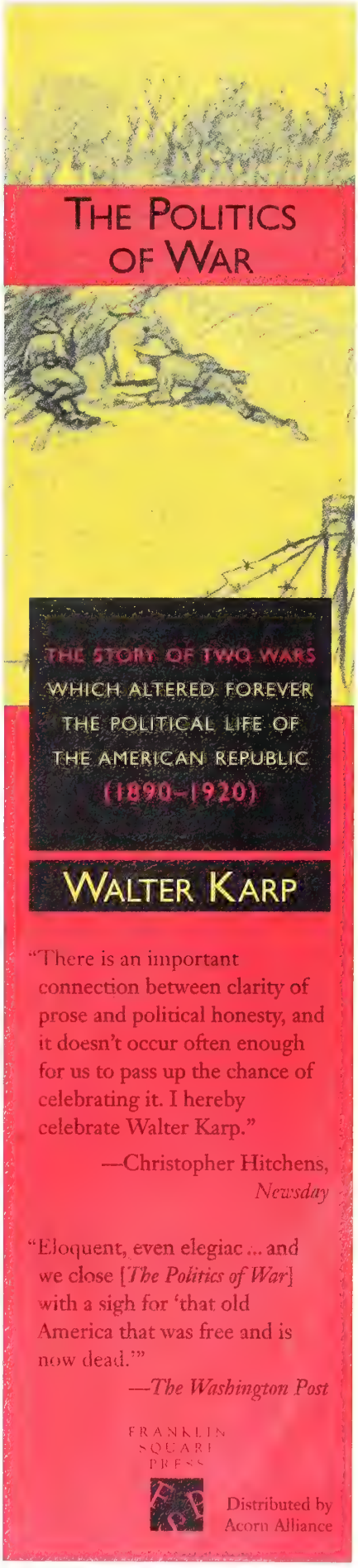
"All right, try again: *thoo*."

I *p-thooed* a squawk that pretty much expressed my feelings, and Sid Sovereign flinched, then shouted, "Little sips, little sips!" and grabbed my nose, pinching it shut, forcing me to breathe little sips through my mouth, but the effect was that of throwing a switch, one that opened the valves of my shameful tears.

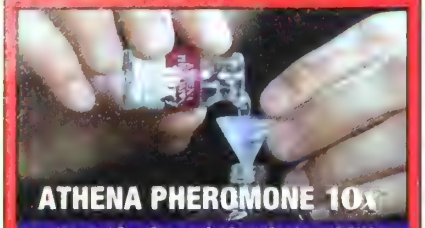
Despite this inauspicious start, I was marching—my maroon cape flaring behind me—down Cermak Road to the joyful cacophony of "When the Saints Go Marching In."

True, at third clarinet I was bringing up the rear; true, Sid Sovereign had told me, "You'd be tenth clarinet if we had a part for it"; and true, I was mostly lost and faking the notes. I had a hard enough time keeping up with the band when we practiced sitting down. Every so often I'd blow a middle C that would fit in. Sometimes, having lost my place on the sheet music, middle C was all I played, as if adding a drone. Sid Sovereign, directing the band, didn't seem to mind. In fact, he suggested I might want to fake it until my tone improved.

By now we were supposed to have



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memorized the music for our upcoming band competition at Riverview, a legendary amusement park on the North Side, but since this was a dress rehearsal we were allowed to have our parts on miniature music stands clipped to our various instruments. The maroon capes and matching maroon-and-gold-brimmed caps, and the white spats that I buttoned over my PF Flyers, had been provided by Sid Sovereign. It was summer, and the capes and caps were wool, and, despite their mothball smell, moth-eaten. They looked to be from another era, the Great Depression maybe. We suspected Sovereign had ransacked some long-forgotten storeroom in the Boys Club system. I admired the ornate satiny uniforms that the softball teams sponsored by neighborhood taverns wore, but I had mixed feelings about parading around in this kind of getup. I wanted to be in the band on our way to Riverview—the most magical place in the city—but not dressed as a dork.

It seemed out of character for Sovereign to be putting so much energy into the Riverview competition. He'd made the brass players polish their horns, and he'd added today's late-afternoon rehearsal to our regular Saturday band practice. Maybe the change in him had something to do with Julio Candido's mother, Gloria, who'd begun attending our rehearsals, an audience of one who filled the band room with a tropical perfume that couldn't all be coming from the white flower in her black hair. Julio's father, wanted for murder, had fled back to Mexico years ago. Mrs. Candido drove Julio to band practice, to school, and everywhere in her white Buick convertible, not a car that a woman employed as a singing cocktail waitress at Fabio's, a mob hangout in the Italian neighborhood just across Western Avenue, could normally afford.

The band room was actually the half-court basketball gym. Usually it smelled of fermented sweat. Mrs. Candido sat beneath the basket on a folding chair, dressed in a sleeveless white summer sheath, her bronze legs crossed, the toe of a white high heel tapping the air to whatever beat Sid Sovereign conducted. He'd begun conducting instead of hiding, sunk in depression, behind his office door, smoking and drinking while we blared directio in the gym, as had been his ro before Mrs. Candido began sho up. The cotton was gone from his He'd even written music for us to while we marched before the ju at the Riverview competition—a to get their attention, something temporary to go with the cl "When the Saints Go Marching

"A little something original, bragged to Mrs. Candido befor struck up the band, "something can bet nobody else will be playi

Sovereign had transcribed arranged Bill Haley and the Co hit, "Rock Around the Clock, marching band.

His arrangement began with glockenspiels tapping out: *one o'c two o'clock, three o'clock,* and the whole band shouting out *ROCK!* tubas picked it up: *four o'clock o'clock, six o'clock,* and we sho *ROCK!* Then other instrumen flutes, cornets, trombones—cou out the remaining hours on the c winding to our final *ROCK!* A s punctuated by the drums, w launched into a swinging march we emphasized by swinging our h as we played.

Mrs. Candido drove slowly Cermak Road, part of the para was hot and sunny, but the top w on the Buick as it always was, no ter how bright the day. It mad wonder why she wanted a conver

Sid Sovereign, wearing a kid maroon cape that looked on hin an askew napkin, led us with the of baton that twirlers throw. A cig bobbed from the corner of his lip his gait wouldn't have passed the a-straight-line test at a DUI sto was definitely marching under th fluence and probably couldn't managed to be out here sober. H naled for us to turn down Calif Avenue. Mrs. Candido got caugh red light and Sovereign held u marching in place until the E turned down California, too. S eign had told us that we were goi march only once around the bloc we'd already gone farther than tha were on our fourth chorus of "Sa As soon as her white convertible c up with us again, we marched th blocks to the elevated station fo

as Park "B." In the blaze of sun-
the shadows of the el tracks and
s latticed the pavement. It felt
stepping into them, and our
g was graced with the resonance
ıadow imparts to sound. I could
e people waiting on the platform
e "B" grinning down at us. A
ar el train clattered over, the
h of its braking steel wheels
as in tune as we were, and Sid
eign signaled with the baton for
stop playing but to continue
ıing in place.
gured the el was the point he'd
heading for and that now we'd
ack to the Boys Club. The el
n was the kind of boundary that
't show up on street maps. East of
acks was Little Village with its
os and Two-twos and Disciples
i; west was a narrow stretch of no-
s-land; and then the African-
ican neighborhood of Douglas
embossed with the graffiti of the
e Unknowns.
e "B" train overhead clapped its
shut and rattled off downtown to
n rhythm.
h, yeah!" Sovereign hollered,
ng the baton as if directing the
s departure. The baton had be-
his scepter, and he saluted Mrs.
ido, who had all the windows
and waved back. She was wear-
ınglasses and a picture hat that
d too big for the interior of the
:—one more reason to drop the
overeign regally sceptered at the
ıuters descending from the sta-
They looked surprised to see a
awaiting their arrival.
h, yeah!" he yelled. "I feel like we
march all the way to Riverview!"
ictured the Blue Streak, Shoot
Chutes, Aladdin's Palace, the Ro-
a ride whose centrifugal force
ed you to a wall, defying gravity
ı the floor dropped out.
think he's on speedballs," Miguel
r said.
kay, my little hepcats, my little
achis," Sovereign yelled. "Okay,
let me hear it! A one, two, and
enspiels, yeah!"
ne glocks started pinging *one*
k, two o'clock, three o'clock. We
ted *ROCK!* and Sovereign gave a
hop and landed, yelling *ka-POW!*
was the one part of the song I

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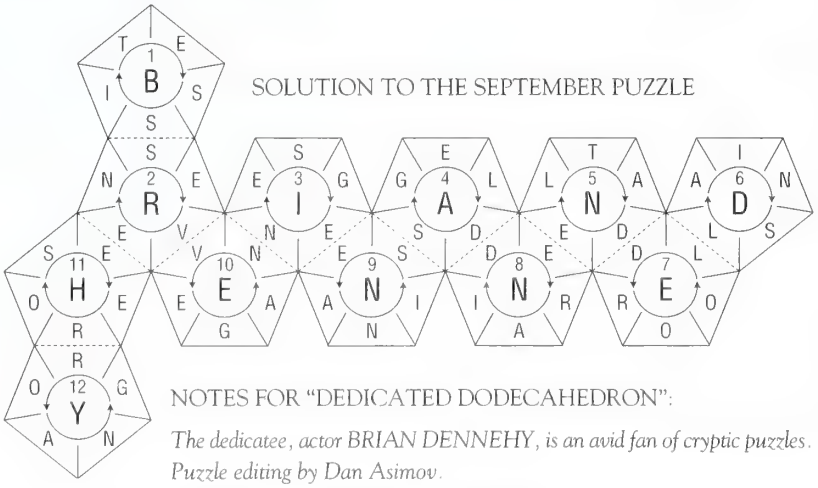
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SOLUTION TO THE SEPTEMBER PUZZLE

NOTES FOR "DEDICATED DODECAHEDRON":

The dedicatee, actor BRIAN DENNEHY, is an avid fan of cryptic puzzles.
Puzzle editing by Dan Asimov.
Anagrams are indicated with an asterisk (*).

SIX-LETTER WORDS: 1. g.-lad-e.-s(ome); 2. avenge*; 3. nerves, hidden; 4. Her(O)e's; 5. insane*; 6. see(m)ing; 7. I-s(l)and; 8. B-is-set; 9. r(a-in)ed; 10. do-lore(s); 11. den-tal(k); 12. O-rangy.

FIVE-LETTER WORDS: 1. delta, hidden; 2. (r)aider; 3. (tub)erose; 4. 's-even, pun; 5. gel(d[rugs])s*; 6. genes, homonym; 7. sites, homonym; 8. anise, Hyannis, pun; 9. groan*; 10. dro(O)l, rev.; 11. s(L.A.)in; 12. v(e.g.)an.

In group B, clue 7, the word "ear" was misprinted as "car." We offer our apologies to all the solvers. Compliments to those who solved the puzzle anyway.

could keep up with, and I was into it. The bystanders from the el train cheered. Sid Sovereign yelled, "Oh yeah, baby, tubas! Tubas, give it to me, baby, oh yeah, let me have it!" We gave it to him: an oompahed *four o'clock, five o'clock, six*. Sovereign pointed the baton straight ahead, and to the roar of *ROCK!* and of a "B" train screeching in, we lockstepped under the tracks, west into no-man's-land.

The pavement shook beneath our synchronized, rock-steady, maroon columns, and for the first time I managed to keep my place in the music and dared to play louder, suddenly recalling a dream in which Uncle Lefty's clarinet could play itself. Playing felt automatic, as if the band glided on a conveyor belt of the music we blew before us. People, more and more of them black, stepped from doorways and threw their upper-story windows open to gape. Pumping the baton like a drum major, Sid Sovereign led us through stop signs without stopping, as if we had the immunity of a funeral. When the green of Douglas Park appeared, Mrs. Candido began honking her horn, and Sid Sovereign, pretending to toot the baton as if it were a clarinet, and yelling, "Oh yeah, baby, POW! POW! POW! bass drum," bowed in her direction. He must have thought she was musically tooting her automobile horn, adding a touch of Spike Jones, though what she was signaling was, Where the hell are you taking my little Julio?

Sovereign hadn't noticed that our parade had grown longer. We'd attracted a group of black kids who'd been hitting a softball in the park. Other kids from Douglas Park had joined them. They were marching in the gutter beside our column, and still more were running in our direction. Maybe Sovereign thought that music afforded us some dispensation and that everyone simply wanted to join in the fun, as if we were Alexander's Ragtime Band.

It almost looked that way at first. The guys from Douglas Park seemed to be enjoying themselves—laughing at our outfits, marching backward, colliding into our ranks, and yelling, *POW! POW! POW! motherfucker*. A lanky guy in a shower cap co-directed us with a softball bat, mimicking Sovereign's baton technique. We marched with our eyes fixed straight ahead, as if oblivious to the growing chaos at our flanks and the shouts of "You disturbing the peace!" But it was impossible to ignore the guy in the shower cap whacking the bass drum with the bat, radically changing the beat. We were heading down a sidewalk across the street from the park when out of an upper-story window someone emptied a pot of water into the tubas. A bottle crashed down. Voices yelled, "Hey, shut that honky shit up down there!" The bass-drum player was in a tug of war with a kid who wanted the trophy of a fuzzy mallet, while the shower-capped guy with the bat kept banging the drum.

We were double-timing, triple-timing, nearly jogging and still playing—I was back to droning middle C—and a confetti of garbage fell from windows and roofs. Sovereign was hit in the head—for an instant it appeared his skull had exploded—but it was just a tomato. He staggered and, looking stunned, directed us to turn down a side street. Mrs. Candido, blaring her horn nonstop, screamed, "Julio! Julio!" Julio broke ranks and ran for the car as a half-eaten pizza kited down, splatting the convertible top and windshield. It looked comical to see Mrs. Candido's wipers working as she gunned away. I wished I were in the Buick with Julio—they wouldn't hear a peep from me about the top being up—and when the car disappeared I felt abandoned.

A trombone player had lost his 'bone to a guy whose biceps were not tattooed but branded with gang insignias, and who was now busy working the slide to produce brassy lip farts. A kid about my age, smiling cheerfully beneath the brim of a White Sox hat nesting on an Afro, grabbed for my clarinet. I wrenched it away, filled with sudden panic over having to tell Uncle Lefty, if he ever returned from California, that I'd lost his horn. The band broke into a disorganized jog, and then we were running, abandoning horns and glockenspiels, the drummers trapped in their harnesses, every man for himself in full retreat. I cut from the pack, down another side street and another.

The itchy cape flared behind me, tugging at my throat, perfect for someone to grab and pull me down. Voices shouted, but I didn't turn to see was chasing. My ill-fitting hat flew then my sheet music, and next the on music stand, but I kept a gri the clarinet. I was fast, the faste in my school. I might be tenth inet, but I was first in every foot and the spats buttoned above m Flyers seemed to make me faster st if I'd added winged heels. I thou was fleeing in the direction o man's-land, but wasn't sure. The st were a blur and I had a stitch in my but I kept running. On an impu turned down a side street I hoped v lead back onto California. My shoes splashed through water, not dles but a current that swirled the bish out of the gutters. The stree flooded: every hydrant opened, b propped in front of their geys mouths, fanning pressurized wate an atomized, prismatic mist. I wa strange neighborhood that expr its anarchy in water, a village o shore of pouring hydrants. Its in tants wore wet clothes plastered to bodies and cavorted through th rents. A young Spanish girl in s stood beside the red fountain of drant, her arms spread as if she wer ancing on water. She was hummi herself—a tune without a langua maybe her secret fire-pump song

"Hey, Clarinet Boy," she singso and I stopped and stood catchin breath. "Play something," she sai gestured for me to come throug curtain of spray. I stepped to v she waited under a canopy of ca ing water as if I belonged there.

"What you wanna hear?" I ask if I could play anything.

Answers to the September ("Playing Around"

1 Monopoly; **2** Scrabble; **3** Rubbe **4** Golf; **5** Napoleon; **6** François terand; **7** Japan; **8** New York C Miniature golf; **10** Ronald Reaga All three; **12** The First Battle o Run; **13** Marie Antoinette; **14** *New World*. **Correction:** Question the August Quiz, "Labor Pains," s have identified Douglas MacArth a general when he took part i gassing; the answer should not ha cluded Dwight D. Eisenhower.

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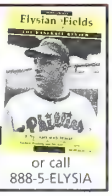
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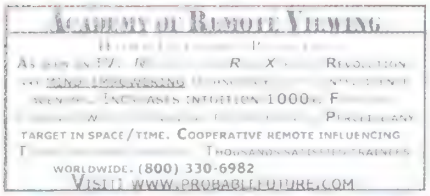
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LETTERS

Continued from page 5

Cristina Nehring's call for more sumptuous essays. His caricature "average Kansan" in "Get Rich o Out" [Essay, June] is laughable ar accurate. He describes an Inte hip, revolutionary farmer with a c degree, and would have his aud believe all Kansans are right-win reals. In fact, average Kansans most Americans, are too busy w ing basketball to care.

Frank's adolescent rebellion a his conservative home state is ac panied by Wayne Biddle's swipe a tle Dorothy from Kansas" ["Home Burning," Letter from Washin June]. Frank claims that mainst conservatives perceive a federal ernment staffed by elitist libe Kansans, regardless of their pol opinions, now have reason to as this about *Harper's Magazine*.

Matthew Gertken
Hutchinson, Kans.

The Middle-American Mi

Curtis White ["The New Ce ship," Readings, August] claims t where the popular media is fran truthful, and where everybody k that Clinton "blew up" a Sud pharmaceutical lab. Does White's vision not receive Fox News and Or perhaps Bloomington-Norma nois, is an astonishingly well-read White ought to get out of town and visit some far-off place su Oakland, where many people hav er even heard of Sudan.

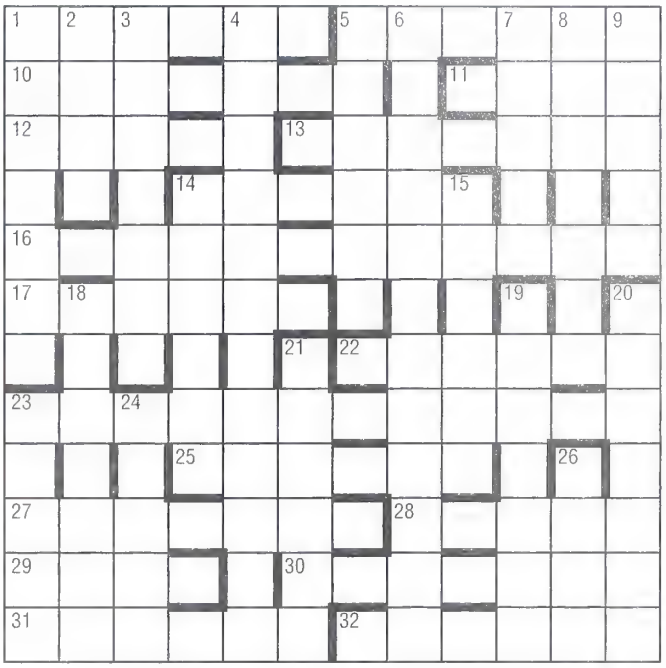
Candida Pugh
Oakland

Curtis White's essay reminded a Soviet emigré student's long comment: "I think the main dif ence between our two countries i in Russia we're taught to have opinion, and in America you're t to have none." It is curious to which system of popular mind co proved more effective.

James Ciment
Marina del Rey, Calif.

Sixes and Sevens (and Twelves)

By Richard E. Maltby Jr.
(with acknowledgments to Zander of The Listener*)*



The clues to words of six, seven, and twelve letters are grouped separately. Solvers must determine where each answer belongs in the diagram, using answers to the numbered clues as guides.

Answers include one proper name and one foreign word. As always, mental repunctuation of a clue is the key to its solution. The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 91.

ACROSS

11. Light in a bucket? So they say! (4)
12. Gambler cried foul (5)
28. America leads power company in consumption (5)
29. Get out of the can, remove water (4)

DOWN

2. Fanatic brought up to be a singer (4)
7. "Going Ape" reality shows—yawner (5)
9. Rusty and I had performed a makeover (5)
23. Star in animated movie—Bang!—attracted to boys and girls (5)
24. Nothing sold the way it looks—that's a relief (5)
26. It looks like s---! Oh, right! (4)

TWELVE-LETTER WORDS

a. I'm exceedingly bright and above convention, certainly
b. Recommended a preparation taken in the army
c. Current Queen Elizabeth and others with trains
d. Black backed sticky stuff that is attached to white backed sticky stuff that is used to make a kind of swing (*hyphenated*)

SIX-LETTER WORDS

a. Liens released, finally put sign up
b. Squash urge to pursue board game and chisel
c. Object to work with, put forward
d. Victory one got in reckless transport
e. In wedding, slings mud, generating smear
f. Million in gold reversed lunatic's fall
g. Networks' man in disarray
h. Possessive editor shortened—it's right there in black-and-white!
i. Hacks off making second-rate verses
j. Popular nun without hesitation will get press
k. Power briefly taken over by street elite
l. Hot number no longer in place

SEVEN-LETTER WORDS

a. Rewriting due process. Remains to be seen!
b. Overdose on bad speed—some plants produce it
c. Developers—at the end they leave unceremoniously!
d. Visionary gets us halfway to Piano Quartet
e. Visionary sounds quickly fry us
f. Around mid exercises, kind of tire—find way out!
g. Juvenile demised—a result of acting badly?
h. One hitting the high spots, running from Belgravia to Richmond
i. French peer over mountain, voice upset
j. Pig used to be horse or bull

Contest Rules: Send completed diagram with name and address to "Sixes and Sevens (and Twelves)," *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Entries must be received by October 13. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive one-year subscriptions to *Harper's Magazine*. Winners' names will be printed in the December issue. Winners of the August puzzle, "Dressed to the Nines," are Theresa O'Lansen, Port Richey, Florida; Peter McCorquodale, Berkeley, California; and Michael Merscher, Southfield, Michigan.



HEARTS AND MINDS

1. What decisive battle did Napoleon predict that he would win "by lunchtime"?

2. Seventeen years before achieving it, a French military official predicted that the pacification of what African country's first resistance movement would take fifteen days?

3. Where did the French develop the *tache d'huile*, or oil-slick, method of colonial pacification?

4. Which African tribe's "army" did Britain's Lieutenant-General Lord Chelmsford admit to having underestimated in 1879?

5. In what war did guerrilla fighter Francis Marion reportedly inspire his adversaries to complain that he didn't fight like a gentleman?

6. Of what Islamic ethnic group did a major national poet disdainfully write in 1832: "Their god is freedom, their law is war"?

7. What Austrian critic wrote of war, "first, one hopes to win; then one expects the enemy to lose; then, one is satisfied that he too is suffering; in the end, one is surprised that everyone has lost"?

8. The continued existence of what "most flagitious" of governments did President Thomas Jefferson find "inconsistent with the safety of other nations"?

9. What U.S. president's national security adviser implemented a plan in hopes of "drawing the Russians into the Afghan trap"?

10. What future U.S. president said of Vietnam in 1965: "We could pave the whole country and put parking stripes on it and still be home by Christmas"?

11. What CBS newscaster exclaimed on the air in 1968, "What the hell is going on? I thought we were winning the war"?

12. With which of these did the U.S. share its intelligence: Saddam Hussein, Ho Chi Minh, Mr. Tsering?

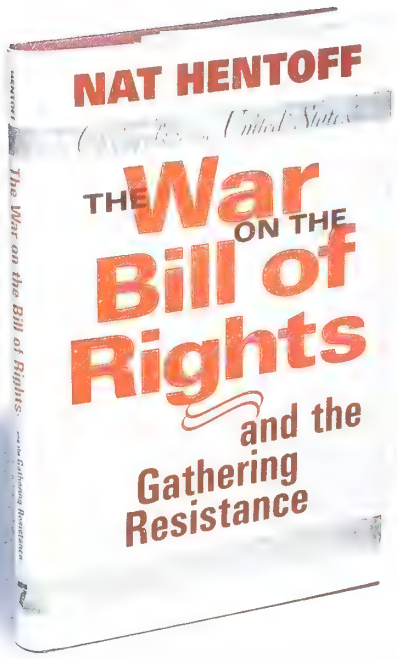
13. During World War II guerrilla fighters in what country made bullets from brass curtain rods?

14. In accepting the Nobel Peace Prize, who observed, "We prepare for war like precocious giants and for peace like retarded pygmies"?

er's, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Entries must be received by October 15. The sender of the first correct set of answers opened at random will receive a one-year subscription to Harper's Magazine. The winner's name will be printed in the December issue. The answers to last month's quiz, "Playing A[illegible]" appear on page 92. The winner of the August Quiz, "Labor Pains," is Joe Mullin, San Francisco, California.



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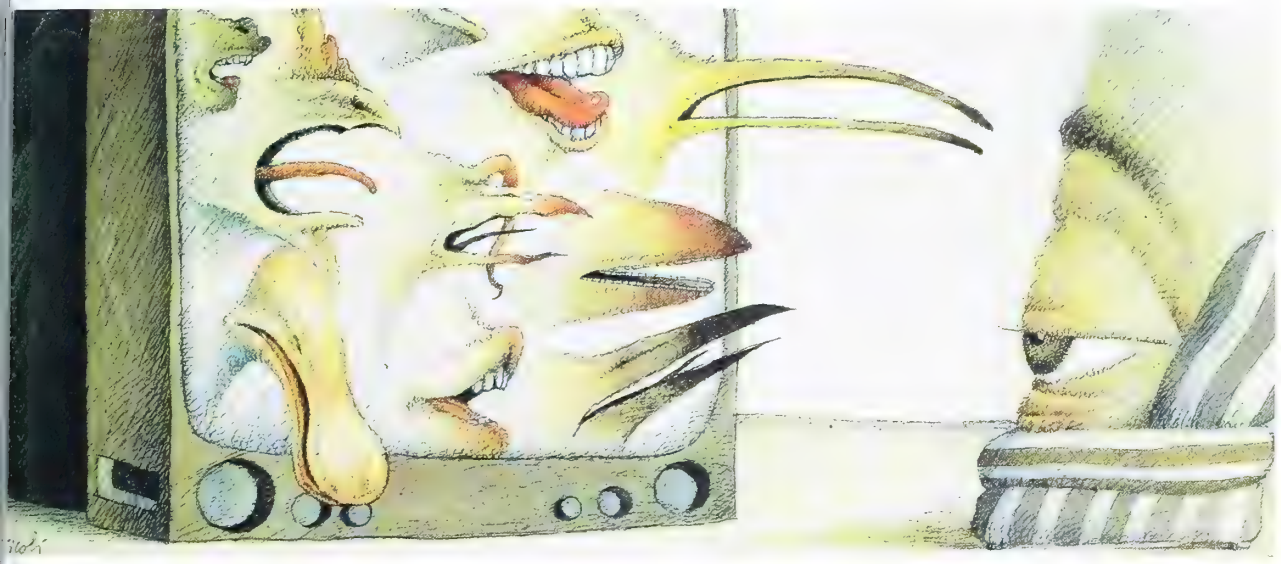
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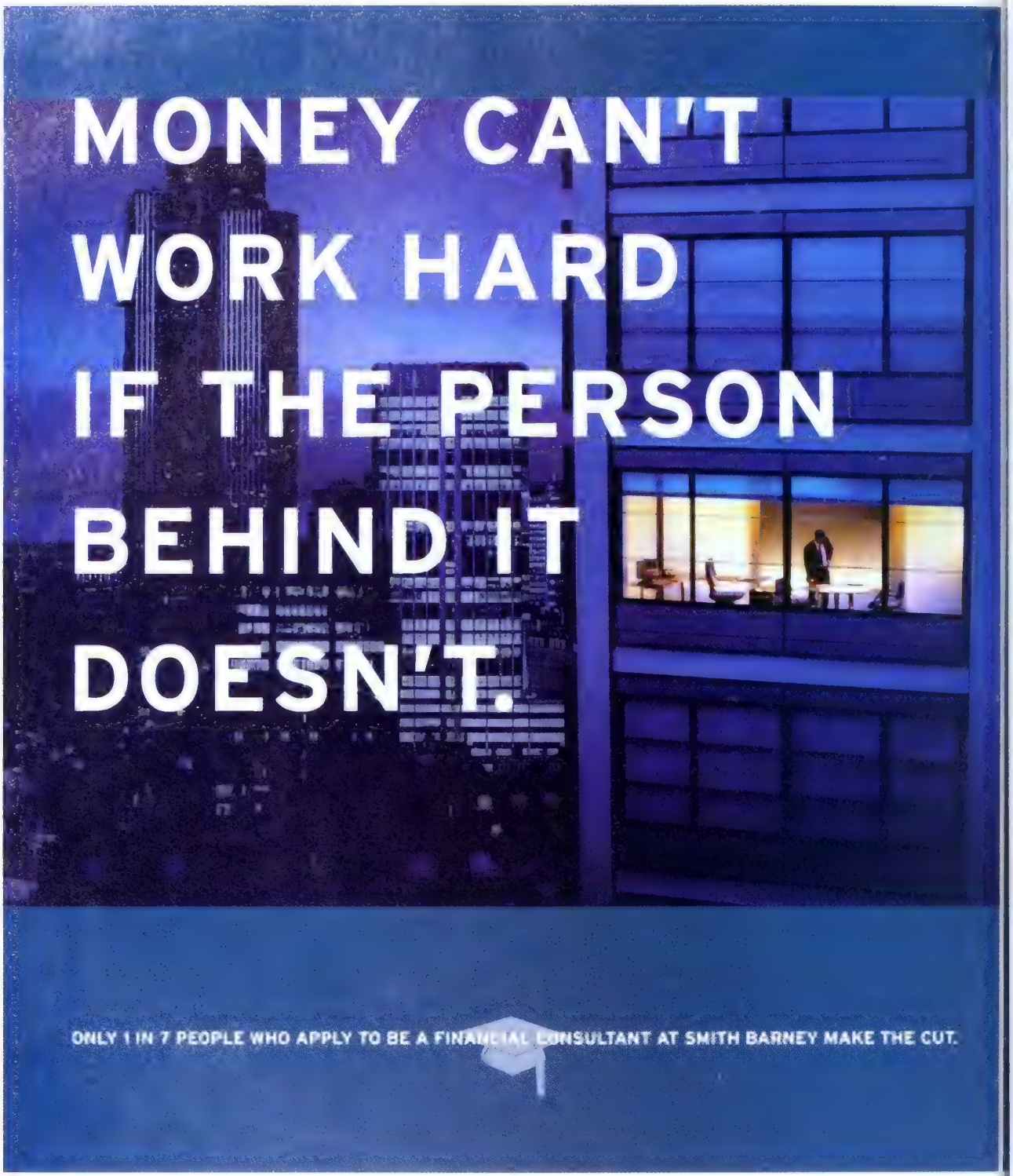
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RUNNING WILD

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LETTERS

Mismanaged Care

Although I am sympathetic to the notion that managed care in prisons leads to substandard treatment, Wil S. Hylton's characterization of hepatitis C ["Sick on the Inside," August] leads me to question his overall understanding of the subject matter.

With a dramatic retelling of his own experience of hepatitis A, Hylton implies that all hepatitis victims are so dramatically impaired as to require two months of bed rest. Nothing could be further from the truth; hepatitis A and C are completely different diseases with different causes, prognoses, and treatments.

Hylton expresses outrage that prisoners are not treated for hepatitis C, implying that because they are prisoners, treatment that would be standard outside of prison is denied them. Hylton fails to mention that even in the non-prison world, hepatitis C is commonly left untreated. In fact, a 2002 study in the *Annals of Internal Medicine* noted that of 327 hepatitis C patients referred to a specialty liver clinic, only 28 perc[illegible] were ultimately treated. There [illegible] many reasons for this: treatments [illegible] lengthy, requiring at least six mor[illegible] of weekly shots; they are toxic, r[illegible] dering many patients sick with [illegible] like symptoms or major depressi[illegible] and they are often ineffective, w[illegible] between 60 and 70 percent of [illegible] tients not responding to treatmen[illegible]

Hylton did not falsify any fa[illegible] but he has misrepresented import[illegible] aspects of a disease in ways that [illegible] further the dramatic goals of his [illegible] ry but undercut his credibility.

Lily Huang, M.D.
Oakland

Wil S. Hylton responds:

Dr. Huang rightly points out t[illegible] there is an enormous difference [illegible] tween hepatitis A and hepatitis [illegible] In fact, it was *because* of this dif[illegible] ence that I chose to write about [illegible] experience with hepatitis A[illegible] hoped that my testimony about [illegible] relatively minor A strain would g[illegible] readers a more personal understa[illegible] ing of just how awful the more v[illegible] lent C strain is. Because somewh[illegible] between 20 and 40 percent [illegible] American prisoners are infec[illegible] with the disease, I wanted reader[illegible] have a sense of the headaches [illegible] fatigue that are common to b[illegible]

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is. If Dr. Huang interpreted the ge to suggest that hepatitis A hepatitis C are indistinguish- I regret the misunderstanding.

for the treatment protocol for titis C, it is clear that there are as risks to patients who receive feron, and it is true that not one is a good candidate for it. issue here is not whether *every* nt should receive the treatment whether *any* patient should. Ac- ng to Correctional Medical Ser- regional medical director Gary pbell, CMS has adopted a poli- f "not encouraging anyone to rgo therapy." This is a far cry, tically, from the 28 percent giv- eatment in the clinic to which Huang refers. I would suggest, as d in my article, that to deny ment is not in keeping with the of medicine.

nally, I hope that Dr. Huang's ppointment in my passage on atitis was not too distracting the central theme of the story: CMS operates behind a wall of cy, using half a billion dollars of lic money every year without ering to account for how any of spent—or not spent, as the case be.

Sick on the Inside" exposes the ical neglect endured by many of 2 million prisoners in the United es. But while enumerating the ngs of Correctional Medical Ser- s, Wil Hylton fails to place the ne for shoddy medicine where it mately belongs, on the depart- nts of corrections that contract n correctional health-care com- ies. If CMS and other companies oloy unqualified or substandard and delay providing—or never vide—needed medical evalua- s and appropriate treatment, it is ause public correctional agencies e negotiated weak contracts, un- taken scant monitoring of ser- s provided under the contracts, made minimal efforts to ensure ountability and quality control.

An improvement in prison med- services requires, as a start, in- endent expert commissions to iew the quality of care supplied,

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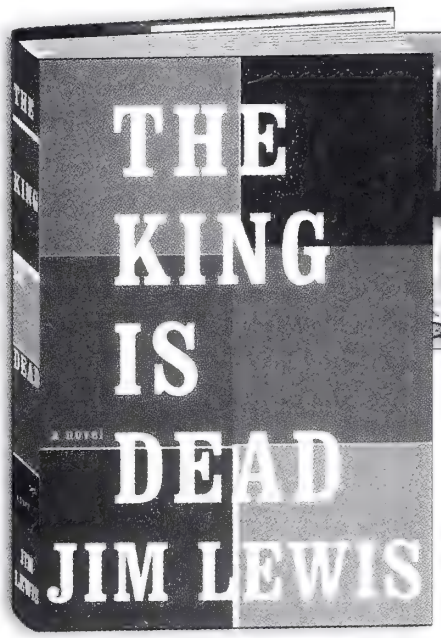




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strong and enforced contracts with private health-care providers, effective inmate medical-complaint mechanisms, and legislation that enables prisoners to sue for medical malpractice. Prisoners may not be a powerful political constituency or have consumer clout, but human decency and respect for basic rights mandate action by public officials to ensure that time behind bars does not include needless illness and death.

Jamie Fellner
U.S. Program Director
Human Rights Watch
New York City

What makes "Sick on the Inside" supercilious is the fact that there are hundreds of thousands of working men, women, and families in the United States who have not committed crimes yet are ineligible for any health care. Either they don't earn enough to afford it or they make too much to receive state aid. Their only choice is to suffer untreated or to go into debt attempting to get health care. Both options represent captivity of another kind.

Donna J. Kapa
Knoxville, Tenn.

Since "Sick on the Inside's" subtitle refers to "the coming prison plague," I was surprised that Wil Hylton did not mention HIV or AIDS. Not only is the overall HIV rate in U.S. prisons up to five times higher than in the general population; many prisoners are infected with both HIV and hepatitis C.

In some states, prisons are required by law to provide antiretroviral therapy to HIV-infected inmates. Handing out pills does not prevent the virus from being spread among prisoners, however, and authorities generally refuse to make condoms available, claiming that easy access would merely "promote" sex.

Even a basic cost-benefit analysis would prove that prison authorities and CMS would save money in the long run by emphasizing preventive medicine. Unfortunately, their total disregard for the basic humanity of prisoners, regardless of why and how inmates end up in their c is the only factor in the decisi making process

Jeff Hooper
Brooklyn

Our justice system is cheaper when prisoners are denied medi care. The indifference expressed Correctional Medical Services other correctional health-c providers is why our Founding thers sought to proscribe cruel unusual punishment.

James J. Herkenham
State Hill, N.Y.

Among the Believers

It is discouraging to note how m of Terry Eagleton's judgment is cided by V. S. Naipaul's ethnic ["A Mind So Fine," Reviews, S tember]. That Naipaul is a nativ Trinidad writing convincingly i British idiom entirely settles matter: his conservatism can o be the usual sucking up to pov and his political ideas should be taken seriously. Eagleton sim won't allow writers of color, h ever anguished and complex th experience, occasionally to l right instead of left. All Eagle manages to bestow is a condesce ing measure of sympathy: "É grés," he writes, cannot be expec to "kick a hole in the lifeboat t are clambering aboard." Of the p sibility that Naipaul might h views worth hearing on postc nial topics by virtue not only of birth but of his considerable sight, Eagleton's review gives credible hint.

John Romano
Santa Monica, Calif.

No Dice

While I appreciate the Puttan oly cards' laugh factor ["Hotel Baltic, Hourly Rates," Readir September], *Harper's Maga* should have acknowledged that game was created by the Commi for the Civil Rights of Prostitute an effort to increase awarenes the burgeoning sex slave trade

When regarded in this con-
the cards "You meet a sadistic
t who covers you in bruises"
They find your skeleton in the
s," among others, lose some of
humor.

Ruffner
land

rait of a Malady

an S. Connell's account of
isco Goya's *Portrait of the Fami-*
Charles IV is a fine piece of in-
ve ["A Masterpiece of Loath-
Portfolio, September], but
ell fails to mention that with
panish throne came another,
ess enjoyable inheritance.
les III passed on a genetic pre-
sition to a disorder known as
libular prognathism, or Class
eletal malocclusion. The disfig-
effects of this condition—
y everted lower eyelids, a thick,
ing lower lip, and a protruding
ike a battering ram—are clearly
le in several of the faces in
's portrait, particularly that of
nfanta María Josefa, the king's
rtunate sister.
seems unnecessarily cruel to
her "demented," to ridicule her
of cosmetics, and, indeed, to
acterize the rest of the family as
ggish," "feebleminded," or
ched." Leaving aside the ques-
as to whether Queen María
a was a nymphomaniac, I do not
in her face "a look of gastric
evolence." Nor can she be
ed for losing her teeth, one of
elatively few things she actually
in common with many of her
and's subjects.
eanwhile, a quick survey of the
s along a supermarket's aisles
irms that the Spanish royal fam-
as portrayed by Goya in 1800,
no more and no less ugly than
rest of us are now.

us Trumble
ator of Paintings and Sculpture
Center for British Art
Haven

n S. Connell responds:
Mr. Trumble states that I failed to mention the Bourbon genetic inheritance. True. I failed to mention a number of things. He states that it is unnecessarily cruel to call María Josefa "demented." I wrote that she had a "demented expression." He states that I ridiculed her use of cosmetics. Aside from mentioning her beauty patch, "which fashionable ladies have employed for a long time," I said nothing about María Josefa's cosmetics, nor did I characterize the rest of the family as sluggish, feebleminded, and poached. I described King Charles as sluggish; by most accounts, he was. I noted that Don Antonio Pascual was feebleminded; beyond doubt, he was. Charles Poore commented that Velázquez gave all his Philips a look of poached nobility; in my opinion, Charles looks equally poached. Mr. Trumble implies that I blame María Luisa for losing her teeth—a non sequitur that leaves me completely baffled.

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NOTEBOOK

Reading the mail

By Lewis H. Lapham

do not say that a man who takes no rest in politics is a man who minds own business; we say he has no iness here at all.

—Pericles

When I read the letters to the tor arriving at the magazine in r larger numbers over the course the last several months, I'm struck the force of the language rising to et the occasion of what a woman Oceanside, California, described "this grinning pestilence of a gov-ıment in Washington." The let-s address every topic on the list of e country's political misfortunes—e tragic and farcical attempt at litary empire in Iraq, the suddenly wollen tumor" of a federal debt ely to beggar the next generation our own citizens, "the criminal as-ılt" on our civil liberties conduct-by an attorney general who be-ves that "in America, there is no ng but Jesus," a president so badly ghtened that when he appears in ɔnt of a television camera to wave e sword of justice, he looks to a ader in Hamden, Connecticut, ike the national deer caught in the ıtional headlights."

I take from the mail a feeling of ıcouragement and hope because I ink the letters prove a point oppo-te to the one their authors intend. he humor and energy of the prose ve the lie to the professions of cyn-ism and despair, and I'm left with ıe thought that maybe it's possible ɔ upgrade the concern for the coun-y's general state of well-being from luxury to a necessity. For the last wenty-odd years, ever since Ronald eagan first opened his window on ıe White House lawn to discover that once again it was "morning in America," the merchants of the country's upscale socioeconomic opinion have been reminding their clientele that politics no longer matter. Of what consequence the tiresome questions of law and public policy when compared to the wonders of Microsoft and the miracle of the New York Stock Exchange? The country's immense prosperity during the decades of the 1980s and 1990s (the nation's household assets up from $6.5 trillion to $35 trillion, the GDP up from $4.9 trillion to $9.2 trillion) lent credence to the theory of a future that could be bought instead of earned. History was mercifully at an end; the financial markets (light unto the nations, answer to everybody's prayers) made all the decisions of any consequence or size; politicians handed around the party hats and hired the mariachi band. If the *res publica* required routine maintenance or minor repairs, send for George Soros, Steven Spielberg, or the army.

The presumptions of wealth and ease made possible Bill Clinton's extended run on the Washington stage and provided the background music for the presidential election of 2000, the two candidates presenting themselves as harmless, ornamental figures bearing well-bred names, both of them valuable objects certain to go well with the furniture in the dining room or the den, both available from the Horchow catalogue. The attitude doesn't match the color scheme of the killing in Iraq, and if we're to account for, and possibly correct, the country's reversals of fortune over the last two years, where else do we turn except to politics—the instrument with which we make our freedom—and how else do politics get made if not with language?

A number of readers touched on the questions in their remarks about the failures of the national news media. The letters sometimes mentioned the "conservative bias" embedded in the walls at Fox News and the *Wall Street Journal*, less often the "liberal bias" in the drinking water at the *New York Times*; sometimes the correspondents referred to the "blithering stupidity" of a particular newspaper columnist or television talk-show host; nearly always they deplored the absence of "vigorous dissent" on the part of a "free and fair press" presumably designated by the First Amendment to defend the country against the ambition of dangerous fools.

The faults to be found with the news media are as numberless as the pebbles on the beach at Malibu, but it's a mistake to blame them for the current emptiness of our politics. To do so serves no purpose other than to flatter the media's sense of their own self-importance. Having attended a good many impressive conferences at which various well-placed figures within the peerage of the fourth estate puff contentedly on pipes and admire the view of the mountains or the sea, I long ago learned that nothing so alarms the assembled company as the intrusion of a new idea. The character of the business is commercial, not political, and when the speakers on the dais praise one another as ferocious champions of liberty pacing tirelessly to and fro on the ramparts of freedom, the effect is comic. The ladies and gentlemen seated behind the wine glasses enjoy the

patronage of very large, very rich, and [illegible] political columnist, publisher, anchorperson, theater critic learns to [illegible] Prince of Wales.

Contrary to the preferred portrait of the journalist as relentless seeker after truth (armed and possibly dangerous), the stock character more nearly representative of the trade would be that of the sophisticated [illegible] stern forever worrying about the quality and number of his dinner invitations, glad to do the king's bidding, quick to repeat the gossip heard on the palace stairs, a credulous and servile little friend to all the world. The media follow a fashion or a trend, and the manufacturers of the nation's news define the product as anything that turns a profit—expressions of "vigorous dissent" from Noam Chomsky or Howard Zinn as well as Donald Rumsfeld's assurances that the Pentagon knows where to find Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction.

Unwilling to take chances with any book, movie, rock song, or situation comedy that doesn't meet the expectations of what the prospective audiences wish to see and hear, the institutional media preserve the myths the society deems precious, reassuring their patrons that all is well, that the American truths remain securely in place, that the banks are safe, our doctors competent, our presidents interested in the common welfare, our intercontinental ballistic masterpieces, our weapons invincible, and our democratic institutions the wonder of an admiring world. Yes, Virginia, there is a world out there, and it not only can be vividly described but also looks just the way you always wanted it to look.

Nor does anybody care very much which lies pass for truth. If in one season President Bill Clinton can be promoted and sold as a sexual pervert and a thieving juvenile delinquent, in another season he can be promoted and sold as a benign elder statesman—experienced and wise, the voice of reason and the soul of honor. Supported by the correct marketing strategy, both editions of the man can be processed into headlines, television time, and best-selling biography. The truth is something that Peter Jennings maybe will get around to next summer when he has time to read *Moby-Dick* or listen to Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.

The corporate media like to present the political argument going forward in the country at the moment as a Punch and Judy show—on stage left a motley crew of liberal-minded people allied with the yearnings of the human spirit and the mechanics of social reform, on stage right a military formation of conservative-minded people who stand, foursquare and all-American, for the sanctity of property and the punishment of scoundrels. I never know how to make sense of the proceedings. The meanings of the words "liberal" and "conservative" have been so mercilessly abused over the last twenty years that they offer more information about the person who employs them as insults than they do about the person on whose head they fall like stones.

To say that A is liberal or B conservative is to say nothing intelligible about his or her politics, conduct, occupation, place of residence, or record of prior arrests. It is conceivable, even likely, that the woman identified as a liberal thinks nothing of tapping her daughter's telephone and enjoys an after-tax income of $2 million a year supplied by eight-year-old seamstresses earning $3 a day in a Chinese basement. On the other side of the stereotype, it is equally conceivable that the man labeled as a conservative devotes his life and fortune to the protection of hummingbirds and refuses to eat grapes picked by nonunion Mexican field hands.

As negative caricatures, however, the words return a high definition theatrical value, and by listening to Rush Limbaugh's radio broadcasts and by reading the editorials in *The Nation*, I've learned to recognize, sometimes on the evidence of no more than two sentences, the anti-liberal and the anti-conservative. The anti-liberal pri[illegible] himself on the clarity of his intelle[illegible] When talking about the faculty of [illegible] telligence (his own or that of [illegible] friends, associates, and Paul W[illegible] fowitz), he invariably describes i[illegible] "ruthless" or "unrelenting." Believ[illegible] that he has seen through the veil [illegible] sentimental illusion, he talks inc[illegible] santly about "reality" and what thi[illegible] cost, about the way in which delu[illegible] technocrats persist in confusing [illegible] Kingdom of Heaven with the Dep[illegible] ment of Health, Education, and W[illegible] fare. Sooner or later he gets aroun[illegible] saying that there isn't enough mo[illegible] in the world, and he can be coun[illegible] upon to draw the comparison betw[illegible] Susan Sontag and Barbra Streisan[illegible]

The anti-conservative prides him[illegible] on the quality of his emotions. [illegible] quainted with a Canadian poet w[illegible] supplies him with bootleg metaph[illegible] he believes that he has looked i[illegible] the bottomless wells of human sorr[illegible] He talks incessantly about "the mo[illegible] parameters" and what things me[illegible] about Calvinism made abominable [illegible] Republicans as landlords undeserv[illegible] ly rich and prematurely old. Soo[illegible] or later he gets around to saying t[illegible] there isn't enough love in the wo[illegible] and he can be counted upon to d[illegible] the comparison between Orar[illegible] County and Nazi Germany.

Given the stupidities of t[illegible] American government and the [illegible] equities of the American econom[illegible] both the anti-liberal and the an[illegible] conservative can find proofs of th[illegible] worst suspicions in every mornin[illegible] newspaper, and the resulting ar[illegible] ment—preferably loud, embellish[illegible] with dark frowns and meaning[illegible] glances—sells books, brings lect[illegible] fees, and drums up an audience [illegible] the Sunday-morning talk shows.

The media's extravagant cr[illegible] promotions of the synthetic deb[illegible] sedate their audiences with the d[illegible] of boredom and so encourage a g[illegible] eral retreat into what the late Wa[illegible] Karp understood to be "the corrupt[illegible] consolation of cynicism." Karp e[illegible] ployed the phrase to describe the [illegible] titude of mind adopted by a gene[illegible] tion of American intellectu[illegible] responding to the Wilson Admin[illegible] tration's harsh suppression of f[illegible] speech during and after World W[illegible]

ing themselves suffocated by a ate of opinion in which dissent lisloyalty and disloyalty a crime, d many independent-minded and outspoken citizens acquired the t of looking at the national polit- scene from the point of view of tators at a tenement fire or a train k. As compensation for their loss ublic voice, they retreated to a li- or a lawn party to comfort them- es with private and literary ex- sions of anger and disgust.

he attitude is one that I've en- ntered often enough in myself to w that it leads nowhere except to sucking of stale and bitter lemons, now also that it is the cynical tician's most precious asset and st friend. Yes, say the gentlemen in er, exactly right, the world is a tru- rrible place, overflowing with ve- bankers and bearded terrorists, and , my dear fellow, you are so sensi- and smart that it would be a crime quander your talent in the sewer of tics, to do anything else but sit e in the garden with the novels of rcel Proust. We would do the same nly we had the chance, but we're as insightful as you, not as well-read profound, and so we must leave ight for London to talk to an Arab ut a bomb.

The friends and servants of the sta- quo, the institutional news media ef among them, paint frightful por- ts of the future in order to preserve ir hold on power. Do nothing, they , because you might get hurt, if not a nuclear weapon or a bus then by olluted trout or a collapsing utschemark. Do nothing, because who are in power know what's best, l we will save you from the wreck of ith and time. Serve the apples with eese, compose a quatrain, feed the nary and pat the dog, find happiness the blankets of despair.

The reassurances are as false as the information circulated by the pub- ists at the Pentagon, and they speak the point made by J. M. Coetzee in *aiting for the Barbarians*, "One ought alone preoccupies the sub- rged mind of Empire: how not to d, how not to die, how to prolong era."

The Bush Administration's imbecile alpolitik derives from the submerged jealousy of a future apt to render its principal ornaments futile or ridiculous, and when I listen to President Bush and Secretary Rumsfeld threaten the wind in the trees and the shadows on the sea, I remember a French noblewoman, a duchess in her eighties, who, on seeing the ascent of the Montgolfiers' balloon from the Bois de Boulogne in 1783, fell back upon the cushions of her carriage and wept. "Oh, yes," she said, "now it's certain. One day they'll learn how to keep people alive forever, but I shall already be dead."

Democratic self-government proceeds from a more courageous principle, allying itself with change and the proposition that nobody knows enough, that nothing is final, that the future is no further away and no more alarming than the next sentence or the next play from scrimmage. At college in the 1950s I was taught to think of the twentieth century as the miraculous and happy ending to the story of human progress; I now think of the twenty-first century as a still primitive beginning. From the perspective of the thirtieth century I expect the historians to look back upon the works of our modern world as if upon sand castles built by careless but sometimes surprisingly gifted children. Idealism trumps cynicism, and the presence of many individuals free to try the strength of their own imagination and intelligence assumes a ceaseless making and remaking, of laws and customs as well as of fortunes and matinee idols.

The letters to the editor hold to the premise on which the country was founded, consistent with James Madison's observation that whereas "in Europe charters of liberty have been granted by power," America has set the example of "charters of power granted by liberty." Every society can always count on the parties of reaction crying up the wish to make time stand still, seeking to hide their own stupidity and fear behind a wall of self-adorning lies. To the extent that a democratic society gives its citizens the chance to speak and think in their own voices, and to listen to what they have to say, it gives itself the chance not only of discovering its multiple glories and triumphs but also of surviving its multiple follies and crimes. ■

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HARPER'S INDEX

Last year in which a quarterly rise in U.S. military spending was greater than the one last spring : 1951

tal U.S. military spending the Bush Administration projects it will have spent by the end of 2008 : $3,200,000,000,000

Total U.S. military spending between 1941 and 1948 : $3,100,000,000,000 (see page 53)

ımber of banks and suppliers that Gulf War veterans are suing for aiding Iraq's purchases of weapons and chemicals : 44

ercentage by which the Defense Department proposed cutting its budget this year by closing its Peacekeeping Institute : 0.001

Ratio of the institute's budget to the estimated price of Jennifer Lopez's engagement ring : 3:4

First year in which the definition of "turkey" in Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary went beyond fowl : 1949

Grams by which the amount of fat in McDonald's fattiest salad exceeds that in its fattiest burger : 3

Percentage change since 2000 in the number of U.S. surgeries performed each year to treat morbid obesity : +178

Number of Florida high school students who take physical-education courses online : 1,204

Minimum number of facts and rules with which a computer must be programmed to have common sense : 200,000,000

Number of companies that control the U.S. voting-technology market : 3

Percentage of votes cast in U.S. elections last year that were counted by the largest voting-technology firm : 52

Campaign contributions that one voting-technology CEO raised to become a Bush "Pioneer" this year : $100,000

Number of Democrats among the 10 largest political donors since 1991 : 9

Average percentage of the Jewish vote won by the Democratic presidential candidate in the 1980s : 59

Average percentage since then : 79

Square feet of Israeli roads under construction in the 1990s per Israeli : 57

Square feet of roads under construction in the occupied territories in the 1990s per settler : 185

Percentage of the White House's proposed Afghanistan spending in 2004 devoted to reconstruction : 3

Cotton-subsidy reparations proposed by four African countries at the WTO's Cancún meeting this fall : $250,000,000

mount by which federal subsidies to U.S. cotton farmers last crop-year exceeded 2001's U.S. cotton sales : $300,000,000

Amount that energy companies' market manipulation cost California consumers between 2000 and 2001 per capita : $260

Amount California has received per capita in energy-company settlements since then : $2.60

Years it took the U.S. Geological Survey to conclude that Arctic refuge drilling would substantially reduce caribou : 12

Days after announcing this conclusion last July that the Geological Survey issued a memo discounting it : 7

Years of study it took the EPA to conclude in August that it is not responsible for regulating CO_2 emissions : 3

Last year in which visits to U.S. national parks increased : 1999

Number of people per mobile-phone line in the United States : 2

Number of people per sauna in Finland : 2.5

Number of tortoises that died of heat exhaustion at the Glasgow Zoo in one day last August : 7

Age in years of a California bristlecone pine that is the oldest tree on earth : 4,733

Age in years of a Nevada bristlecone when the U.S. Forest Service let a graduate student cut it down in 1964 : 4,950

Rank of the World Wildlife Fund among organizations most trusted by Europeans and Americans, respectively : 2, 8

Rank of Coca-Cola : 8, 2

Number of sequels to *The Gods Must Be Crazy* in which its star N!xau appeared before his death last July : 3

Amount that a Louisiana preacher paid white people to integrate his Sunday services last August, per person : $5

Price of admission to the World's Fair of Money held last August in Baltimore : $0

Attendance at last year's largest annual conference on "establishing the truth behind" JFK's assassination : 165

Minimum number of such conferences held worldwide each year : 3

Figures cited are adjusted for inflation and are the latest available as of September 2003. Sources are listed on page 65.
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READINGS

[Exchange]

CONDITIONAL STATE

The following interview with Israeli writers Amos Oz and David Grossman appeared in the Summer 2003 issue of the Index on Censorship. *The interview, which originally appeared in the Jerusalem daily* Ha'aretz, *was conducted by Ari Shavit.*

What scares you the most, and is there hope?

AMOS OZ: The good news is that for the first time in ninety years of conflict, everyone knows what the solution will be. Today the Jews know that the Palestinians are not going to disappear, and the Palestinians know that the Jews are not going to disappear. We even know where the lines of partition will be.

If things are so good, why are they so bad?

OZ: Because the patient is more or less ready for the operation but the surgeons are cowards. I can't remember a time when there was such a nadir of leadership in both nations. If there were leaders today capable of saying, "Let's do what everyone knows has to be done," the whole thing would come to pass within a few months. Everyone knows that most of the settlements will have to go, that a few blocs will remain in return for an exchange of lots, that there will be no sweeping right of return. So what are they waiting for?

The calamity lies in the personal cowardice of the two leaders. Sharafat, I call them. And of them it can definitely be said that like has found like. Because I have a deep suspicion that both of them prefer this reality to the post-solution reality. What for us seems to be a new dawn is for them dusk.

DAVID GROSSMAN: I agree that what we have here is the personal cowardice of two individuals whose reputations rest on bravery, on the ability to face up to danger. I also agree that it's possible that the solution is close. Both because it is known and because the Americans are fed up and the world is fed up and they might impose a solution on us. But I am more pessimistic than Amos. I am afraid that even if we arrive at peace, it won't be a rosy, eternal peace. It will be a series of spasms of peace followed by violations and then more peace. But not in the lifetime of those present in this room.

What most frightens me is that I am no longer confident of Israel's existence. That doubt was always there. I think that everyone who lives here also lives the alternative that maybe Israel will cease to be. That's our nightmare. But over the years, we stabilized the nightmare and patched it up and whitewashed it. What has happened in the past two years is that suddenly the possibility that Israel will no longer exist has become concrete. It's no longer a mere nightmare. The possibility exists that the great, heroic experiment that took place here will cease to be.

Consider what happened in the Central Elections Committee or in the Likud primary. Suddenly you see that all sense of shame has disappeared, that even mechanisms of social hypocrisy that are needed to maintain the fabric of life have vanished. And in some way it is all connected to life under terrorism. Because

if you live in a reality in which you see people torn apart, in which you see living flesh torn, it is very difficult for you to go on believing in something. And you come to the conclusion that in order to maintain culture, and especially in order to maintain democracy, a certain type of illusion is needed, involving a social agreement that is based on a great deal of goodwill. And this has been undermined. We came here so that even if there was danger one's instinct would be not to flee but to stay. Today that is no longer self-evident.

OZ: I don't feel the same way David does. My existential fears are no longer Jewish and Israeli ones—they, too, have been globalized. Of the twenty-nine conflicts that are bleeding today around the world, there is a Muslim side in at least twenty-seven of them. And there is Christian fanaticism with manifestations of European anti-Semitism and Jewish religious-nationalist fundamentalism.

There is also a postmodern clock that posits everything in a relative light. One form of extremism engenders another. Either there is only one truth and whoever does not share it must be killed, or everything is true and everyone is equal, so murderers, too, have the right to murder.

Another clock that worries me is that of globalization, a sort of infantilization of the entire human race. So when you talk about a lack of culture, David, it doesn't have to do only with Hamas and with shattered bodies. It has to do with the feeling that we were born to buy or sell.

GROSSMAN: Amos, it is impossible to ignore the fact that we are increasingly isolated because of all kinds of threats and ostracisms. . . . I hope I don't sound paranoid, but my feeling is that since the start of the intifada, and after the wave of anti-Semitism and the attacks on Israel around the world, something in us has changed. I think the modern Israeli of my age, who already thought he was international, universal, who is plugged into the Internet and has a dish on the roof and satellite TV and MTV, has suddenly begun to feel how the tragic element of the Jewish destiny is again closing in on him.

There is a feeling that the Jew who came to the land of Israel and built a state in order to connect with a certain solid base, with a concrete existence, has suddenly again become a symbol of something else. After all, the Jew was always a kind of metaphor for something: he was never perceived as the thing itself. And now that is coming back.

People always had a problem relating to us, the Jews, as human beings. There was demonization and idealization, but both are actually different forms of dehumanization. Zionism, despite everything, healed us of that. It restored us to the practical, the human, the historical. But now we are again returning to that symbolic place. I find this dangerous. It also reinforces the sense of persecution that exists within us in any case. And it sucks us into the wound that exists in Judaism, into its sacrificial and traumatic content.

Amos Oz, those feelings are not alien to you, are they? You wrote about them long before the intifada.

OZ: I always had the feeling that we were walking on thin ice. On probation for good behavior, drawing on the bank of the memory of the Holocaust. Let me put it this way: large parts of the Arab world, and perhaps in Islam as well, have not gotten over the terrible affront they experienced as a result of Israel's establishment in 1948.

In the Christian world it goes far deeper. Because there is a deep, dark element in the Christian narrative. In Christianity, people are raised on a story that there is someone who can kill God. And whoever can kill God is terribly strong and smart, more than human, but also evil. Millions of Christian children around the world open their eyes and the first picture they see is of a person bleeding on the cross, a person dying in torment on the cross. And when the Christian child comes to understand that this is a picture of the dying God, he asks who the criminal is. Who did this? It trickles even into people who have become atheists. Because even people who have moved to the margins of the left and never set foot in a church were raised on that mother's milk. It's not that they are anti-Semitic in the banal sense of wanting to kill every Jew; they have a mix of awe and fear. And sometimes they also set a very high bar of moral demands vis-à-vis Jews. It's as though after they have exonerated the Jews of collective responsibility for the crucifixion of Jesus, Jews have to prove that they deserve the exoneration.

Apart from Israel, there is not one country in the world that exists conditionally. Israel is told: If you behave in such and such a way, you have the right to exist. If not, you don't have the right to exist and the whole thing was one big mistake. Behave well, you will live; behave badly, you will be dismantled.

But what especially frightens me is how far many Israelis in the intelligent, enlightened, peace-seeking left have internalized this approach. They, too, see Israel as a conditional state. A state whose existence depends on its behavior.

Are you saying that within the left-wing, dovish intelligentsia in Israel there is some sort of echo of the Christian anti-Semitic approach to the Jewish state?

OZ: During the period of the atrocities that France perpetrated in Algeria, the French intelligentsia

[Sting]
RIDING SHOTGUN

From recently released transcripts of telephone conversations between Joseph Miedzianowski, a gang-crimes specialist with the Chicago Police Department, and William Jarding, a correctional officer with the Cook County Sheriff's Department assigned to the Cook County firearms range. The conversations were recorded in November and December 1998, as a result of a court-authorized wiretap of Miedzianowski's home telephone. In June, Jarding was sentenced to sixteen months in prison for conspiracy to possess stolen ammunition. Miedzianowski is currently serving a life sentence for an unrelated drug-running conviction.

JOSEPH MIEDZIANOWSKI: Hello.
WILLIAM JARDING: Papa.
MIEDZIANOWSKI: Hey, Billy.
JARDING: I'm still at work.
MIEDZIANOWSKI: Whadda you doing?
JARDING: Working. So, you didn't see that guy, did you?
MIEDZIANOWSKI: I told you I'm gonna have it by tomorrow morning.
JARDING: Ch—, okay.
MIEDZIANOWSKI: 'Cause, ah, I'm not gonna, I can't let my little Billy sink or swim.
JARDING: Well, no, I—
MIEDZIANOWSKI [*cooing*]: He, he's my Billy. And I'm not sharing him with nobody. When you coming home tonight?
JARDING: I don't know. I'm, I'm gonna be here for a couple of hours. I know that.
MIEDZIANOWSKI: So, whaddaya gonna do? Just hang out?
JARDING: No. You gotta file the paperwork. Gotta get all that shit ready for them tomorrow. Make sure the range is clear. That's it.
MIEDZIANOWSKI: Too bad they lock the vault.
JARDING: Oh, that's the first thing they do when I'm here. Are you fucking kidding? And you know the first thing they ask me: what jacket are you wearing and do you have a bag?
MIEDZIANOWSKI: And whadda you say?
JARDING: I say, "Absolutely. Here, look." And then when they go to lunch, [*singing*] Hi, ho!
MIEDZIANOWSKI [*singing*]: Hi, ho!
[*Both laugh.*]
JARDING [*singing*]: There the ammo go!
MIEDZIANOWSKI: If you got a chance when you get home tonight, give me a holler.
JARDING: Are you gonna be busy?
MIEDZIANOWSKI: No, I'm, I'm being good. [*laughs*]
JARDING: Okay. Thanks, Pop.
MIEDZIANOWSKI: Billy, take care now. Bye-bye.
JARDING: Goodbye.

* * *

JARDING: Hello.
MIEDZIANOWSKI: How are you?
JARDING: What are you up to?
MIEDZIANOWSKI: Billy, I'm gonna tell you somethin', I'm not saying this as a joke, I pulled my back out so fuckin' bad I barely could get in the car to drive home yesterday.
JARDING: How d'ya do that?
MIEDZIANOWSKI: You know.
[*Jarding laughs.*]
MIEDZIANOWSKI: Worse pain I've ever fucking had. Anyways, my little commando, what are you doing? Can you come over here?
JARDING: Yeah. I just gotta jump in the shower and walk the dogs.
MIEDZIANOWSKI: In about an hour? Make it an

[Schedule]
SPANKING THE SUSHI

From an August 2003 program guide for the Japanese adult-entertainment channel Paradise TV, which claims to have more than 100,000 subscribers. The list was obtained and translated from the Japanese by Ryann Connell, a staff writer for the Mainichi Daily News.

7:10 A.M.: The Ultra-Excitement—Lost Virginity Night: Search for a Virgin, Choose Her, and Try Her Out
9:00 A.M.: Ghosts in Saucy Photos
10:00 A.M.: Huge Release—Sexual Harassment Heaven: Embarrassed Amateur Girl Put Through Erotic Hell
10:55 A.M.: Female Announcer Cum & Vaginal Juice Eruption Show
12:30 P.M.: Gather Everyone! How About Gang-Raping Me?
4:30 P.M.: Instant Fellatio, Instant Insertion. Sex Party Where Sex-Crazed Women Eat Men
5:25 P.M.: Serviced by a Bumpkin Babe. Travels of a Dirty Man Who Gets a Blow Job
6:30 P.M.: The Best Inverted Pussy Countdown
7:25 P.M.: The Losing Virginity Show. Pick the Virgin, Watch the Night She Loses Her Virginity
8:25 P.M.: Strategies for Sneaking in on Women at Midnight
10:00 P.M.: Movie—He's Home. Tomorrow's Urine.

hour 'cause I'm gonna, she's gonna be gone in about an hour. Okay?

JARDING: So, I'll see you about two. I gotta walk the dogs.

MIEDZIANOWSKI: Okay. Are you workin' the range this week?

JARDING: Yep.

MIEDZIANOWSKI: Steal. Steal. Steal.

[*Jarding laughs.*]

MIEDZIANOWSKI: Seriously, steal, steal. That's all I can tell ya. Three words: steal, steal, steal.

JARDING: Location, location. No, no.

[*Miedzianowski laughs.*]

JARDING: Strike that.

MIEDZIANOWSKI [*laughing*]: Steal, steal, steal. Okay? I'll see you, oh, in about an hour.

JARDING: Goodbye.

MIEDZIANOWSKI: Take care, Billy.

MIEDZIANOWSKI: Hello.

JARDING: Papa.

MIEDZIANOWSKI: Hey, Billy. What're you doing today?

JARDING: I'm at the range right now.

MIEDZIANOWSKI: Again?

JARDING: I'm guarding our stash.

MIEDZIANOWSKI [*laughing*]: Our stash.

JARDING: The only bad thing is that, ah, nine-millimeter ball, that's it.

MIEDZIANOWSKI: Really?

JARDING: Mmm. But next week, shotgun.

MIEDZIANOWSKI: Shotgun, shotgun's always good.

JARDING: Yep.

MIEDZIANOWSKI: I'll tell you what I'll do. What time do you get off today, Billy?

JARDING: Ah, I'm not really sure.

MIEDZIANOWSKI: This afternoon when I crawl out of my bed, I'll give ya a call.

JARDING: Okay. Goodbye.

MIEDZIANOWSKI: Good morning.

JARDING: Hello.

MIEDZIANOWSKI: Good morning. You are my special friend.

JARDING: Hello.

MIEDZIANOWSKI: Hello!

JARDING: I got a couple of goodies for you already, and I gotta wait for shotgun. They gotta go pick it up.

MIEDZIANOWSKI: *You* gotta pick it up?

JARDING: No, they do.

MIEDZIANOWSKI: Oh, I thought you said "you." Oh my God, you're never coming back.

JARDING: Oh, of course not.

MIEDZIANOWSKI: Man, Bill, you already got ammunition. I am so proud of you.

JARDING: Early bird gets the worm, eh?

MIEDZIANOWSKI: Well.

JARDING: So, what you kind of explained to me the other day is, don't pay attention to Paulie [a Chicago police officer] about nothing?

MIEDZIANOWSKI: Billy, this is the bottom line. His stories are stories. His stories are my stories. Anything I've done people are saying they're doin'.

JARDING: Mmm hmm.

MIEDZIANOWSKI: Man, Bill, I've thrown guys out third-floor windows, I fuckin' beat 'em with hammers, I've run over them with cars. None of these fuckers got the balls to do that anymore. It's ridiculous.

JARDING: It's 'cause they'd all get jammed.

MIEDZIANOWSKI: And why don't I?

JARDING: Don't know, it's the magical touch.

MIEDZIANOWSKI: 'Cause I'm papa.

JARDING: Mmm.

MIEDZIANOWSKI: 'Cause I always remember one thing.

JARDING: Hmm?

MIEDZIANOWSKI: What you put down on paper today will come to haunt you tomorrow. [*laughs*]

JARDING: That part is true.

MIEDZIANOWSKI: So I always put down the right stuff.

JARDING: Mmm hmm.

MIEDZIANOWSKI: The right story, the right, the truth. You know what I mean? The truth will always prevail.

JARDING: Yeah.

MIEDZIANOWSKI: Okay, beautiful. Well, I tell you what, I'll see you here at four o'clock then?

JARDING: Okay.

MIEDZIANOWSKI: Wilhelm, take care.

JARDING: Shotgun day.

MIEDZIANOWSKI: Take care now.

JARDING: Goodbye.

MIEDZIANOWSKI: Bye-bye.

[Crafts]

BIGHOUSEKEEPING

From Prisoners' Inventions, *written and illustrated by a California inmate known as Angelo, published by WhiteWalls in June. The book documents contraptions and skills devised by prisoners using materials available to them in jail.*

PICTURE FRAMES

While this very interesting form of inmate handicraft is mostly applied to the making of picture frames, and is described and spoken of as



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An untitled portrait of Taliban fighters in Kandahar, Afghanistan, by Thomas Dworzak. The photograph was printed in Arms Against Fu
Magnum Photographers in Afghanistan, *published by Powerhouse Books*

such by all inmates and staff, other decorative items are also produced by the same technique. In fact, its use appears to be limited only by the inmate's imagination.

The main material is colored paper. Most any type of chip bag can be used if it has a shiny metallic interior, though some daring and imaginative inmates also use parts of the exteriors of certain bags as decorative motifs.

For the actual construction, the paper, cellophane, or chip bags are first cut into small uniform-size rectangular shapes. These pieces are then carefully folded and combined to form long strips (or, by folding manipulations, curves or right angles or other special shapes), which are then used to form abstract decorative designs, with the subconstructions held together at key junction points by bits of carefully concealed thread.

While this hobby-craft technique lends itself to an infinite variety—and I have seen some very imaginative stuff, particularly in the area of jewelry boxes—most inmates stay with just a small simple range of picture-frame designs that are sure tested sellers.

GLOSSING OVER

Among the maintenance supplies issued to the various offices, shops, schools, and housing units in the prison system every month are gallon containers of a high-gloss, self-shining liquid floor wax.

One of my cellies, who was into making intricate model ships from ice-cream spoons and other materials, would dilute the wax with water, adding a stain made from coffee, and use it as a finish that very much looked like a high-quality varnish or lacquer. One of the most common exotic uses is by the greeting-card makers. They carefully dab small quantities of wax on isolated parts of the finished card, giving even the poorest drawing a lift.

But the bulk of the wax used goes into spiffing up the cells. When applied in layers the wax gives even the most cracked and disgusting bare concrete floor a degree of respectability. One particularly obsessive cellie even went so far as to wax the walls and ceiling, and it really did diminish the sensation of living in a spacious sewer pipe. Another very focused individual laid a thick

layer of wax over an arrangement of playing cards laid facedown in a simple alternating pattern from the cell door to the area around the sink; the pattern and process were repeated on the top of the property locker—a really impressive job.

COTTAGE CHEESE

When my cellie Paul found a carton of milk going sour, he would allow it to set for a while, then determine by smell the direction that particular batch was going and adjust his handling of it accordingly. For instance, milk with a very rank smell or tart taste would usually not improve much in extended aging, so once the curds and whey separated he would drain off the whey, leaving a cottage-cheese residue ready to consume. Batches of souring milk that developed a sweet smell would, with varying degrees of aging and handling, develop into a range of cheeses and yogurts, with the best being those that aged the longest. Temperature variations play a part in culture development, though controlling these variations is not really possible. Basically it's just a matter of where the batches are put to age (be they concrete, metal, or cloth) and if they are covered or not. Even the position in the cell is considered, the outside wall being the warmest area on hot days. Paul also took to passing favorite cultures into newly acquired milk to perpetuate good strains.

For the much prized yogurt cultures, the whey is always left in to become part of the treat. Also, whenever possible, Paul would add a packet of strawberry jelly, which we occasionally get in our bag lunches, to make for a really princely dish.

BIRD BATHING
(OR HOW TO FILL A TOILET WITH WARM WATER)

Generally, inmates are allowed one shower a day. Most are obsessed with washing more than that, so if they can't sneak an extra shower or two they will sponge-bathe in the cell. The sink in the cell, however, is very small, so the toilet is often pressed into service, either as a cold-water rinse or as the main basin for hot water.

To fill the toilet with warm water you must first remove the cooler water already there. There are several methods: if you have a plastic-covered pillow, put it over the opening of the toilet. Get a good seal and push hard in the center (like a plunger). It will force the water level in the toilet down. Flush the toilet and, as the outflow stops, plug the hole with a plastic-covered rag to stop the back rush of water. Bail the cold water out with a cup, or Coke can, or something.

A simple paper trough can then be used to channel hot water from the sink to the toilet, or you can transfer water with a cup or plastic bag. Note: The water that inevitably overflows onto the floor is a delight to the freaks, as they love to wash everything, especially the floor, at least a couple of times a day and will plan baths accordingly.

POOLING

This is an extreme solution to an extreme situation that I've been told of by several long-time inmates but that I've never had occasion to test. In the case of pooling, the purpose is simply to turn the cell into kind of a wading pool to beat the heat in older prisons where the air-conditioning is poor or nonexistent.

The procedure is to block off (dam up) the cell door (using clothes, plastic, etc.), then plug the cell's toilet and sink, and run both in continuous overflow until the desired depth of water in the cell is reached. Then enjoy. When you're tired of pooling, just pull the plug to get rid of the water—but do let your neighbors know it's coming, of course.

MUFF BAG

This is an intriguing and kinky device brought to my cellie's attention on the yard one day by one of his many amorous admirers, who disclosed not only the design but also that he fantasized about my cellie when using it. Because of its high leakage potential, my cellie and I were reluctant to do more than test the idea in the sink with a single ply bag, but indeed its physical resemblance to the human posterior when full of water was startling.

The device is made using two 24-inch-square thin plastic wastebasket liners (a double-bag system is recommended due to the tendency of the bags to puncture in moments of passion). The corners of the bags are pulled in and tied together inside the bag so that the whole thing resembles Speedo shorts without the leg holes, after which the bag is filled with hot water, tied off, and positioned properly on the bunk (preferably your cellie's, if he's not home). Add rolled-up blankets to simulate the torso and legs and supply support, and you're ready to slip it to her. It is reported that baby oil works well as a lubricant; a dab of hand lotion with the baby oil is supposed to be even more habit forming.

TOILET-PAPER "BOMBS"

To make these, wrap about twelve to fifteen passes of toilet paper around your hand. (Keep them loose.) Double it over in the middle. Toilet-paper bombs burn very fast and hot due to the center opening. As each bomb starts burning out, pitch it in the toilet and immediately reposition and light the next bomb. Setting the toilet-paper bomb on a piece of damp cloth facilitates moving it to the toilet after use, allowing another bomb to be set in place quickly. Using two to three is a fast but messy way to make a piping-hot melted-cheese sandwich.

[Scene]

AMOR PERDIDA

By Tennessee Williams, from the Summer 2003 issue of the Michigan Quarterly Review. *The previously unpublished essay was undated, though it is believed to have been written between September 1940 and the summer of 1945.*

It is about a month ago today. I am seated in an open *cantina* facing the square in Acapulco, Gro., Mexico, and in accordance with one of my oldest and most respected traditions, I have just finished spending my last silver coin on a drink. I am seated with two favorite companions. At my left elbow is a juke-box which is playing what I seriously believe to be the most beautiful of all musical compositions, a bolero called *Amor Perdida*. At my right elbow is Mr. Orrin Beebe who is a confessed cousin of Lucius [a columnist for the *New York Herald*] and has just opened a rival *cantina* on the other side of the square.

We are drinking rum-cocos which is a drink made by knocking one end off a coconut and pouring in a couple of jiggers of rum, a dash of lemon and a little cracked ice and sugar.

We are blinking and squinting into the strong yellow sunlight of the square and the dark natives are drifting meaninglessly about us like figures in a dream. Not far from our table is a wretched old dog, slowly dying. I have noticed him before, slinking among the tables with quiet, pleading eyes. Careful not to approach too closely, his large yellow eyes expressing wisdom and sadness and complete acquiescence. I have given him scraps of *tortillas* and *tacos* and he has gulped them down with the frenzied haste of starvation. But now the old dog is dying. The pleading look has gone out of his eyes, he has finally given up his mendicant career. He lies on his side in the sun, breathing in spasms, and his eyes have a look of dark and patient endurance. Nobody seems to notice his condition. The death of dogs in the street is a Mexican commonplace and the natives of Acapulco, a gentle and kindly people, pay no attention to it. I look at the dog and I feel a sympathy for him. I pull his desiccated body into the shade of the *cantina* and pour a little water on the concrete in reach of his tongue. He ignores the water but glances up at me for an instant of recognition. His brief look is apologetic. Then he stares back into space and I return to my table.

A small boy is selling newspapers, *Excelsior* and *El Universal*. In great black type are such words as *Londres* and *Bombas* and *Destrucciónes*.

It seems less immediate, less important than the mongrel's death.

A dusty old *camión*, beach-taxi, is taking on passengers for Los Hornos, which is the afternoon beach. A stout American woman in one of those huge, gaudy sombreros which only Americans wear is bawling out the driver for his delay in starting.

But drinking is a process of insulation against such things and in a few moments my interest has returned to its usual center, inside my own skull.

After a while I turn to Mr. Beebe.

"Well, Beebe, it looks like I am back on the beach."

"How do you mean?"

"I sold a play in New York a few months ago. Ever since then I've been in a fool's Paradise, living on ninety dollars a month with nothing to do but write and lie around here. Now that's all over."

"They dropped your play?"

"Uh-huh. I knew they would sooner or later but hoped it would be a little later than this. The cheque for this month's advance royalties was due about five days ago and it hasn't come yet. So I feel pretty goddam sure they've already dropped it."

"What are you going to do?"

"I'm going back to my old profession."

"What's that?"

"Waiting tables."

"You got a job lined up?"

"Yes."

"Where?"

"In your *cantina*."

"Huh!—How much experience have you had?"

"Quite a good deal," I tell him. "I've waited tables in New Orleans, Iowa City, St. Louis, Memphis, Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Laguna Beach."

"Can you sing?"

"Sing? Like a nightingale!"

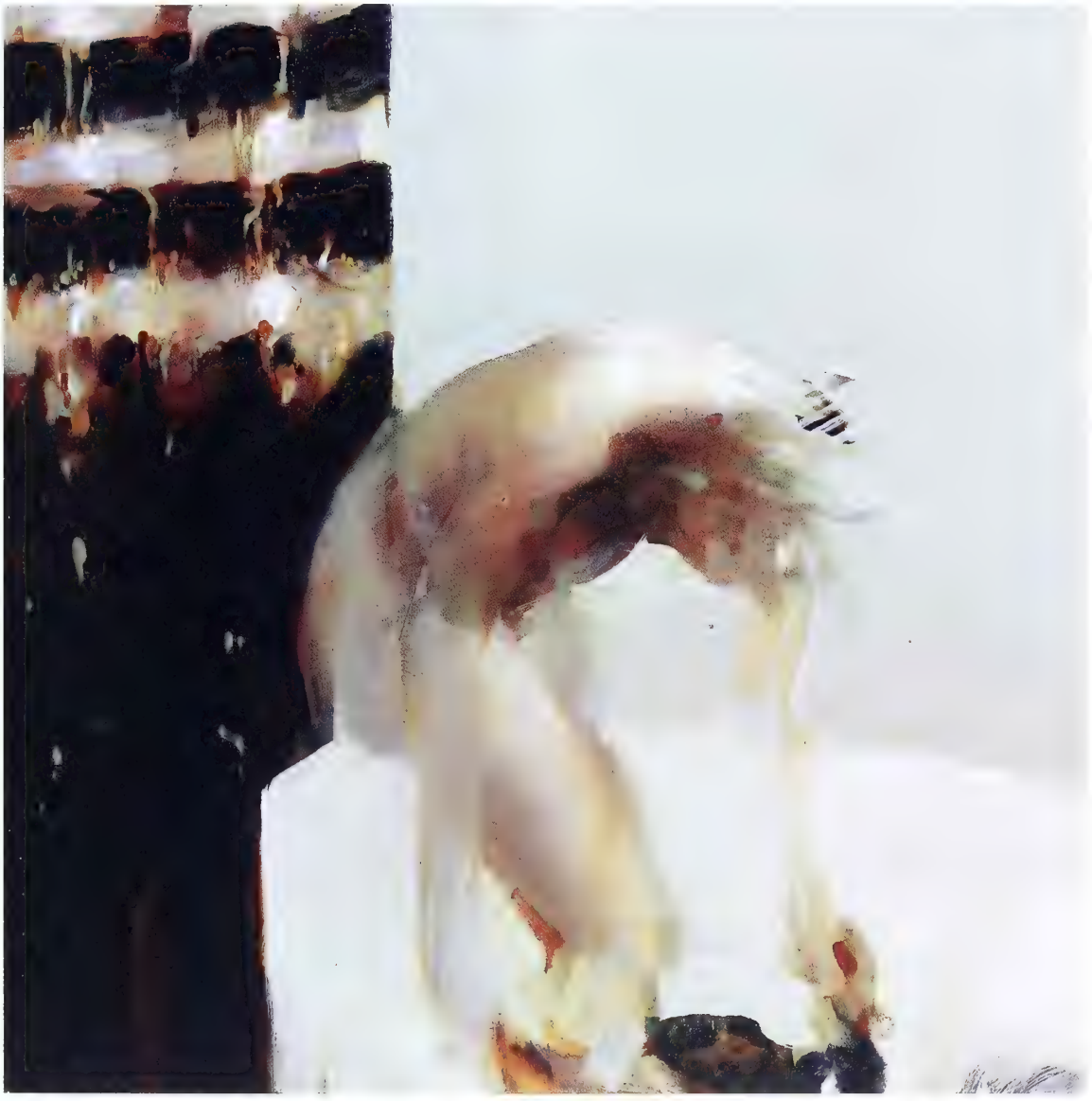
"Okay," he says finally. "You'll need a clean white shirt and a black bow tie."

Beebe rises from the table and wanders across the square. But I remain at the table. The juke-box has started again. That amazingly over-dressed woman known as the Princess Olga appears on the square. Three men follow about one step behind her. She talks very loudly, the three men listen and smile. I think she is explaining the mysteries of the universe to them. That's the nice thing about a language you don't understand—it is possible to believe the conversation is so much more elevated than it probably is.

After a while I get up. I think I will go over to Wells-Fargo on the opposite corner and see if any mail has come in for me. I am no longer concerned about it—but go anyway.

My name is printed at the top of the telegraph list. Mr. Tennessee Williams.

I receive the yellow envelope and seat my-



T.S. in Her Bath, *by Alex Kanevsky, was on display last spring at J. Cacciola Gallery, in New York City.*

self in a wicker chair beneath the mildly-agitated punkas.

I tear the envelope open and read this message.

BETTER RETURN AT ONCE. WE ARE CASTING YOUR PLAY FOR IMMEDIATE PRODUCTION.

Signed: Theresa Helburn, Theatre Guild, New York.

When people are facing imminent destruction their lives are supposed to pass before them in lightning review. What I faced at the moment was something quite different from imminent destruction, and yet that same phenomenon occurred.

As I sat in the wicker chair beneath the languid punkas I thumbed my way back through twenty-six years of living.

Various periods in the past were revived before me. I remembered particularly the *Vieux Carré* of New Orleans where I first learned how a poor artist lives. I remembered the Quarter Rats, as we were called. The prostitute Irene who painted the marvelous pictures and disappeared, Helen who entered my life through a search for a lost black cat, the jobless merchant seaman, Joe, who wrote sea-stories more exciting than Conrad's which were destroyed when the house he lived in burned. I remembered The Quarter Eat Shop, Meals for a Quarter in the Quarter, and passing

out pink, yellow, and blue cards on Royal, Bourbon, and Canal. The sunlight rich as egg-yolk in the narrow streets, great, flat banana leaves, and the slow, slow rain. The fog coming up from the river, swallowing Andrew Jackson on his big iron horse. Tamale vendors at midnight, their haunting voices. Mother O'Neill pouring kettles of boiling water through the floor to break up a studio party. The big fight, the riot call, the Black Maria, Night Court and the House of Detention. The big bare room and the filthy, desperate prisoners. Words scrawled on the dirty white walls. Life getting bigger and plainer and uglier and more beautiful all the time.

I remembered thumbing a ride from Santa Monica to San Francisco to see William Saroyan and the Golden Gate Exposition. Saroyan wasn't there but the fair was marvelous. Sunset from Telegraph Hill and a room that I slept in half-way down it and curious scraps of conversation heard through a very thin wall. I remembered days of slightly glorified beach-combing in Southern California. Picking squabs and dropping one feather for each bird in a bottle and collecting afterwards two cents for each feather. Selling shoes across from the M.G.M. lot in Culver City and spending lunch hour watching for Greta Garbo. Never with any success. Taking care of a small ranch up Canyon Road in Laguna Beach. And the sound of dogs barking a long way off at night when the moon started rising. A thirty-year-old schoolteacher from Oklahoma having her last fling before marriage on the California beaches. Waking up at two or three in the morning to find her at the foot of my bunk with a middle-aged man in a crumpled white linen suit, saying, Tenn, this is Jack, Jack's come here to bring me home, we're getting married tomorrow! Sitting up all night, drinking, playing the guitar, singing *El Rancho Grande*—celebrating sadly. And Jacobs who used to conk the "queers" in back of Mona's place with an ice-cleaver wrapped in a towel and roll them for their money, and yet was the most good-natured person I've known. And Jim who played juvenile leads in Miami University productions and was going to crash Hollywood—and worked with me as a pin-boy in a Hollywood bowling alley. Trying to get on the W.P.A. Writers' Project once in Chicago. My negro friends there who had so much more charm than white intellectuals have. Joe Jones' free art-class in the old Court-house in St. Louis, the Artists and Writers League there being evicted by the Police because they were Communistic. Screaming and bloody noses and hours in the bull-pen.

School-days in Mississippi. Walking along aimless country roads through a delicate spring rain with the fields, flat, and wide, and dark, ending at the levee and at the cypress brakes, and the buzzards wheeling leisurely a long way up. Dark life. Confused, tormented, uncomprehendable and fabulously rich and beautiful. . . .

When finally I got up from the wicker chair, the brilliant yellow sunlight outside the Wells-Fargo office had faded. Beebe had gone home and had come forth again in a crisp white linen suit. He was seated once more by the juke-box in the rival *cantina*.

I went over where he was sitting and sat down by him.

"Have you got a white shirt?" he asked me.

"No," I told him.

"What size collar do you wear? Fifteen?"

"Fourteen and half," I told him.

"Okay. I'll lend you one of mine that's shrunk a little."

"No, thanks," I told him.

I handed him the yellow piece of paper.

It was getting so dark he had to bend way over to read it.

When he had made it out, he gravely extended his hand.

"Congratulations, Tenn. How do you feel?"

"Old," I told him.

"Huh?"

"Yes. Old. The irresponsible days of my youth are over."

There was a silence.

After a while Beebe smiled. "Has it occurred to you," he said, "that the play might be a failure?"

"No," I answered honestly. "I hadn't thought of that."

"You'd better think of it, Son."

Another brief silence.

"Beebe," I said, "will you keep that job open for me?"

"Sure," said Beebe. "I'll save the shirt for you, too."

After a while we both got up and crossed the plaza and entered Beebe's *cantina*.

Things were festive and bright. It was going to rain. A cool, damp wind was blowing off the Pacific.

I dropped a nickel in the juke-box and wandered out into the patio which was still unlighted. I had a curious sense of isolation. The old life seemed to be over. The new one had not begun yet. This was a time in between. Somehow it made me think of the time when I tore a hole in my one pair of pants and had to spend a motionless half hour behind a screen in a Jewish tailor's shop while the pants were mended. It was an interlude, a period of suspended animation.

Then all at once the Mexican girl started singing *Amor Perdida*, the Japanese lanterns among the dark mango trees bloomed into pastel color. I caught my breath, for it seemed as though I were standing with empty pockets and greedy hands in Aladdin's orchard of jewels.

[Sting]

RIDING SHOTGUN

From recently released transcripts of telephone conversations between Joseph Miedzianowski, a gang-crimes specialist with the Chicago Police Department, and William Jarding, a correctional officer with the Cook County Sheriff's Department assigned to the Cook County firearms range. The conversations were recorded in November and December 1998, as a result of a court-authorized wiretap of Miedzianowski's home telephone. In June, Jarding was sentenced to sixteen months in prison for conspiracy to possess stolen ammunition. Miedzianowski is currently serving a life sentence for an unrelated drug-running conviction.

JOSEPH MIEDZIANOWSKI: Hello.
WILLIAM JARDING: Papa.
MIEDZIANOWSKI: Hey, Billy.
JARDING: I'm still at work.
MIEDZIANOWSKI: Whadda you doing?
JARDING: Working. So, you didn't see that guy, did you?
MIEDZIANOWSKI: I told you I'm gonna have it by tomorrow morning.
JARDING: Ch—, okay.
MIEDZIANOWSKI: 'Cause, ah, I'm not gonna, I can't let my little Billy sink or swim.
JARDING: Well, no, I—
MIEDZIANOWSKI [*cooing*]: He, he's my Billy. And I'm not sharing him with nobody. When you coming home tonight?
JARDING: I don't know. I'm, I'm gonna be here for a couple of hours. I know that.
MIEDZIANOWSKI: So, whaddaya gonna do? Just hang out?
JARDING: No. You gotta file the paperwork. Gotta get all that shit ready for them tomorrow. Make sure the range is clear. That's it.
MIEDZIANOWSKI: Too bad they lock the vault.
JARDING: Oh, that's the first thing they do when I'm here. Are you fucking kidding? And you know the first thing they ask me: what jacket are you wearing and do you have a bag?
MIEDZIANOWSKI: And whadda you say?
JARDING: I say, "Absolutely. Here, look." And then when they go to lunch, [*singing*] Hi, ho!
MIEDZIANOWSKI [*singing*]: Hi, ho!
[*Both laugh.*]
JARDING [*singing*]: There the ammo go!
MIEDZIANOWSKI: If you got a chance when you get home tonight, give me a holler.
JARDING: Are you gonna be busy?
MIEDZIANOWSKI: No, I'm, I'm being good. [*laughs*]
JARDING: Okay. Thanks, Pop.
MIEDZIANOWSKI: Billy, take care now. Bye-bye.
JARDING: Goodbye.

* * *

JARDING: Hello.
MIEDZIANOWSKI: How are you?
JARDING: What are you up to?
MIEDZIANOWSKI: Billy, I'm gonna tell you somethin', I'm not saying this as a joke, I pulled my back out so fuckin' bad I barely could get in the car to drive home yesterday.
JARDING: How d'ya do that?
MIEDZIANOWSKI: You know.
[*Jarding laughs.*]
MIEDZIANOWSKI: Worse pain I've ever fucking had. Anyways, my little commando, what are you doing? Can you come over here?
JARDING: Yeah. I just gotta jump in the shower and walk the dogs.
MIEDZIANOWSKI: In about an hour? Make it an

[Schedule]

SPANKING THE SUSHI

From an August 2003 program guide for the Japanese adult-entertainment channel Paradise TV, which claims to have more than 100,000 subscribers. The list was obtained and translated from the Japanese by Ryann Connell, a staff writer for the Mainichi Daily News.

7:10 A.M.: The Ultra-Excitement—Lost Virginity Night: Search for a Virgin, Choose Her, and Try Her Out
9:00 A.M.: Ghosts in Saucy Photos
10:00 A.M.: Huge Release—Sexual Harassment Heaven: Embarrassed Amateur Girl Put Through Erotic Hell
10:55 A.M.: Female Announcer Cum & Vaginal Juice Eruption Show
12:30 P.M.: Gather Everyone! How About Gang-Raping Me?
4:30 P.M.: Instant Fellatio, Instant Insertion. Sex Party Where Sex-Crazed Women Eat Men
5:25 P.M.: Serviced by a Bumpkin Babe. Travels of a Dirty Man Who Gets a Blow Job
6:30 P.M.: The Best Inverted Pussy Countdown
7:25 P.M.: The Losing Virginity Show. Pick the Virgin, Watch the Night She Loses Her Virginity
8:25 P.M.: Strategies for Sneaking in on Women at Midnight
10:00 P.M.: Movie—He's Home. Tomorrow's Urine.

hour 'cause I'm gonna, she's gonna be gone in about an hour. Okay?

[illegible] I'll see you about two. I can't walk [illegible]

MIEDZIANOWSKI: Okay. Are you workin' the range this week?

JARDING: Yep.

MIEDZIANOWSKI: Steal. Steal. Steal.

[*Jarding laughs.*]

MIEDZIANOWSKI: Seriously, steal, steal. That's all I can tell ya. Three words: steal, steal, steal.

JARDING: Location, location. No, no.

[*Miedzianowski laughs.*]

JARDING: Strike that.

MIEDZIANOWSKI [*laughing*]: Steal, steal, steal. Okay? I'll see you, oh, in about an hour.

JARDING: Goodbye.

MIEDZIANOWSKI: Take care, Billy.

* * *

[illegible] Hello

JARDING: Papa.

MIEDZIANOWSKI: Hey, Billy. What're you doing today?

JARDING: I'm at the range right now.

MIEDZIANOWSKI: Again?

JARDING: I'm guarding our stash.

MIEDZIANOWSKI [*laughing*]: Our stash.

JARDING: The only bad thing is that, ah, nine-millimeter ball, that's it.

MIEDZIANOWSKI: Really?

JARDING: Mmm. But next week, shotgun.

MIEDZIANOWSKI: Shotgun, shotgun's always good.

JARDING: Yep.

MIEDZIANOWSKI: I'll tell you what I'll do. What time do you get off today, Billy?

JARDING: Ah, I'm not really sure.

MIEDZIANOWSKI: This afternoon when I crawl out of my bed, I'll give ya a call.

JARDING: Okay. Goodbye.

* * *

MIEDZIANOWSKI: Good morning.

JARDING: Hello.

MIEDZIANOWSKI: Good morning. You are my special friend.

[illegible] Hello

MIEDZIANOWSKI: Hello!

JARDING: I got a couple of goodies for you already, and I gotta wait for shotgun. They gotta go pick it up.

MIEDZIANOWSKI: *You* gotta pick it up?

JARDING: No, they do.

MIEDZIANOWSKI: Oh, I thought you said "you." Oh my God, you're never coming back.

JARDING: Oh, of course not.

MIEDZIANOWSKI: Man, Bill, you already got ammunition. I am so proud of you.

JARDING: Early bird gets the worm, eh?

MIEDZIANOWSKI: Well.

JARDING: So, what you kind of explained to me the other day is, don't pay attention to Paulie [a Chicago police officer] about nothing?

MIEDZIANOWSKI: Billy, this is the bottom line. His stories are stories. His stories are my stories. Anything I've done people are saying they're doin'.

JARDING: Mmm hmm.

MIEDZIANOWSKI: Man, Bill, I've thrown guys out third-floor windows, I fuckin' beat 'em with hammers, I've run over them with cars. None of these fuckers got the balls to do that anymore. It's ridiculous.

JARDING: It's 'cause they'd all get jammed.

MIEDZIANOWSKI: And why don't I?

JARDING: Don't know, it's the magical touch.

MIEDZIANOWSKI: 'Cause I'm papa.

JARDING: Mmm.

MIEDZIANOWSKI: 'Cause I always remember one thing.

JARDING: Hmm?

MIEDZIANOWSKI: What you put down on paper today will come to haunt you tomorrow. [*laughs*]

JARDING: That part is true.

MIEDZIANOWSKI: So I always put down the right stuff.

JARDING: Mmm hmm.

MIEDZIANOWSKI: The right story, the right, the truth. You know what I mean? The truth will always prevail.

JARDING: Yeah.

MIEDZIANOWSKI: Okay, beautiful. Well, I tell you what, I'll see you here at four o'clock then?

JARDING: Okay.

MIEDZIANOWSKI: Wilhelm, take care.

JARDING: Shotgun day.

MIEDZIANOWSKI: Take care now.

JARDING: Goodbye.

MIEDZIANOWSKI: Bye-bye.

[Crafts]

BIGHOUSEKEEPING

From Prisoners' Inventions, *written and illustrated by a California inmate known as Angelo, published by WhiteWalls in June. The book documents contraptions and skills devised by prisoners using materials available to them in jail.*

PICTURE FRAMES

While this very interesting form of inmate handicraft is mostly applied to the making of picture frames, and is described and spoken of as



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An untitled portrait of Taliban fighters in Kandahar, Afghanistan, by Thomas Dworzak. The photograph was printed in Arms Against Fur Magnum Photographers in Afghanistan, *published by powerHouse Books.*

such by all inmates and staff, other decorative items are also produced by the same technique. In fact, its use appears to be limited only by the inmate's imagination.

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GLOSSING OVER

Among the maintenance supplies issued to the various offices, shops, schools, and housing units in the prison system every month are gallon containers of a high-gloss, self-shining liquid floor wax.

One of my cellies, who was into making intricate model ships from ice-cream spoons and other materials, would dilute the wax with water, adding a stain made from coffee, and use it as a finish that very much looked like a high-quality varnish or lacquer. One of the most common exotic uses is by the greeting-card makers. They carefully dab small quantities of wax on isolated parts of the finished card, giving even the poorest drawing a lift.

But the bulk of the wax used goes into spiffing up the cells. When applied in layers the wax gives even the most cracked and disgusting bare concrete floor a degree of respectability. One particularly obsessive cellie even went so far as to wax the walls and ceiling, and it really did diminish the sensation of living in a spacious sewer pipe. Another very focused individual laid a thick

layer of wax over an arrangement of playing cards laid facedown in a simple alternating pattern from the cell door to the area around the sink; the pattern and process were repeated on the top of the property locker—a really impressive job.

COTTAGE CHEESE

When my cellie Paul found a carton of milk going sour, he would allow it to set for a while, then determine by smell the direction that particular batch was going and adjust his handling of it accordingly. For instance, milk with a very rank smell or tart taste would usually not improve much in extended aging, so once the curds and whey separated he would drain off the whey, leaving a cottage-cheese residue ready to consume. Batches of souring milk that developed a sweet smell would, with varying degrees of aging and handling, develop into a range of cheeses and yogurts, with the best being those that aged the longest. Temperature variations play a part in culture development, though controlling these variations is not really possible. Basically it's just a matter of where the batches are put to age (be they concrete, metal, or cloth) and if they are covered or not. Even the position in the cell is considered, the outside wall being the warmest area on hot days. Paul also took to passing favorite cultures into newly acquired milk to perpetuate good strains.

For the much prized yogurt cultures, the whey is always left in to become part of the treat. Also, whenever possible, Paul would add a packet of strawberry jelly, which we occasionally get in our bag lunches, to make for a really princely dish.

BIRD BATHING
(OR HOW TO FILL A TOILET WITH WARM WATER)

Generally, inmates are allowed one shower a day. Most are obsessed with washing more than that, so if they can't sneak an extra shower or two they will sponge-bathe in the cell. The sink in the cell, however, is very small, so the toilet is often pressed into service, either as a cold-water rinse or as the main basin for hot water.

To fill the toilet with warm water you must first remove the cooler water already there. There are several methods: if you have a plastic-covered pillow, put it over the opening of the toilet. Get a good seal and push hard in the center (like a plunger). It will force the water level in the toilet down. Flush the toilet and, as the outflow stops, plug the hole with a plastic-covered rag to stop the back rush of water. Bail the cold water out with a cup, or Coke can, or something.

A simple paper trough can then be used to channel hot water from the sink to the toilet, or you can transfer water with a cup or plastic bag. Note: The water that inevitably overflows onto the floor is a delight to the freaks, as they love to wash everything, especially the floor, at least a couple of times a day and will plan baths accordingly.

POOLING

This is an extreme solution to an extreme situation that I've been told of by several long-time inmates but that I've never had occasion to test. In the case of pooling, the purpose is simply to turn the cell into kind of a wading pool to beat the heat in older prisons where the air-conditioning is poor or nonexistent.

The procedure is to block off (dam up) the cell door (using clothes, plastic, etc.), then plug the cell's toilet and sink, and run both in continuous overflow until the desired depth of water in the cell is reached. Then enjoy. When you're tired of pooling, just pull the plug to get rid of the water—but do let your neighbors know it's coming, of course.

MUFF BAG

This is an intriguing and kinky device brought to my cellie's attention on the yard one day by one of his many amorous admirers, who disclosed not only the design but also that he fantasized about my cellie when using it. Because of its high leakage potential, my cellie and I were reluctant to do more than test the idea in the sink with a single ply bag, but indeed its physical resemblance to the human posterior when full of water was startling.

The device is made using two 24-inch-square thin plastic wastebasket liners (a double-bag system is recommended due to the tendency of the bags to puncture in moments of passion). The corners of the bags are pulled in and tied together inside the bag so that the whole thing resembles Speedo shorts without the leg holes, after which the bag is filled with hot water, tied off, and positioned properly on the bunk (preferably your cellie's, if he's not home). Add rolled-up blankets to simulate the torso and legs and supply support, and you're ready to slip it to her. It is reported that baby oil works well as a lubricant; a dab of hand lotion with the baby oil is supposed to be even more habit forming.

TOILET-PAPER "BOMBS"

To make these, wrap about twelve to fifteen passes of toilet paper around your hand. (Keep them loose.) Double it over in the middle. Toilet-paper bombs burn very fast and hot due to the center opening. As each bomb starts burning out, pitch it in the toilet and immediately reposition and light the next bomb. Setting the toilet-paper bomb on a piece of damp cloth facilitates moving it to the toilet after use, allowing another bomb to be set in place quickly. Using two to three is a fast but messy way to make a piping-hot melted-cheese sandwich.

[Scene]

AMOR PERDIDA

By Tennessee Williams, from the Summer 2003 issue of the Michigan Quarterly Review. *The previously unpublished essay was undated, though it is believed to have been written between September 1940 and the summer of 1945.*

It is about a month ago today. I am seated in an open *cantina* facing the square in Acapulco, Gro., Mexico, and in accordance with one of my oldest and most respected traditions, I have just finished spending my last silver coin on a drink. I am seated with two favorite companions. At my left elbow is a juke-box which is playing what I seriously believe to be the most beautiful of all musical compositions, a bolero called *Amor Perdida*. At my right elbow is Mr. Orrin Beebe who is a confessed cousin of Lucius [a columnist for the *New York Herald*] and has just opened a rival *cantina* on the other side of the square.

We are drinking rum-cocos which is a drink made by knocking one end off a coconut and pouring in a couple of jiggers of rum, a dash of lemon and a little cracked ice and sugar.

We are blinking and squinting into the strong yellow sunlight of the square and the dark natives are drifting meaninglessly about us like figures in a dream. Not far from our table is a wretched old dog, slowly dying. I have noticed him before, slinking among the tables with quiet, pleading eyes. Careful not to approach too closely, his large yellow eyes expressing wisdom and sadness and complete acquiescence. I have given him scraps of *tortillas* and *tacos* and he has gulped them down with the frenzied haste of starvation. But now the old dog is dying. The pleading look has gone out of his eyes, he has finally given up his mendicant career. He lies on his side in the sun, breathing in spasms, and his eyes have a look of dark and patient endurance. Nobody seems to notice his condition. The death of dogs in the street is a Mexican commonplace and the natives of Acapulco, a gentle and kindly people, pay no attention to it. I look at the dog and I feel a sympathy for him. I pull his desiccated body into the shade of the *cantina* and pour a little water on the concrete in reach of his tongue. He ignores the water but glances up at me for an instant of recognition. His brief look is apologetic. Then he stares back into space and I return to my table.

A small boy is selling newspapers, *Excelsior* and *El Universal*. In great black type are such words as *Londres* and *Bombas* and *Destrucciónes*.

It seems less immediate, less important than the mongrel's death.

A dusty old *camión*, beach-taxi, is taking on passengers for Los Hornos, which is the afternoon beach. A stout American woman in one of those huge, gaudy sombreros which only Americans wear is bawling out the driver for his delay in starting.

But drinking is a process of insulation against such things and in a few moments my interest has returned to its usual center, inside my own skull.

After a while I turn to Mr. Beebe.

"Well, Beebe, it looks like I am back on the beach."

"How do you mean?"

"I sold a play in New York a few months ago. Ever since then I've been in a fool's Paradise, living on ninety dollars a month with nothing to do but write and lie around here. Now that's all over."

"They dropped your play?"

"Uh-huh. I knew they would sooner or later but hoped it would be a little later than this. The cheque for this month's advance royalties was due about five days ago and it hasn't come yet. So I feel pretty goddam sure they've already dropped it."

"What are you going to do?"

"I'm going back to my old profession."

"What's that?"

"Waiting tables."

"You got a job lined up?"

"Yes."

"Where?"

"In your *cantina*."

"Huh!—How much experience have you had?"

"Quite a good deal," I tell him. "I've waited tables in New Orleans, Iowa City, St. Louis, Memphis, Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Laguna Beach."

"Can you sing?"

"Sing? Like a nightingale!"

"Okay," he says finally. "You'll need a clean white shirt and a black bow tie."

Beebe rises from the table and wanders across the square. But I remain at the table. The juke-box has started again. That amazingly over-dressed woman known as the Princess Olga appears on the square. Three men follow about one step behind her. She talks very loudly, the three men listen and smile. I think she is explaining the mysteries of the universe to them. That's the nice thing about a language you don't understand—it is possible to believe the conversation is so much more elevated than it probably is.

After a while I get up. I think I will go over to Wells-Fargo on the opposite corner and see if any mail has come in for me. I am no longer concerned about it—but go anyway.

My name is printed at the top of the telegraph list. Mr. Tennessee Williams.

I receive the yellow envelope and seat my-



T.S. in Her Bath, *by Alex Kanevsky, was on display last spring at J. Cacciola Gallery, in New York City.*

self in a wicker chair beneath the mildly-agitated punkas.

I tear the envelope open and read this message.

BETTER RETURN AT ONCE. WE ARE CASTING YOUR PLAY FOR IMMEDIATE PRODUCTION.

Signed: Theresa Helburn, Theatre Guild, New York.

When people are facing imminent destruction their lives are supposed to pass before them in lightning review. What I faced at the moment was something quite different from imminent destruction, and yet that same phenomenon occurred.

As I sat in the wicker chair beneath the languid punkas I thumbed my way back through twenty-six years of living.

Various periods in the past were revived before me. I remembered particularly the *Vieux Carré* of New Orleans where I first learned how a poor artist lives. I remembered the Quarter Rats, as we were called. The prostitute Irene who painted the marvelous pictures and disappeared, Helen who entered my life through a search for a lost black cat, the jobless merchant seaman, Joe, who wrote sea-stories more exciting than Conrad's which were destroyed when the house he lived in burned. I remembered The Quarter Eat Shop, Meals for a Quarter in the Quarter, and passing

out pink, yellow, and blue cards on Royal, Bourbon, and Canal. The sunlight rich as egg-yolk in the narrow streets, great, flat banana leaves, and the slow, slow rain. The fog coming up from the river, swallowing Andrew Jackson on his big iron horse. Tamale vendors at midnight, their haunting voices. Mother O'Neill pouring kettles of boiling water through the floor to break up a studio party. The big fight, the riot call, the Black Maria, Night Court and the House of Detention. The big bare room and the filthy, desperate prisoners. Words scrawled on the dirty white walls. Life getting bigger and plainer and uglier and more beautiful all the time.

I remembered thumbing a ride from Santa Monica to San Francisco to see William Saroyan and the Golden Gate Exposition. Saroyan wasn't there but the fair was marvelous. Sunset from Telegraph Hill and a room that I slept in half-way down it and curious scraps of conversation heard through a very thin wall. I remembered days of slightly glorified beach-combing in Southern California. Picking squabs and dropping one feather for each bird in a bottle and collecting afterwards two cents for each feather. Selling shoes across from the M.G.M. lot in Culver City and spending lunch hour watching for Greta Garbo. Never with any success. Taking care of a small ranch up Canyon Road in Laguna Beach. And the sound of dogs barking a long way off at night when the moon started rising. A thirty-year-old schoolteacher from Oklahoma having her last fling before marriage on the California beaches. Waking up at two or three in the morning to find her at the foot of my bunk with a middle-aged man in a crumpled white linen suit, saying, Tenn, this is Jack, Jack's come here to bring me home, we're getting married tomorrow! Sitting up all night, drinking, playing the guitar, singing *El Rancho Grande*—celebrating sadly. And Jacobs who used to conk the "queers" in back of Mona's place with an ice-cleaver wrapped in a towel and roll them for their money, and yet was the most good-natured person I've known. And Jim who played juvenile leads in Miami University productions and was going to crash Hollywood—and worked with me as a pin-boy in a Hollywood bowling alley. Trying to get on the W.P.A. Writers' Project once in Chicago. My negro friends there who had so much more charm than white intellectuals have. Joe Jones' free art-class in the old Court-house in St. Louis, the Artists and Writers League there being evicted by the Police because they were Communistic. Screaming and bloody noses and hours in the bull-pen.

School-days in Mississippi. Walking along aimless country roads through a delicate spring rain with the fields, flat, and wide, and dark, ending at the levee and at the cypress brakes, and the buzzards wheeling leisurely a long way up. Dark life. Confused, tormented, uncomprehendable and fabulously rich and beautiful....

When finally I got up from the wicker chair, the brilliant yellow sunlight outside the Wells-Fargo office had faded. Beebe had gone home and had come forth again in a crisp white linen suit. He was seated once more by the juke-box in the rival *cantina*.

I went over where he was sitting and sat down by him.

"Have you got a white shirt?" he asked me.

"No," I told him.

"What size collar do you wear? Fifteen?"

"Fourteen and half," I told him.

"Okay. I'll lend you one of mine that's shrunk a little."

"No, thanks," I told him.

I handed him the yellow piece of paper.

It was getting so dark he had to bend way over to read it.

When he had made it out, he gravely extended his hand.

"Congratulations, Tenn. How do you feel?"

"Old," I told him.

"Huh?"

"Yes. Old. The irresponsible days of my youth are over."

There was a silence.

After a while Beebe smiled. "Has it occurred to you," he said, "that the play might be a failure?"

"No," I answered honestly. "I hadn't thought of that."

"You'd better think of it, Son."

Another brief silence.

"Beebe," I said, "will you keep that job open for me?"

"Sure," said Beebe. "I'll save the shirt for you, too."

After a while we both got up and crossed the plaza and entered Beebe's *cantina*.

Things were festive and bright. It was going to rain. A cool, damp wind was blowing off the Pacific.

I dropped a nickel in the juke-box and wandered out into the patio which was still unlighted. I had a curious sense of isolation. The old life seemed to be over. The new one had not begun yet. This was a time in between. Somehow it made me think of the time when I tore a hole in my one pair of pants and had to spend a motionless half hour behind a screen in a Jewish tailor's shop while the pants were mended. It was an interlude, a period of suspended animation.

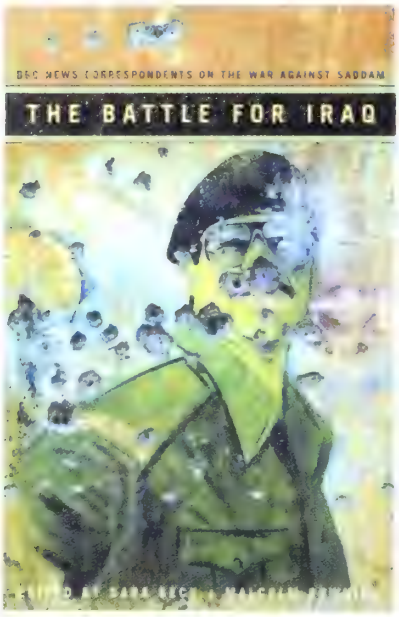
Then all at once the Mexican girl started singing *Amor Perdida*, the Japanese lanterns among the dark mango trees bloomed into pastel color. I caught my breath, for it seemed as though I were standing with empty pockets and greedy hands in Aladdin's orchard of jewels.



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Untitled, *by Fausto Melotti, can currently be viewed at the Leo Castelli Gallery, in New York City.*

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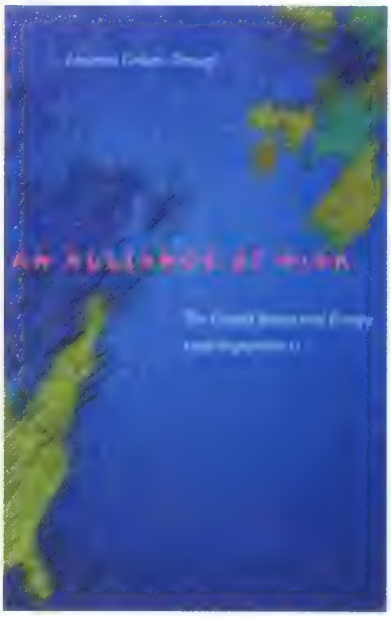
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JUNK POLITICS

A voter's guide to the post-literate election

By Benjamin DeMott

Bobbing placards. Bunting. Stray balloon. Cheering crowd. Trombone glissando. The candidate speaks, then descends from the podium to work the line:
Thanks. Thanks so much. You're great. Thanks. You guys are just great.
Thank you. Thanks so much. You guys are great.
Voice in crowd:
Remember the income gap.
Candidate:
I will. Thanks so much. You're great. I was born here. You're just great.
Thank you.*

Watch a campaign rally virtual or "real" nowadays and few birds sing. Beamish faces, meet-and-greet clichés, candidates leaning in, head bending and squinting to suggest deep dread of missing a syllable of The People's Response . . . A steady flow of gratitude to the "folks" who have "come out," praise for the folks' quality (great people), sideline pepper talk (Go get 'em, man), oddball, off-camera sound-bite admonitions ("Remember the income gap"). Following immutable protocols, candidates and supporters resemble the procession in Keats's urn, fast fixed in timelessness.

Bemused or bored, you tell yourself: Junk politics, always and ever the same.

But that's wrong, as it happens. The hogwash quotient of political panegyric may vary little from age to age (Nathaniel Hawthorne's nineteenth-century book-length tribute to Franklin Pierce isn't a lot more vapid than the nominating speeches that will soon thrill partisan New York and Boston). But the content of junk politics and the styles of self-mythologizing that drive home the messages—the key metaphors and tropes—constantly evolve. And, as the great twentieth-century scholar-critic Northrop Frye used to insist, changes in metaphor are *fundamental* changes.

Religious history in the West bears Frye out. Ten centuries ago metaphorical elaborations were beginning to sex up Christian worship. New playlets allowed hitherto silenced voices to speak. (Jesus' captors shouted taunts at the tortured Savior.) Hitherto undreamed of themes, conflicts, and human

* *As recorded by C-SPAN August 26, 2003, at a Howard Dean rally in Bryant Park, Manhattan*

Benjamin DeMott's last article for Harper's Magazine, *"Put On a Happy Face," appeared in the September 1995 issue. His fourteenth book,* Junk Politics: What It Means, Why It Sells, How It Grew, *is due out in January (Nation Books/Thunder's Mouth Press).*

JUNK POLITICS PERSONALIZES MAINLY THROUGH TROPES OF HEART—FEEL-YOUR-PAIN CHATTER AND TOUCHY-FEELY PERSONAL TESTIMONY

ambitions inserted themselves into church services. Charges that liturg
and other corruption was muddling the mind of the faithful sharpened i
wars, split a powerful church in two, and opened the revolutionary paths
still travel. Obviously trope changes matter.

The case is that both the essential planks and the elaborating tropes of
day's junk politics are troublingly underexamined, yet they've been functio
for some time as major agents of public confusion. They advance bel
and values that are connected only superficially, if at all, with the best in
country's past. Democratic principles are obscured. Rising mists of patr
ic fustian erase the memory of honored American pledges ("liberty and
tice for all"). What's needed for civil security is a new kind of primer—
it a tropological guide, call it a twenty-first-century polit
shit detector—aimed at fostering recognition of and effec
contention against the stories threatening to undo us.

The right starting point is with broad questions: What are the de
ing characteristics and content of junk politics in our time? What key tro
serve basic junk-political ends? Some bare-boned answers:

1. Junk politics personalizes and moralizes issues and interests rather th
clarifying them. It's impatient with articulated conflict, enthusiastic ab
Americans' optimism and moral character, and heavily dependent on fe
your-pain language and gesture.

2. Junk politics takes changelessness as a major cause—changelessn
meaning zero interruption in the processes and practices that strengthen
isting, interlocking systems of socioeconomic advantage.

3. Junk politics introduces new qualifications for high political office,
in the process redefines traditional values. It tilts courage toward bragga
cio, sympathy toward mawkishness, humility toward self-disrespect, ide
fication with ordinary citizens toward distrust of brains.

4. Junk politics miniaturizes large, complex problems at home wh
maximizing threats from abroad. It's also given to abrupt unexplained
versals of its own public stances, often spectacularly bloating proble
previously miniaturized.

5. Junk politics seeks at every turn to obliterate voters' consciousness
socioeconomic and other differences in their midst.

The politics just skeletally summarized isn't sold by argumentation
analysis but rather, as I say, by anecdote, tone, and trope, and by kindly e
and genial grin. The price the nation pays in consuming this politics is a da
gerous weakening of the substructure of democratic citizenship. Vot
prime enemy as elections approach isn't, in short, the opposition's slate;
junk politics itself and associated tropes. The old rule applies: Know Your E
emy and Resist It Intelligently.

LOVE HEALS ALL

Junk politics personalizes mainly through tropes of heart—feel-your-p
chatter and touchy-feely personal testimony. The implicit message is that le
ership's chief concern should be with setting an upbeat tone and demo
strating a sensitive response to hardship, rather than with homing in on
justice, spelling out practical correctives, arguing for the correctives in pub
forums, working for their ultimate enactment.

Standard warmups for salutes to "heart" spotlight narratives by or ab
the once injured and insulted. *Let me tell you my story*, said speaker after spe
er during the opening sessions of the quadrennial party conventions in t
year 2000 and on the campaign trail thereafter. For years my church had f
members, could not get a loan . . . I was a foreigner, the child of immigran
had no standing—yet here I am on this platform . . . I was a welfare moth
but now I take home $200,000 a year . . . As a child I played on a toxic-wa
dump, but now . . . At the conventions, displays of heart involved figures
larger consequence. Hadassah Lieberman spoke affectingly about her pare
tortured in concentration camps. The departing president mentioned

iliation but reported he was now "at peace." President-to-be Bush re-
ıbered his visit to a juvenile jail in Texas during which he talked with
ry, wary" young inmates who had committed grown-up crimes. (When
ooked in their eyes, Bush told audiences, "I realized some of them were
little boys.")

he new president also remembered an activist minister in Minneapolis
labored tirelessly for the homeless:

> I think of Mary Jo Copeland, whose ministry called "Sharing and Caring
> ands" serves 1,000 meals a week in Minneapolis, Minnesota.
>
> Each day, Mary washes the feet of the homeless, then sends them off with new
> cks and shoes.
>
> "Look after your feet," she tells them. "They must carry you a long way in this
> orld, and then all the way to God."

During the 2000–01 campaign, experiential reminiscence pushed one-on-goodness, positive thinking, and prayer forward into the spotlight. A simpattern is now emerging in the 2003–04 cycle. The personalizing media tribute round the clock (George Stephanopoulos inquiring as to whether Lieberman is just "too nice" to be president). But Kerry, Edwards, phardt—and the Liebermans—all deal extensively in heart-baring personal ory, personal pain. Hundreds of audiences learned about Gephardt as a n of feeling through his words regarding his mother ("she e me everything I have"), who died in the summer of 2003. phardt further revealed that his twenty-six-year-old daughis an underpaid schoolteacher, that his thirty-year-old ghter lately endured coming-out-gay anxiety, that his fa-r suffered a back injury ending his days as a milk-truck ver, that his son, at age two, was diagnosed with terminal ncer (a tumor "the size of a volleyball"), and that Gephardt d his wife "went home that night [of the diagnosis], knelt wn by the bed, and prayed that we could find an answer to r horrible problem." Happily a doctor called in the morng and advised them about a new experimental therapy, and day the toddler, named Matt, is a thirty-two-year-old married resident of Atlanta, Georgia. ("I get warm all over when I see this young man," Gephardt reports. "He is a gift from God.")

Heart tropes employ personal testimony to create an perience of intimacy, sincere and authentic; the feelings and oughts aren't easily dismissed as abstract, predictable, parian mouthings. *Let me reveal to you in passing that I am a man prayer . . .* Quiet accents of candor bring a sense of closess between speaker and audience, Republican, Democrat, whatever. The pression strengthens that heart—heart alone, not records of accomplishents, not positions on issues, not argued-for priorities, not expressive, persuasive talents—must be the electorate's pivotal concern. At the 2003 AACP convention in Miami, Julian Bond excoriated no-show would-be esidential candidates, declaring that it was "as much by their presence as their words" that the missing would be judged. Supporting that view, Kweisi lfume, the NAACP president, gestured at an elderly woman in a wheelchair, aiming that the candidates' failure to appear was "an affront to people ke her who came to this convention to see the presidential candidates." ieberman and Kucinich raced to Florida to apologize for their absence, emonstrating heart. The former declared: "I was wrong. I regret it, and I apolgize for it," and the latter announced: "I'm very sorry I wasn't able to be here. mazing grace, how sweet it is, once was lost, now I'm found.")

Leaders need prove only that they can feel . . . a child's or parent's or ranger's pain. Problems aren't as difficult as Phi Bete wonks claim. By sheding a moral defect, by being the buoyantly admirable, minority-sensitive,

KERRY, EDWARDS, GEPHARDT, THE LIEBERMANS—ALL DEAL EXTENSIVELY IN HEART-BARING PERSONAL HISTORY, PERSONAL PAIN



lustrations by Andrew Zbihlyj

JUNK POLITICS ENCOURAGES THE BELIEF THAT "POLITICAL" AND "POLITICIAN" ARE SYNONYMOUS WITH "INCONSEQUENTIAL," "MEAN," OR "LUDICROUS"

elder- and cripple-cherishing people that we necessarily are, America can make problems disappear.

But can Americans thereby reach basic terms of injustice—fundamen discontinuities between affirmed democratic values and standards and o cially approved rules, practices, laws?

The revered historian R. H. Tawney warned almost a century ago agai addresses to "humanitarians whose feelings are more easily stirred by ha ships than their consciences are by injustice." He contended that the vo es rousing American colonists against the Crown and American abolitic ists against slavery had staying power less because they talked hardship th because they clarified rights and wrongs. This is even truer of the no voices of the civil rights struggle. Great causes—they still exist—nourish the selves on firm, sharp awareness of the substance of injustice. The countr very foundations, indeed, lie in clearly defined understanding of injustic Blunting such understanding is a major project of junk politics. And trop of heart are among the projectors' key tools.

I'D RATHER BE CUTTING BRUSH

Junk politics is shrewdly yet passionately pro-changelessness; it promo this cause with tropes encouraging the belief that the words "political" a "politician" are synonymo with "inconsequential," "mea or "ludicrous." The tropes dirt on political ambition by ing dirt on the entire politi arena. Again, the media co tribution is crucial. Pundits a columnists deprecate the pol ical calling by obsessively minding readers, in impress tones, that this or that offic holder isn't "just" a care politician but a *profession* (David Yepsen, *Des Moines R ister* columnist, on Dean: "H presidential. . . . Unlike t Gephardts and the Kerrys the race, Dean's not a care politician. He's a doctor w got into politics.") Ordina citizens echo the pundits' viev The *New York Times* quotes a businessman attending a Wesley Clark ral "Best yet," says this fan, "Clark's not a tainted politician."



Large corporate campaign donors dismiss, as jokes, differences betwe themselves and their employees regarding the positions of candida whom the donors support. (The countercultural millionaire who inve ed Urban Outfitters, Inc., a major contributor to Senator Rick Sant rum's gay-baiting campaigns, first denies then acknowledges the cont butions, later says that his workers hold "all kinds of political views," a finally adds that he and his employees "joke about our political diff ences.") Talk in this vein evokes political seriousness itself as a kind half-amusing, half-pitiable disfigurement.

And leaders themselves play a variety of corroborative diffidence gam Persons in mid-political career voice scorn for politics. Hillary Clinton fuses to answer reporters' intelligently prepared questions about the "pol ical content" of her *Living History* (2003). Tyro politicos shrug at their ov contradictions and eschew consecutive thought. Arnold Schwarzenegg asserts that his tales of pot-heavy group sex were made-up publicity ploys a that he no longer behaves as he once did—because now he's a family ma

Others contribute to diffidence-shows by behavior attesting their ov

nsequentiality. The president's contribution comes in part through un- ained reversals of position—issue-vaporizing veerings that signal the ab- e of coherence and depth in the thinking on which momentous opinions ed in the first place. George W. Bush vigorously denounces on television anuary 2003 the University of Michigan's affirmative-action admissions cies; a few days later the White House submits a brief to the Supreme Court nst those policies; in June 2003 the Supreme Court upholds the policies; nce the president praises the court, hails its recognition of "the value of ersity on our nation's campuses," and declares that, "like the court," he k[s] forward to the day when America will truly be a color-blind society." And then, beyond all this, there's the diffidence-show implicit in lead- own mucker-posing speech, rich in solecisms, truculently stubborn mis- nunciations, non sequiturs, plain absurdities. A Cabinet member links drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge with nursing and doc- ing. (Interior Secretary Gale Norton says her department aims to "heal landscapes and restore health to our national forests.") A U.S. senator cants on the Glorious Fourth in a "debate" on increases in the low-in- ne child tax credit. ("You've got 12 million children this year that will celebrating the Fourth of July," says Senator Blanche Lincoln, Democ- of Arkansas, "that will be left out of the advantages of additional tax re- that could go for getting them ready for school, or other things their par- s need. It's sad that the president didn't think this was important enough do something about it.") By intent or otherwise, such speech reflects lack anxiety about appearing stupid to colleagues or constituents and there- disses the political calling.

The American democratic ideal called for universal, informed participa- n in the public square: acquaintance with skills of argument, familiarity th standards of coherence, brains. The embrace by those in high office of n-bulb diffidence tropes—macho brandishings of ignorance—trashes that eal and draws down added contempt on political vocation.

AND UP, STAND UP, FOR JESUS!

Junk politics redefines qualifications for high political office; the chosen tropes lebrate pugnacity and eagerness to take on bullies. By any measure the ost popular current political gesture is that of defiance. Defiance of what? cessive specificity not required. To attract voters, leaders and would-be lead- s posture pseudo-heroically at generalized opposition—perpetrators of of- nsive budgets, chicken-hearted competitors in election races, corporate atans, whomever. The playacted contests are structured as self-mythologiz- g engagements pitting good against evil; stress falls on the leader as isola- , facing multiple bullying enemies whether in the California state legisla- ure or at the United Nations or on the other side of the aisle—facing them one, proudly, grimly, fearlessly, in duels destined to end in absolute victo- es or defeats.

Religious overtones are audible (the David-Goliath myth hovers near); al- sions to conversion and rebirth experiences are common, as are echoes of spel hymns ("Stand Up, Stand Up, for Jesus!"). "Somebody has to stand roud [against Gray Davis's budget] and say enough is enough!"—Califor- ia State Senate Republican leader James Brulte. "Let us stand up [against e Dixie Chicks and other foreign threats] and let us be the human shields f prayer . . . for the President!"—Alabama's state auditor, Beth Chapman, t the "Stand Up for America" rally that put her on the Deep South polit- al map. "The only hope Democrats have . . . is to behave like Democrats nd stand up [against wishy-washy candidates for the nomination]!"—Ver- ont's Howard Dean.

Had the stance of the country's Founding Fathers when addressing op- onents in constitutional debates been that of crusaders struggling against he odds to conquer pure evil, had they defined themselves as heroic isolatos tterly oblivious of the need for (and the satisfactions of nurturing) al- iances—had they, moreover, not strongly committed themselves to the

THE MOST POPULAR CURRENT POLITICAL GESTURE IS THAT OF DEFIANCE. DEFIANCE OF WHAT? EXCESSIVE SPECIFICITY NOT REQUIRED

THE ADMINISTRATION HOLDS THAT WORKERS WOULD BE BETTER OFF IF FEWER OF THEM HAD A SHOT AT OVERTIME PAY AND MORE WERE CALLED "MANAGERS"

belief that true politics consists in the giving and weighing of reasons United States of America wouldn't exist. But junk politics *rides* on defiar of reasons; a stagy habitual truculence is its pivotal energy resource.

AT THE HELIPUTIAN BAZAAR

Junk politics miniaturizes domestic problems; the aim of the downsizin partly to persuade voters that no major issues exist, partly to establish di dent leaders as—despite the diffidence—persons of range, command, mastery. Trope-polishing miniaturizers shuttle daily from medium to me um—reductive apothegms, arresting redefinitions, poll questions, photo o most-unforgettable-character sketches, choose your genre. Large-size, lo range public causes shrink to impulsive individual New Year's resolutions (V President Dick Cheney: Energy conservation is simply "a sign of perso virtue"). The often monumental, often selfless labor that produces enacta legislation is likened to psychotic sexual assault (Grover Norquist, head Americans for Tax Reform: "Bipartisanship is another name for date rape Pollster miniaturists drop issues in favor of "mood and attitude" love-me/lo me-not non-questions (Does President Bush care about problems of peo like yourself? A lot? Not much? How much?). Damage-control miniatur cut an entire section from an EPA report detailing scientists' estimates of ha caused by rising global temperatures—and soothingly rewrite another E report alluding to possible post-9/11 air pollution in lower Manhattan. P motion for tax cuts is windy and teary about checks—minuscule checks— "folks." Signing the tax bill, the president introduces not millionaires wh booty starts at $10,000-plus a month but an Air Force sergeant's wife nam Jenny Tyson. Jenny and her mate, says Bush, modestly proud, "will keep extra $1,300 a year of their own money."

The miniaturizing instinct manifested itself at many moments in the ru up to war. Questioned about giant, worldwide, antiwar protests, the pre dent downsized them: "The size of protests is like deciding, well, I'm go to decide policy based on a focus group." When protests moved from the stre to prestigious editorial pages, miniaturists downsized the president's o exaggerations of the Iraqi threat; the Leader's "mistake" wasn't a matter a dozen speeches over months but of a "tiny" (Paul Wolfowitz), "insign cant" (Condoleezza Rice) "one sentence" or "sixteen words."

But on the foreign-affairs beat, as already indicated, miniaturizing and m imizing impulses often become entangled in each other's coils. The most str ing recent performance in the maximizing mode was that of Secretary Po ell at the United Nations. Powell simultaneously miniaturized doubt a maximized threats with hot rhetoric about imminent peril, comically ov played "readings" of photographic images (see this tractor trailer, look at t hole in the ground), and paraphrases of translated passages of intercepted c versations that expunged their dense ambiguities. (The secretary re-tra lated an Iraqi headquarters command to "inspect" for ammunition as an der to "clear out all of the areas, the scrap areas, the abandoned areas. Ma sure there is nothing there.")

The record confirms that miniaturists are most comfortable working the d mestic front. The administration argues for solving the poverty/literacy pr lem by allowing the states to run Head Start and shrink it. The administ tion holds that American wage earners would be better off if fewer had a sh at overtime pay and more were recategorized as "managers"; according Congress is asked to approve new rules that reduce by hundreds of th sands the number of workers eligible for overtime-pay benefits. Seemingly c vinced everybody would be better off if they heard no upsetting economic ne the administration seeks to kill the Mass Layoff Statistics program—a Bure of Labor Statistics report that tracks and publicizes factory closings. The a ministration moves ahead, through executive order, with its faith-based e terprise, finding solutions in the story lines of selected, contemporary, urb saints' lives for socioeconomic troubles diminished to "trouble spots."

From the hospitable Miniaturizing Party big tent nobody is exclud

ublicans invented the most notable figure of speech in miniaturist jargon—
nts of light." But John F. Kennedy was miniaturizing when he proposed
ure Africa with a Peace Corps, and so was estimable Jimmy Carter when
ent his weight to the volunteer Habitat for Humanity project (solving the
e national housing problem one sawhorse at a time)—and the first head
he White House's Faith-Based and Community Initiatives Office was
iself a Democrat.

And neither party forswears personalizing rubbish during controversy.
ublicans battling to pass a bill capping malpractice jury awards reduce
complicated issues to a choice of whether or not to reward cynical op-
tunists. (Mort Zuckerman repeats in *U.S. News & World Report* a long-
discredited myth about a "woman [who] throws a soft drink at her
friend at a restaurant, then slips on the floor she wet and breaks her tail-
ne. She sues. Bingo—a jury says the restaurant owes her $100,000!") De-
crats counter with heartbreak—the story of young Jesica Santillan, killed
doctors who gave her a heart and lung of the wrong blood type.

t follows, obviously, that sound critiques of junk politics and supporting
pes don't center on relative party guilt. They concern how to draw fair
es between melodramatic arias and responsible efforts at measuring ac-
ately the scope of problems; how to animate the real-life consequences,
the majority, of political action purportedly coping with large problems.

E DAY WILL COME WHEN WE WILL ALL BE ONE

Everyman is who we see down Crawford, Texas, way when George W. Bush
ads out, with or without entourage, toward the press.
e details mostly cohere. Jeans all around. No dress shirts
ties. Real dust rising from the boots and a pickup in the
ddle distance support the blazing big buckle in the Bush
lt. The dog needs fixing, admittedly. (An authentic ranch
farm dog is a mud-'n-shit rolling mother with an ear-
tting voice; the Bush dog looks lappy and overbathed.)
t the rest of the scene reads plain folks and country, as
hould, and when the president speaks up in his *g*-dropping,
nna-gotta vein, the themes radiate out: bunch of regular
ys and gals here, nobody uppity. Across America's length
d breadth the same story: good buddy equal pardners
lking gonna-gotta together, everybody on earth more or
ss Crawford kin.

Like a Crawford photo op, junk politics is interested in
literating consciousness of differences. And at mo-
ents in the recent past, that objective hasn't been
ursed with cynicism. Immediately after 9/11 the nation-
need was for reassurance—proof of solidarity and good-
ess, proof that the hijackers and their backers were mad
believe anything in this country's nature deserved
ich monstrous loathing. And at first the need was met
editably, with respect for the gap separating the fearful suffering of the
ctims and the bereaved from the anxieties of the unwounded. Reassur-
nce came in the form of guarded hope that the sacrifices of rescue work-
rs and the demonstrations by public leaders of unfaked grief at the
aughter of innocent thousands could be read as evidence of the moral
orth lying at the American core.

Much in that period possessed dignity: the forthright advocacy, in pul-
its and elsewhere, of a reassessment of values, the many restrained but
eeply felt expressions of belief in the feasibility of recovering the national
est self. But realizing the promise of solidarity turned out to be a project
asily coarsened. Outrage and despair that initially stimulated thought
nd awakened consciousness of forgotten meanings of fraternity came
uickly to be treated as clinical conditions. The authority-preferred nos-
rums included an escalation of heart tropes, ever more extravagant

ACROSS AMERICA'S LENGTH AND BREADTH THE SAME STORY: GOOD BUDDY EQUAL PARDNERS TALKING "GONNA-GOTTA" TOGETHER, EVERYBODY CRAWFORD KIN



NO NEED TO FRET ABOUT NOT FINDING WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION. LICKING SADDAM HUSSEIN MADE US "FEEL GOOD ABOUT OURSELVES"

salutes to American character, sympathy, and essential sameness, e more hostility to the exchange of reasons in political debate. And e more piety as well. Prayer was proclaimed a significant element in the liberations about attacking Iraq. Asked at a press conference, "Hov your faith guiding you?" the president, eyes moistening, replied that "pray[s] daily" that war can be averted. Self-questioning metamorpho into self-cosseting. And the glue holding together the sentimentali and contradictions—the erratic overnight reversals of policies—was co mitment to the abolition of awareness of difference and enthusiasm wish-fulfilling fantasies of unity and sameness.

Nothing more bolstering to such fantasies, of course, than standard warti tropes on the theme of shedding "partisan differences" (Support Our Troo and standard patriotic anointing of America as international moral arbi For a moment the post-9/11 psychology had seemed in process of begett a politics aware at least in some measure that optimistic faith in the go ness of our kind would be stronger if founded not on delusory self-celebrat but on fair public policy and thoroughgoing debate about substantial p lic issues. But myths of holy war overmatched the nascent psychology, p ting homeland courage and righteousness against pusillanimous evil, sim taneously flattering and medicating the upper-middle-class electorate ou its short-lived leaning toward self-critique and holding aloft—even hig than the flag—the great banner of optimistic American togetherness. Pla high on the list of officialdom's patriotic duties was that of recharging c zen faith in shared moral eminence (the president delivered paean a paean on our mutual characterological excellence—the "goodness" of American people, America as a nation of "kind hearts").

The war itself quickly became the setting for fresh campaigns against ference. Command decisions embedded war correspondents in combat un eliminating space for objective criticism of commanders ("we're all in t together"). Personalizing flacks bent themselves to the work of putting a l able human face—symbol of American togetherness—on combat defeats a horror. A single charmingly candid, humbly born West Virginian an (possibly staged) rescue mission displaced issues of lost lives, lost treasure, l international standing.

No need to fret about finding or not finding weapons of mass destructi said Frank Luntz, a Republican pollster. What counts is that licking Sadd made *all* Americans "feel good about ourselves." No need to be exercised ab the difference between planned per capita expenditure for Homeland Se rity in Wyoming and in New York (seven times less in the Empire St than in Vice President Cheney's Wyoming). Homeland Security resources w spent in an attempt to shut down redistricting disputes in the Texas State L islature. Junk togetherness seeped into congressional argument about defi and tax policy. Floor debate dwindled into close-harmony cheering for equ

ity, both parties joining in denunciations of "the class-warf crowd," both parties competing for a title only extreme di ness could covet (Top Proselyter for Classless America).

To repeat: terror attacks, the Iraq war, and their aftermath had tensified the public need—heartless to mock it but wrong to pander to it for compelling images evoking the promise of democratic happiness: co panionship, solidarity, expectation, street fairs (not wrangling) in the pub square. The refashioned, reenergized politics of self-esteem and unifying mo distinction met the need, defused fear and bewilderment with a winning gri mirroring American content in less troubled times. We like ourselves, s the trusted tropes. We trust our neighbors—lessers, betters, kids, whiteto bleacher folk, skyboxers, leaders, followers, the lot. *You couldn't tell them ap the commander in chief and those kids*—not, that is, in the restorati difference-abolishing footage shot on the carrier flight deck: the genius-tr that led the news shows. Leader and followers fanning and laughing togeth as equals, at ease, down to earth, same suits, same helmets, no side.

And critical response to the images rarely struck the target—witness media erage of the gentrified saturnalia aboard the USS *Abraham Lincoln*. Much tility in newspapers to the repositioning of the ship, the risky landing, the ggering progress across the deck, the cued cheers—objections that this was aged, made-for-TV event, lacking authenticity. (At the journalistic high l, Norman Mailer stepped forth as lecturer on modesty to complain that h's donning the flight suit ranked as a cowardly act by a poseur who, hav- bought out of combat in youth, shamelessly claimed an exalted hero's stature niddle age.) But the theme of the flight-deck drama was sameness not hero- lifference, palship not leadership, and the contribution that truly count- was to the broad cause of issue erosion. The staged event—flight suit, re-slighting carrier, the rest—were (like "nukular," "Bring 'em on," the ch, the Rangers, etc.) elements of an act of identification with "folks" that duced intimacy and erased distance. No difference and distance ("they're in this together out there"), no issues. No issues, no change.

In the ideal world the buried issue of the hour—national infantilization: babying of the electorate, spoiling of voter-age "children" with year-round beat Christmas tales, the creation of a swelled-head citizenry, morally in and irremediably sentimental—would have made its way in time into blic discourse. Candidates competing for a chance to mount an effective allenge to the sponsors of infantilization wouldn't have allowed the issue become inexpressible. They would have helped us grasp the mix of ele- nts—mucker-pose manners, bitty legislative initiatives, phony underdog pathy, Celebrities-R-Us equality—which, in managed coalescence, were ce again marginalizing substantial issues. But the post-9/11 world wasn't eal. The old rule—Know Your Enemies and Resist Them Intelligently—d rarely been more pertinent, but resistance simply didn't begin.

Suppose it never begins, or begins and fails. Suppose distinctions vanish tween foundational democratic principles and decorative pleasurable pes. What happens then? Very little at first. The familiar apparatus of con- tutional government and party organizations survives seemingly untouched ampaigns, elections, ostensible checks and balances, etc.).

In time, though, the language of justice and injustice comes to strike or- nary ears as Latinate and archaic—due for interment—and attachment to d forms weakens. Heart tropes grow harder-edged. On debate nights aspiring ndidates, wired, sit on podiums attending to personal-hardship tales nar- ted by audience members; electronically recorded data on candidates' mo- ent-to-moment sympathy levels flash on viewers' screens; spinners facing ost-"debate" questions abut victory and defeat serve up biographical details candidates' lives that "explain" high or low affect-ratings.

The idea of qualifications is reconceived. Persons seeking high office cer- fy mediocrity or incompetence rather than the opposite. (They produce ev- dence of significant academic failure, or proof of longstanding contempt for olylingual aesthetes and scientific prodigies, or other pertinent bona fides.) lo longer obliged to perform as gifted miniaturizers—the concept of *social roblems* has been irretrievably lost—political advisers are judged by new stan- ards. Their reputation depends on success at creatively updating the gen- ified saturnalia—producing spectacles that revitalize the grand myths of ameness, melding rich, poor, powerful, and powerless.

Scenarios comic, nightmarish, or far out, to be sure, but consider: the ichest and most influential moviemaker in America, Steven Spielberg, has lready created box-office triumphs—including the startlingly *un*ironic *A.I.*—encouraging popular belief in the essential sameness of humans and nachines. Large capital resources plus stars with clout can easily be com- nandeered for superprojects aimed at abolishing consciousness of differ- nce across the board. Given present indicators, given the pace at which ten- lerness hype, brushcutter selves, defiance-mongering, and sameness and niniaturizing shows settled in as norms of our campaign discourse, who would bet that "product" advancing this basic junk-political cause isn't now n development? ■

SUPPOSE DISTINCTIONS VANISH BETWEEN FOUNDATIONAL DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES AND DECORATIVE PLEASURABLE TROPES. WHAT HAPPENS THEN?

TURN ON, TUNE IN

Toward a progressive talk show

By Thomas de Zengotita

American progressives are now realizing that right-wing media must be directly challenged. Rush Limbaugh and Roger Ailes have dominated the political-opinion landscape, essentially unopposed, for too long. The question is: How to strike back?

Major players are conferring over this question. Al Gore is talking to Comcast. Podesta is talking to Kirsch. AnShell is talking to Liu. Franken is talking to AnShell. And Norman Lear is talking to everybody.

The diagnosis is this: Conservatives succeed and progressives fail in TalkLand because progressives are too nice and have complex views that can't be reduced to sound bites reeking with attitude and entertainment value.

That's not all wrong. The complex part is right. The sound-bites part is sometimes right. But the nice part is over, and the entertainment part is just wrong. The reason progressive talk shows have failed is that they've taken established [illegible] formats, Donahue [illegible] and squeezed them into established formats.

That lesson is sinking in. New formats are being discussed, featuring satire and skits—a big step forward but not big enough. We need to move beyond established talent too. We need the hungry young. Substance aside, we need them because they will exert themselves wit nothing-else-matters energy. And through th new talent we target a specific market.

But you don't decide on a cast before y write the play; you write the play and then ca it. So here's the play.

Format

Assume a two-hour radio show or TV show or both, the way MSNBC does *Imus*. It will tak time to do what this show must do; namely, mov serious political substance into the libertari space created by Comedy Central.

The nearest thing going to what I have i mind is *The Daily Show*. Jon Stewart sets th tone, interviewing guests and presiding ov mockumentary skits featuring players we cou on for a certain performance. Notice that Jon constantly relating to the audience, interactin with the camera in a confiding way. He know it's all about creating an in-group.

But *The Daily Show* is:

a) only a half hour long;

b) all comedy;

c) divided into short bits;

d) substantive only by implication, if at all

This show will be more extended and mea dering, sardonic, comic—but serious too, angr

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bitter. It will deal with politics, policy, and orical context as well as with popular cul- and prominent personalities.

Concept and Cast

he two main figures on the show are:

he Host. Straight white man. Early thir- . Why straight and white and male? Be- se progressives are so fragmented. The Host ds to be an "unmarked signifier" who can ld bridges between identity groups. His per- ality? How about Ivy League Grad School ets Ali G and Jiminy Glick with a pinch of rt Sahl?

Of course, the specific personality can't be own ahead of time, but imagine a patrician ppie or an intense New York intellectual o can fall into hip-hop vernacular at will l can discuss the Frankfurt School as well as superpowers of the X-Men.

Whatever his style, the Host *must* embody s fusion of high and popular culture. That is e key to our enterprise.

Why? *Because the base for a renewed progres- ism in this country is made up of young people whom that fusion is a way of life.* People in at base have read Foucault *and* spent time in at rooms discussing *Buffy the Vampire Slayer.* om interns to associates, these people drive e culture industry—media, arts, nonprofits, e academy.

This will be our core demographic. Right w, there is no *single* venue in our public cul- re to represent them. The success of this ow will depend on its ability to fill that vacu- n. It will depend on not trying to compete for e exurban commuter crowd, not right away. his show aims to be the coolest thing out ere for our target audience. If that happens, uch will follow, because major cultural tip- ng points are lodged in that demographic.

The basic problem is this: Political engage- ent—especially from the left—is no longer ol. The right has managed an astonishing ltural-political reversal: they turned us into e Establishment and themselves into rebels. his is completely ludicrous, given what is go- g on in the world, but that was the genius of e political-correctness gambit. This show ms to make political engagement cool again.

The Person Who Actually Knows Stuff PWAKS). The Host's partner. A major inno- ation. The people we are after went to the est schools in the country, but, with notable xceptions, they are—for reasons the show ill take up—abysmally ignorant. The good ews is that they know it, and, unlike their ven more ignorant and apathetic fellow citi- ens, they are embarrassed about it. They feel uilty for not knowing more history and eco- nomics, for not really knowing how things stand in the world. They have been exposed to enough—in some half-remembered course, in an essay, or in a book review—to know that the facts are on our side, but they can't keep track of them, can't deploy them spontaneously in argument.

But "The Person Who Actually Knows Stuff" can. PWAKS sits at the table with the Host during the show—laptop ready, files of facts catalogued, likely websites in the directory. PWAKS monitors the proceedings, foraging for pertinent information. In accordance with the needs of the moment as the show unfolds, the Host can say, "Well, this looks like a job for [*characteristic sound effect*] . . . The Person Who Actually Knows Stuff!" And, bang, we get the distribution of benefits from the Bush tax cut, or per capita income under free-trade regimes in Latin America, or proportions of Big Pharma budgets that go to marketing versus research—and so on.

Information tending to undermine the Host must be forthcoming, too—it will be up to him to deal. Faced with an unwelcome statistic, he says, "Well, that's how it goes in a real no-spin

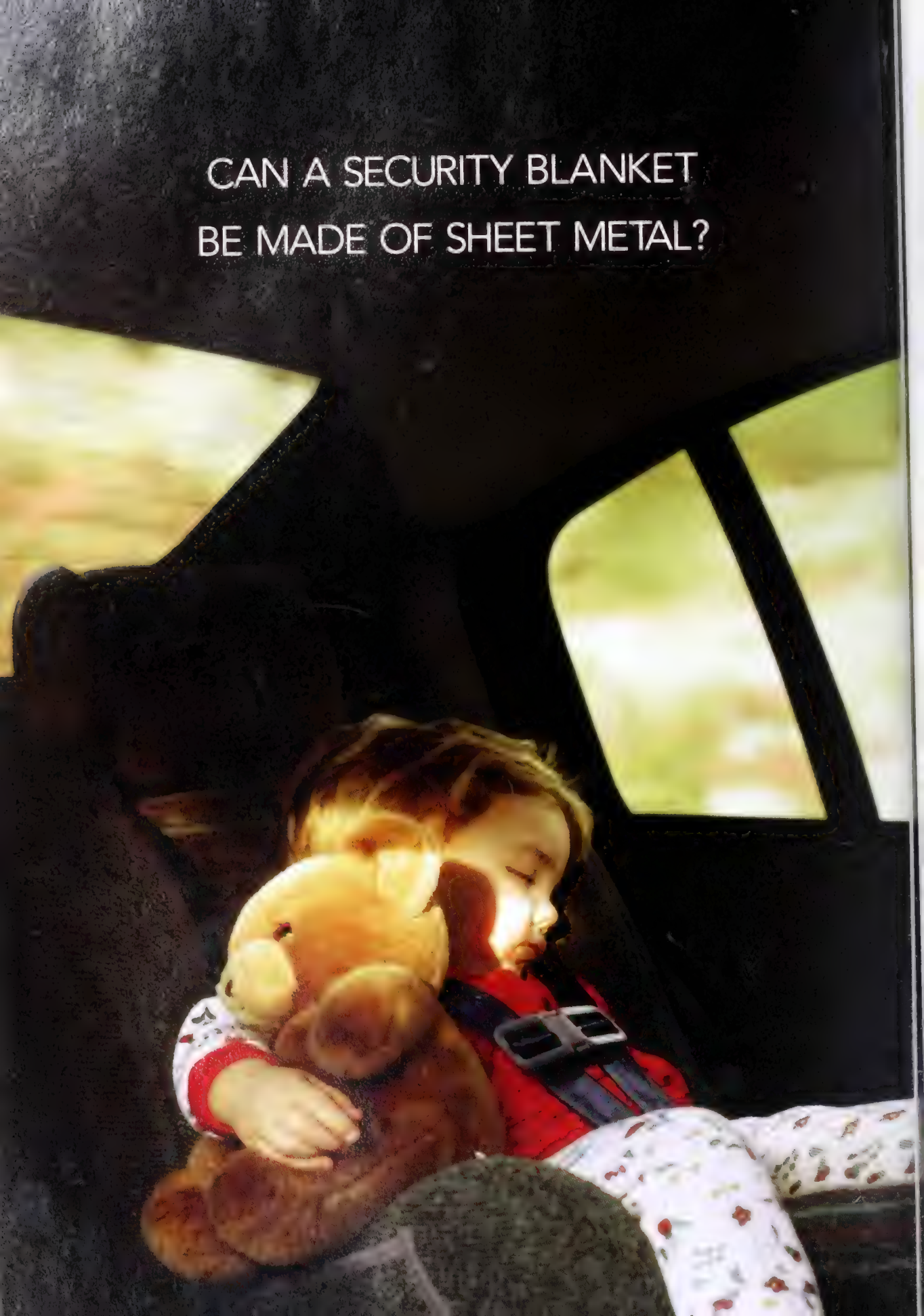


zone." In the long run, the payoff will be enormous if this happens regularly.

So the Host and PWAKS complement each other. He is the generalist, the satirist, the polemicist. PWAKS is into detail, her memory is photographic, her organizing skills unparalleled. Master of the info-age, she navigates the

Illustrations by Tim Bower

CAN A SECURITY BLANKET
BE MADE OF SHEET METAL?



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NIGHT VISION. ALLOW US TO SHED SOME LIGHT.



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CHEVROLET PONTIAC OLDSMOBILE BUICK CADILLAC GMC SATURN HUMMER SAAB

*OnStar services require vehicle electrical system [illegible] system information and details. **Testing conducted by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) as part of its New Car Assessment Program (NCAP).

that and finds the facts—one of our main themes being that, contrary to recent academic dogma, there are such things.

Supporting Cast: Comics and mimics for skits featuring political and cultural figures à la *Saturday Night Live* but more substantive. Samples are given below, but the gist is that we don't do forgiveness comedy. Personalities are mocked—not "roasted"—and the policy consequences of character are emphasized. No one we satirize will ever do a see-what-a-good-sport-I-am guest appearance. Bush 43 will not smile upon his imitator the way Bush 41 did on Dana Carvey.

Themes

They are underlying. They constitute an ethos that guides specific judgments. The overarching theme is:

1) *Irony, Apathy, and the Fear of Being Duped.* This is what we must address if we are to help revive a progressive vanguard. The young people we are trying to motivate recognize themselves in this description, believe me; I have learned that much in twenty years of teaching. We who emerged from the sixties



and seventies have not inspired a critical mass of successors. And this applies across the identity spectrum. The NAACP and NOW and ACT-UP all face the same problem.

Most people in our demographic will not respond to yet another advocate hyping yet another cause with horrific graphics depicting mass suffering. They've seen too many ac That's why they're disengaged.

But we don't preach. We talk about mo specific features of the landscape.

2) *Political Correctness.* The show's positi on this crucial topic is: Okay, a lot of som times silly constraints have emerged to ensu against giving offense to various groups. B compared with the circumstances in whi women, blacks, and gays used to live, P.C. *nothing.* And structural discrimination is st very real—though things improved enough, especially in the academy and the culture indu try, so that reactionaries could sell the id that P.C. is an oppressive regime enforced "thought police."

This is nonsense, but the fact—and it is fact—that progressives let themselves get c as puritanical nags in the lives of young peop has been a disaster.

In general, we say to those who take offen at the drop of an inappropriate pronoun, "G over it, there are more important things stake than your personal comfort zone." T those who pretend to confuse etiquette with r pression we say, "We're on to you, pal, a we're not going to let a few linguistic inconv niences distract us from massive and ongoi social injustice—and especially not from tho who profit by it."

But that's the show's position. Guests a callers will have other views. The point is to ta this issue on, connecting it, for example, to guest's account of the feminist movement, or a discussion of language and perception with a v iting philosopher. *Progressives cannot afford dance around this topic anymore. It is killing us.*

3) *Postmodernism.* More generally, the sh takes on the whole brouhaha over postmo ernism—of which P.C. is a symptom. Th can't be purely academic. Doug Rushkoff a techno DJs and the creators of *The Simpso* are as qualified to discuss this topic as Judith Butler or David Harvey. In fact, th should be brought together, because the poi of the show is to *be* this mix of popular a high culture.

We discuss Baudrillard on simulacra wi Fredric Jameson but also with the directors *The Matrix*—and the Host takes a call from som one who was on a reality TV show.

And so on.

4) *Standards/Quality.* The show pushes f standards and quality in the face of the rel tivism that has recently dominated progressi discourse. Hence its announced policy screening audience contributions. But, on again, that's the show's attitude—the discu sion is open.

) *Thunder on the Right.* Exposing the machi- ons that sustain reactionary forces in this ntry is a constant theme. We strike back in ous ways—but especially through satire and ckery. The fact that conservatives enjoy an e in the humor department is a scandal.

) *Justice in the World.* This is basic. We e to confront the other themes in order to ress this one again. The core issue is: How progressives to unite around a vision of jus- for all when the ideology of postmodern itics has deprived us of universal categories l principles? (See my essay "Common ound" in *Harper's Magazine,* January 2003.)

Sample of Regular Segments

) *Correcting the Record.* Very important mo- nt devoted to misinformation from previous ws, with credit to listeners who send in cor- tions. The contrast, on this score, with bad- h practices on right-wing shows will speak itself.

2) *Check This Out:* Recommendations. Web- s like Truthout.com, a Krugman column, a nathan Schell article, a new book, a movie, album. Audience submissions invited—but vet them; this is not an anything-goes bulletin ard. We are aiming, without apology, to con- idate an elite—an in-group of tough, smart, en- ged young people (see above).

3) *Editorial Discretion.* A verbatim reading from e mainstream press, with commentary. The fo- s is on how stories get buried or framed in a cer- n way. For example: Bush announces big boost AIDS money to great fanfare—and no actual oney is forthcoming. But *that* story is on page with the panty-hose ads.

4) *Statistics.* Yet another blatant rip-off of the arper's Index.

4) *AlienWatch.* "The Australian Conspiracy." mainstay satirical focus. The lead-in:

[*Voice like Walter Winchell, or maybe Lewis ack*] "Welcome to *AlienWatch,* where we update ou on a plot to destroy Western civilization with ash media. No one else dares confront these sidious forces seeking to corrupt our way of life, ut political correctness will not stop us from re- ealing the shocking truth behind [*ominous mu- c*]—The Australian Conspiracy.

"Rupert Murdoch [*manic cackle sound effect*] ts at the center of this web of decadence, but his ustralians are everywhere, and their influence growing, even on our own shores.

"Their motive? It's genetic. They're descended om a bunch of convicts, don't forget, and now ney want revenge. We know ethnicity is taboo ese days, but the thought police can't intim- date *us.* Think about it. Why else would Aus- alians flood our culture with their trash? Mon- y? Sure, but there are other ways to make money. No—these people *like* trash, it's their natural element. Australians descend from the dregs of the Anglophone Imperium, the tail end of the Caucasian Bell Curve. They were ethnically cleansed by the parent nation before they could contaminate us. Now they are sneaking back. Ask yourself this: *Why is Australia so far away?* You think that's a coincidence? Please.

"Ask yourself this: What did an Australian ever do that was worth anything? Name a really important Australian scientist or artist. Not one, see? All they do is drink beer and play rugby—and wallow in trash.

"Think about it."

(Ideally, a defender of Australia calls in to name a great Australian scientist. The Host says, "Well, I never heard of him," and tries to get the caller to advocate Australian Studies.)

And the particular segment follows. Maybe a Steve Dunleavy column or some especially outrageous piece of "reporting" in the *New York Post.* We focus especially on Fox News. The Host riffs on the item, exposing how it shores up prejudices Murdoch encourages. Here's a real example:

Host: "Okay, get a load of this one from Fox: August 26, 2003, the day American casualties since the end of 'major hostilities' surpassed what they had been during them. Well, the Aussie agents who run Fox—devoted to reporting so we can decide—refused to do what the biased liberal media did; namely, report the fact that 141 American military personnel had been killed in Iraq since May 1. That being the day, you recall, when Top Gun Dubya the Draft Dodger made a big show of announcing 'Mission Accomplished' aboard that aircraft carrier—on the taxpayers' dime. No, Fox decided to provide context. Brit Hume threw up two maps on the groovy graphics screen, California beside Iraq, and numbers comparing the murder rate in California with the American casualty rate in Iraq—about seven a day in sunny Cal, one a day in Iraq. See, folks, he was saying, there go those hysterical liberals making a big deal out of not that much just so they can dump on America. Brit even pointed out that Iraq and California are 'about the same size,' so we could appreciate how fair his comparison was.

"That last little move was overreaching, Brit. It showed that this was no innocent mistake. It showed that you knew exactly how bogus your comparison was, that you were purposely, flagrantly, scamming your listeners. The relevant variable isn't geographical size, it's population—the number of American troops on the ground in Iraq versus *the entire population of California.* That is, about 140,000 to 34,500,000. For your comparison to work, the

murder rate in California would have to be 246 a day!"

Hume imitator: "That's *Special Report* for this time, please come again next time, and in the meantime stay tuned for Fox News. Fair and balanced and unafraid." [*whoosh and music*]

Host: "Unafraid is right! That was *outrageous*. But what I want to know is: Do the folks at Fox think their audience is *that* stupid? *Are they right?*"

We also have regular skits mocking specific shows on Fox (identified as the fifth column of the Australian Conspiracy). For example:

The O'Malley Fixture

"Okay, my next guest is Sister Ogunfiditimi—hope I got *that* one right—but whatever, you claim to be a nun of some kind, but if that's true what's all this about land mines? Shouldn't you be working in a hospital or something? Why are you running around complaining about land mines, for heaven's sake?"

"The clinic was destroyed by mercenaries paid by . . ."

"Well, all the more reason to get to work. Your first priority should be to lead the villagers in rebuilding services, no?"

"The village was also destroyed by the . . ."

"Well, if there's no village, who are you serving? You got turned on to some celebrity cause about land mines because you couldn't come up with villagers? I'm sorry, I just don't get it."

"Some villagers survived the massacre and were removed to the refugee camp at . . ."

"Okay, okay, now I see, okay, I apologize. So you are serving villagers but they're in some U.N. refugee camp, right? What's that camp like, by the way? More bureaucrats than refugees, I'll bet, heh, heh—but whatever—I still don't see where these so-called land mines come into it. Why don't you help the villagers rebuild the village? Too much red tape?"

"The land mines are on roads leading from the destroyed villages in the north to the refugee zones in the south, so there is no . . ."

"Yeah, well, this is starting to get *pretty complicated*, isn't it? You know what I think? This reminds me of when I was teaching high school and kids would come up with *all these reasons* why they couldn't do what they were supposed to do. There was always something, you know what I mean? Always some reason to avoid good old-fashioned work—that's how it looks to me, I gotta tell you."

Or:

Hanratty and Caves

"Hi, and welcome to our show. I'm Sean Hanratty. I'm smart, I'm glib, I'm confident, I'm handsome, I'm beautifully groomed and tailored, I have a book on the *New York Times* bestseller list, and my speaker fees are through the roof—so I'm rich too! And lemme tell you, it feels sooooo good—no wonder I love th country. Ready to rumble, Alan?"

"Er, hi, uh . . . I'm Alan Caves. I'm, uh, n exactly stupid, but I'm slow, especially wh people are, uh, you know, *watching* me. I act ally do much better thinking up what I shou have said later, when I'm lying in bed obse ing, but, uh, wait a minute . . . oh yeah, I ha these confidence problems because I was t type of kid that guys like Sean used to tortu in gym, and I don't have a bestseller and n much in the way of speaker fees, because n body wants to hear me, which I'm kind of r lieved about actually, because I suffer fro stage fright. But my therapist says . . ."

"Great, Alan—and good luck with that. O topic tonight is liberal bias, and our guests ar first, Pat Buchanan, twice a Republican can date for president, author of six books, veter of three TV shows, and, it just so happens, n close personal friend. How are you, Pat?"

"Doin' good, Sean, doin' good."

"And, representing the other side, we have . let's see here . . . Akbar Hussein. Akbar was ed tor of his high school newspaper in Dearbor Michigan, until he was expelled for an editori sympathetic to Al Qaeda. So that's our lineup, f and balanced as always, right, Alan?"

"Gotta agree with you on that one, Sean."

Or:

"Poll question for the day: Who has dor more to debase American culture—Russe Crowe or Mel Gibson? Email your respon to_____."

Guests

A big part of the show. The innovation that the Host talks like a person, interruptin getting equal time. This is *not* an earnest B Moyers interview—this is a conversation. Th Host will have to make it happen by expres ing his own views and pursuing questions h cares about. Guests to include academics ar policy people, writers, celebrities, officehol ers, sometimes alone but most often with th mix of high and pop culture. Conversation f an hour, with phone calls. (Callers a screened rigorously beforehand but are give extended time if they get on, really included the discussion.)

But here we take a page from the right-wi playbook. When dealing with a caller (or gues expressing loathsome views, however disguise the Host goes for the jugular. This means mo than insults. The Host is looking to expose th hate and fear—and sheer stupidity—that shap reactionary beliefs.

So with a fundamentalist Christian call the Host might lead the conversation thus but delicately, so that the caller stays on:

So, you believe that Jonah was, like, this guy, who was swallowed by a whale? What d of whale would it have been, in the literranean at the time? Doesn't this make certifiably insane, technically, I mean? If it e just you, all by yourself, who believed ething like that—then you *would* be certifi-, right?

And, speaking of the Mediterranean and Holy Land, could you explain to our listen- why you are so supportive of anything Israel s, no matter what? I mean, explain the pture?... Ah, so you evangelicals support Is- because you are, like, *looking forward* to the of the world? Would you want the end of world to be nuclear or biological, or don't have a preference?"

Or, with a guest or caller who comes on like y Falwell, oozing smarmy lies about loving sinner but hating the sin of homosexuality: "I'm curious about you personally. When you sitting next to a man you know is a eer"—the Host smuggles in the crucial "a"—hen you know it, I mean, because it could be ybody, couldn't it? You should be wondering out that all the time, I suppose, shouldn't ı? He *could* be a queer. Anyway, doesn't it ke you feel creepy? You wonder if he is nking about your private parts and what at might be doing to his private parts and ff, right?"

The basic point? Gloves off. We have to ex- se the hate and fear that the "respectable" ht has learned to hide. But we know better. hen they're hanging out in the bar after rk, the way they talk, the way they laugh—thing's changed. Vicious bigotry. And we out to expose it. That's the way to win back ccer moms terrified by images of OSad-mBinLaden.

The good news is that the hectoring tradition the right has created a space that makes this ssible, and progressives need to take advan- ge. If you think what I just outlined goes too r, you need to listen to more Rush Limbaugh. ot to mention Michael Savage, who, like Bob rant, will no doubt rise again.

Coverage

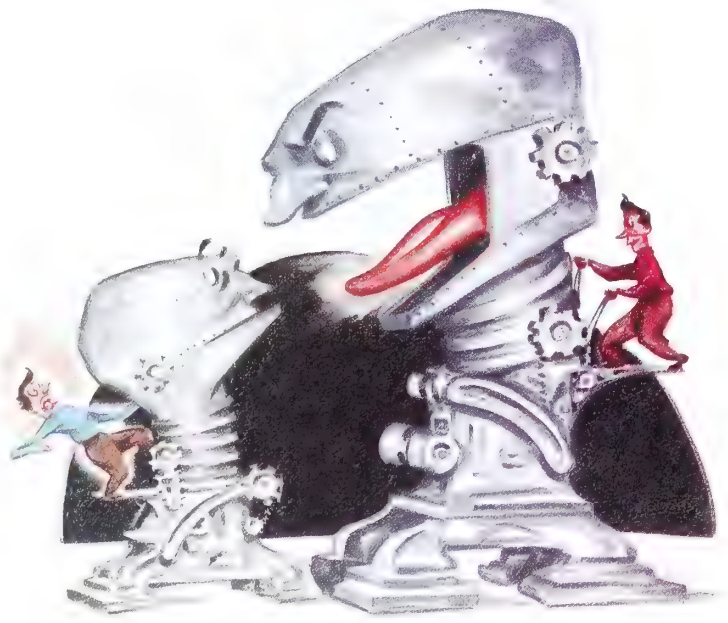
Besides guests, we have story coverage—espe- ally when something is breaking that the main- ream media is bungling. For example:

The Statue. Except for about ten minutes n *Nightline* on the evening of April 9, the ansparently staged toppling of Saddam's atue was allowed to proceed without ques- on, probably because media outfits were so losely involved in the staging—as they regu- arly are in so many less egregious cases. But iven the iconic significance assigned to this event, their collaboration on this one was truly outrageous.

Our show would have been all over this, starting with Paula Zahn's live interview on CNN with Corporal Chin after he draped the American flag, and then the Iraqi flag, across the statue's face. Paula had her story line when she asked the corporal, with a confiding little grin—one of the boys who knows how these things are—why he took the American flag down so fast. Did the brass call down to remind our patriotic soldiers of CENTCOM flag policy? No, said the corporal, innocent as a newborn babe, it had been part of "the plan" all along.

Looking a bit glassy-eyed, Paula affected not to notice, and changed the subject. A voice off camera called the corporal and he went away, never to be heard from again.

Our show would have been on it for days—calling CNN, the *Times*, *Nightline*, Robert Fisk in Baghdad. What "plan"? Who is looking into this? Broadcasting the URLs that put up transcripts of the Zahn interview, that put up long shots of the square showing only about a hundred men involved, showing that some of those men were Chalabi henchmen flown in by the



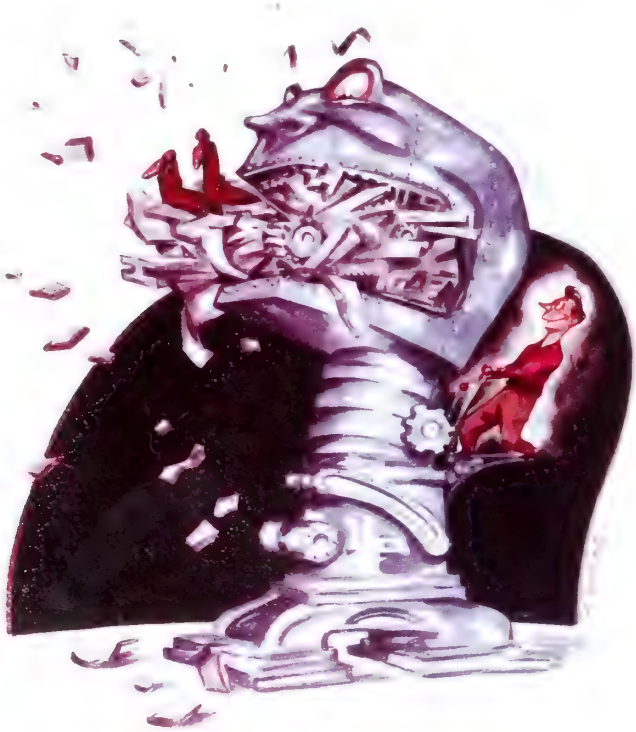
United States a few days earlier. We could have turned this one inside out. And it would have mattered.

William Bennett. He came in for some razzing over his gambling, but he got nothing like what we would have dished out. We would

have collected is still the best expression of moral authority—especially those stressing private morality in public figures, as in relation to Bill Clinton, for example. The Host would read excerpts, ruminating, finally saying, "Geeez, it boggles the mind. Try to imagine the kind of self-righteousness it takes to publish something called *The Book of Virtues* under your own name? To set yourself up on that throne of judgment, what kind of person could do that—besides my rabbi, I mean? Seriously, though, how does that work psychologically, how full of yourself do you have to be? Talk about self-esteem! It's hard to wrap your head around what it would be like—but we'll try.

[*Sound effects of a lone slot machine; distant sultry jazz*] Voiceover, whispering:

"Well, folks, we've tracked virtue to its lair in our ongoing quest for guidance on how to live our lives since things got so confused by the sixties—and we think we've found the man who can set us straight, who can hardly wait to set us straight, actually, setting us straight is his favorite thing. Yup, it's William Bennett, embodiment of rectitude, captain of



the moral order, the guy who *knows* what's right and wrong, not just for himself but for all of us.

"Unfortunately, he's very busy right now; actually, he's been busy for a while with—I guess you could call it his *second* favorite thing. He's been sitting here all by himself in a casino hotel room playing a slot machi for eight hours, that's what he's been doin By himself.

"Hmmm . . .

"I gotta tell you, I'm thinking it's weirder be doing this all alone than it would be if had, you know, some congenial company—b heck, what do I know, he's the authority. Wa shhhh, he's talking to himself. Let's listen Maybe we can pick up some moral guidan from ancient philosophical maxims and elev ing religious proverbs . . ."

Bennett imitator, chanting: "It isn't sex, so isn't bad, it isn't sex, so it isn't bad, it's not ill gal, it's only $8 million, I earned it, it's m money, I paid the mortgage, it isn't sex, so isn't bad, I need it to relax, everybody's en tled to a little relaxation, I need it to relax . .

Leo Strauss. Ever since Allan Bloom's *T Closing of the American Mind*, the media ha acknowledged, in passing, the influence of th little-known scholar who was Bloom teacher—and, as it turns out, the teacher of many leaders of the neoconservative mov ment. A few weeks ago, some major public tions took on the subject directly—and d their usual job of trivialization. This sho would have done it right.

On a Friday, say, the Host introduces th subject with a few words about Strauss's philo ophy, his connections to the Kristols, Wo fowitz, Perle, et al., his influence in conserv tive foundations and think tanks—as the *Tim* did on May 4 in its Week in Review sectio But for this show that's the preview. The Ho announces the guest for next Tuesday—a pr fessor with progressive views and an intima knowledge of the Straussian school—and giv the title of Strauss's book, with recommende chapters and passages relating to the philos pher king, especially any suggesting sympath for what Plato called the Noble Lie. Passag posted on our website.

A Noble Lie, you see, is one that enligh ened rulers tell the rabble in order to ensu that their enlightened policies—policies too e evated, too farseeing, for the rabble to compr hend—are nevertheless supported. In recen circumstances, for example, you might tell o citizens that a tyrant posed an imminent thre to the Republic because he had Weapons Mass Destruction and ties to Al Qaeda, whe what you really had in mind was gaining co trol of the world's oil supplies as a hedg against the emergence of China or the Eur pean Union as a possible threat to America hegemony by, say, 2030.

That would be an example of a Noble Lie– and it might be worth knowing what Le Strauss had to say on the subject, no?

THE WAR BUSINESS

Squeezing a profit from the wreckage in Iraq

By Chalmers Johnson

In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist. We must never let the weight of this combination endanger our liberties or democratic processes. We should take nothing for granted.

—Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1961

The permanent military domination of the world is an expensive business. Last September, having already spent $79 billion in Iraq and Afghanistan, George W. Bush asked Congress for an additional $87 billion to sustain the effort another year. Within hours, the White House admitted that even this was a lowball estimate. L. Paul Bremer, Bush's proconsul in Iraq, said the cost of reconstructing that nation alone was "almost impossible to exaggerate." In total, military spending next year will likely reach half a trillion dollars, more in real dollars than was spent even in 1968, at the height of the Vietnam War.

Although many of the dreaming geomancers in his administration had foreseen the Iraq war as a "cakewalk," Bush himself has always been more cautious in describing his vision of America's military commitments. He has called Iraq the "central front" in "a different kind of war, fought on many fronts in many places," and thus far he has refused to estimate when this larger war might end or even to provide criteria for victory. Instead, he has said that the struggle will be "lengthy" and will "require sacrifice" on the part of the American people. In short, the White House has committed the American people to financing an expensive, perpetual war with fronts in Iraq, Afghanistan, and countries yet to be announced. Even those few politicians who objected to the Iraq invasion now argue that we must "finish the job." The deed has been done. The money must be spent.

And so, for the private contractors that increasingly make up the infrastructure of our armed forces, fortune has arisen from tragedy. During the first Iraq war, in 1991, one in a hundred American personnel was employed by a private contractor. In the second Iraq war, that ratio is closer to one in ten. The *Washington Post* reports that as much as one third of the rapidly expanding cost of the Iraq war is going into private U.S. bank accounts.

The original point of this massive outflow of federal dollars was to save money. In Donald Rumsfeld's vision, privatization would bring the unbending discipline of the marketplace to bear on war itself. In 1995, well before his return to Washington, Rumsfeld presented to America his "Thoughts from the Business World on Downsizing Government," a monograph informed by his experience as both a White House chief of staff and defense secretary (under Gerald Ford) and a CEO of two large American corporations (General Instrument Corp. and G. D. Searle). "Government programs are effectively insulated from the rigors of the marketplace, and therefore are denied the possibility of failure," he wrote. "Sometimes, nothing short of outright privatization can restore the discipline of a bottom line."

Chalmers Johnson is the author of Blowback. *His next book,* The Sorrows of Empire, *will be published by Metropolitan Books in January.*

Nine thousand contracts awarded without competition is coming to fruition and the bottom line has yet to be plumbed. Depending upon how much the American people are willing to sacrifice, the potential for private profit in U.S. war making has become, to borrow a phrase, almost impossible to exaggerate. The war has been a bonanza, for instance, for both Halliburton, the energy holding company, and for Bechtel, the number-one construction contractor in the United States. Dick Cheney was CEO of Halliburton from 1995 to 2000. George Shultz was Bechtel's president for eight years before becoming Ronald Reagan's secretary of state. Last March the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers awarded the Kellogg Brown & Root subsidiary of Halliburton a contract, expandable up to $7 billion over two years, to provide for all of the logistical and maintenance needs of the U.S. forces in Iraq. At the same time, the U.S. Agency for International Development gave Bechtel an initial contract of $34.6 million to rebuild Iraqi power-generation facilities, electrical grids, water and sewage systems, and airports. Bechtel will bill the U.S. government for expenses up to $680 million over eighteen months. These open-ended contracts did not come about through competitive bidding but through backdoor deals guided by the Bush Administration. Oversight is virtually nonexistent.

THE POTENTIAL FOR PRIVATE PROFIT IN U.S. WAR MAKING HAS BECOME ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO EXAGGERATE

Whatever else may or may not have changed after 9/11, one thing has become clear: munitions making and war profiteering have supplanted the energy and telecommunications deals pioneered by Enron and WorldCom in the late 1990s as the most efficient means for well-connected capitalists to engorge themselves at the public trough. To call these companies "private," though, is mere ideology. Munitions making in the United States today is not really private enterprise. It is state socialism.

When a political problem becomes a business problem, a shift occurs. Responsibility is displaced and consequences diffused. This dislocation of responsibility has roots in a much older phenomenon, in which empires sought to "outsource" the enforcement of their political will. The British had their Gurkhas, Sikhs, and sepoys; the French, their Foreign Legion; the Dutch, their Ambonese; the Russians, their Cossacks; and the Japanese, their puppet armies in Manchuria, China, Indonesia, and Burma. Replacing homeland soldiers with local cannon fodder and setting one indigenous ethnic or religious group against another have often made the policing of a subordin people easier and less expensive.

The "sepoy strategy" once involved train "native" troops to serve in regiments comma ed by British officers or in imperial Indian r ments thought to be loyal to the British cro which were normally composed of Sikh a Gurkha mercenaries. (The word "sepoy" pro bly derives from the Urdu word for "horsem or "soldier.") In 1857, at the time of the Se Mutiny—which Indian nationalists call t "first war of independence"—Britain deplo an army of 300,000 soldiers in India, 96 perc of whom were sepoys. The fact that they pro not to be loyal to Britain suggests one of the m jor potential pitfalls of this approach.

In 1857, when the British introduced one the earliest versions of the Enfield rifle, the b lets were rumored to be soaked in grease m from animal fat, including fat from cows a pigs. Cows are sacred to Hindus; pigs are rep sive to Muslims. One of the idiosyncrasies of ammunition for this particular rifle was tha twist of paper attached at one end had to be b ten off before the round could be used. Sto quickly spread among the sepoys that the Brit were trying to humiliate them by forcing th to violate religious taboos. So when one Brit commander ordered his troops to bite the bul a soldier shot him.

Revolt erupted, and the British struck b with savage brutality. Captured sepoys were b oneted or sewn into the hides of pigs or c and fired from cannons. Much as when the G man Republic suppressed the Spartacist revolt, road from Kanpur to Allahabad was lined with corpses of Indian soldiers who had been hang England ended the authority of the East In Company, which had employed the sepoys a their officers, and for the next ninety years ru the country directly as a crown colony. The dian regiments were abolished and their soldi absorbed into larger formations that inclu Englishmen. The operation of artillery was stricted to British soldiers. With these chang the British in effect gave up their role as m chants in India and became the unwelcome cupiers of a hostile land.

The Americans tried their hand at sepoy in Vietnam in 1962. They sent Green Be into the southern highlands to train the M tagnards—mountain people, ethnically disti from the Vietnamese—and to organize th into a Civilian Irregular Defense Group. G erally speaking, the Montagnards contribu little to the war effort, and their outposts w easily overrun by the Vietcong whenever served their purposes to do so.

In Afghanistan between 1979 and 1989, t CIA supplied mujahedeen ("freedom fighte

os with more than $2 billion worth of light ons, including Stinger antiaircraft missile chers, and offered instruction in how to use i against the Soviet forces then occupying the ıtry. The Americans were uninterested in religious beliefs, political loyalties, or atti- s toward the West of those they were re- ing, training, and arming. Once the Soviet on was defeated, the Americans abandoned anistan to its fate, and the mujahedeen, nly Islamic fundamentalists, turned against United States. The deployment of thousands merican military forces to Saudi Arabia, lo- on of Islam's two most sacred sites, and U.S. ort for Israel only increased their resent- nt. Muslim militants retaliated throughout 1990s, attacking New York's World Trade ter in 1993, U.S. military apartment towers audi Arabia in 1996, American embassies in ya and Tanzania in 1998, and the Navy de- yer USS *Cole* in 2000. It is possible to think he suicidal attacks of September 11 as a con- porary version of the Sepoy Mutiny.

After 9/11, the United States sent CIA agents Afghanistan with millions of dollars to bribe lord armies to reopen the civil war in ich the Taliban had previously de- ted them, promising them air sup- t in their new offensive. The war- ds, with a bit of help from the United tes, thus overthrew the Taliban gov- ment and soon returned to their old ys of regional exploitation. The pro- ganda apparatus of the Pentagon imed a stupendous U.S. victory in ghanistan, but, in fact, leaders of the liban and Al Qaeda escaped and the untry has become an even more vir- nt breeding ground for terrorists. Also, the first year after Afghanistan's liberation, the oduction of opium, controlled by America's rlord allies, increased eighteenfold, from 185 to 3,400 tons. Another victory for pri- vate enterprise.

A related aspect of sepoyism is the arming d training of U.S. satellites and dependencies, nich is a little bit like a corporation turning to e of its subsidiaries to fulfill its labor require- ents. Ever since 1993, when the mutilated body Sergeant Randy Shughart was televised while ing dragged through the streets of Somalia's pital, Mogadishu, causing President Clinton ur days later to announce the withdrawal of our rces from that country, the Pentagon has tried avoid American casualties that might turn the ublic against its plans. The death of foreign sol- iers does not make news, and so the intent is to repare foreign soldiers for joint operations under ur command. As President Bush put it in a speech on March 11, 2002, "We will not send American troops to every battle, but America will actively prepare other nations for the battles ahead."

Particularly since the end of the Cold War, the military has developed close relationships with myriad governments and officer corps in what used to be called the Third World and has put immense effort into military-to-military training programs. During the 1990s leaders in both political parties concluded that many foreign-policy goals could better be fostered through such contacts than through traditional economic and diplomatic ties. One program for implementing such policies, the State Department's International Military Education and Training Program, has increased fourfold since 1994. In 1990 it was offering military instruction to the armies of 96 countries; by 2002 that already impressive number had risen to 133 countries. There are 189 countries in the United Nations, which means that this single program "instructs" militaries in 70 percent of the world's nations.

We train approximately 100,000 foreign soldiers each year—most of them officers who then can pass on American methods to their troops. In 2001 the U.S. military taught 15,030 officers and soldiers in Latin America alone. The Pentagon does this either by bringing them to one of the approximately 150 military educational institutions in the United States or by sending military instructors, almost always Army Special Forces, to the countries themselves. The "war on terror" has only accelerated these programs, in many cases replacing the "war on drugs" as a justification, with no discernible difference in pedagogy. The United States claims that such training promotes American values. There are other benefits as well. The close contact between American military instructors and foreign officers and soldiers, for instance, provides the United States an inside track in weapons sales. The Defense Security Cooperation Agency, headed by a lieutenant general and an integral part of the Department of Defense, operates the Foreign Military Sales Program, which is our government's preferred method of selling U.S. defense equipment,





BRITISH OFFICIALS PREPARE TO SHOOT SEPOYS FROM CANNONS, 1857 (LEFT); U.S. ARMY RANGER TRAINING MONTAGNARD TRIBESMEN, 1962

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purchased from American manufacturers, to foreign governments. The value of government-to-government arms sales rose 10 percent in 2001, to $13.3 billion. The Pentagon has, since 1991, been by far the largest single salesman of munitions on earth. From 1997 to 2001 it exported $57.8 billion in arms, more than three times as much as the United Kingdom, the second-largest exporter.

Sepoys are useful, and sometimes even profitable, but the real money is in government contracts. Indeed, military contractors are among the most profitable businesses in the country today. The largest contractors are the Vinnell Corporation of Fairfax, Virginia, which on July 2 received a $48 million contract to train a new Iraqi army; Military Professional Resources, Inc. (best known by its acronym, MPRI), located in Alexandria, Virginia, and owned by L-3 Communications; Kellogg Brown & Root, the Texas company that, long before its merger with Kellogg, bankrolled Lyndon Johnson's political career and that is



SECRETARY OF DEFENSE IN SAUDI ARABIA, 1990

today a subsidiary of the Halliburton Corporation; DynCorp of Reston, Virginia, which became notorious during the late 1990s when it was discovered that some of its employees in Bosnia were keeping underage women as sex slaves and then selling them elsewhere in Europe; Science Applications International Corporation of San Diego, whose top five executives made between $825,000 and $1.8 million in salaries in 2001 and held more than $1.5 million worth of stock options each; BDM International of Fairfax, Virginia; Armor Holdings, Inc., of Jacksonville, Florida; Cubic Applications, Inc., of Lacey, Washington; DFI International (originally Defense Forecasts, Inc.) of Washington, D.C.; and International Charter Incorporated of Oregon.

These are not small organizations. DynC has 23,000 employees; Cubic, some 4,500; MPRI, about 700 full-time staff members pl roster of 10,000 retired military personnel are on call for contract assignments. One thority on these new mercenaries, Profe Deborah Avant of the Elliott School of In national Affairs at George Washington U versity, estimates that the revenues of the vate military companies, which totaled $ billion in 1990, will rise to $202 billion 2010, making the industry one of the fa growing in America. The companies even h their own trade group, the International Pe Operations Association—a name George well would have cherished.

The Vinnell Corporation, a subsidiary of large defense conglomerate Northrop Grumm was created by retired American military cers and, since 1975, has been licensed by government to train the Saudi National Gu the 100,000-man force used to protect monarchy and to serve as a counterweigh any threat from the regular armed forces. May 12, Al Qaeda terrorists blew up three eign housing compounds in Riyadh, Saudi A bia, killing thirty-four, including eight Am cans. One of the main targets was apartment building of some seventy Vin employees. Over the years Vinnell has c structed, run, staffed, and written doctrine five Saudi military academies, seven Sa shooting ranges, and a state-operated hea care system, while training and equipping Saudi mechanized brigades and five infan brigades. Saudi Arabia has, in turn, funne hundreds of millions of dollars into major e fense corporations to equip these forces, wh briefly saw action in the first Gulf war by re turing the Saudi town of Khafji, on the Kuw border, from the Iraqis.

DynCorp was hired to provide personal p tection for President Hamid Karzai of Afgh istan and will take over the training of Afghan army once the Green Berets leave country. DynCorp also "trained" the Hait police after the United States intervened th militarily in 1994. This year it won the luc tive contract to provide a thousand adviser help create Iraq's new police department, ju cial branch, and prison system. The contr the estimated value of which could be as h as $50 million for the first year, was one i series the Pentagon exempted from the U government's usual requirement for "full a open competition." Other DynCorp ope tions include running the entire Air Fo One fleet of presidential planes and he copters, and the aerial spraying of defoliant on drug crops in Colombia. By 2002 it was

Photograph © CORBIS SYG

ion's thirteenth-largest military contractor, n $2.3 billion in revenue, 96 percent of it from contracts and subcontracts with the U.S. government.

During the 1990s the Pentagon began to ntract out every conceivable kind of service ept firing a rifle or dropping a bomb. As a re- t of its penchant for cost-plus contracts, ich guarantee a profit, many new so-called e-support contractors have sprung into be- . These firms have taken over base construc- n, maintenance, and security, so the days of .'s doing guard duty and cleaning latrines ve virtually disappeared.

The best-known example of this is the super- urious Camp Bondsteel in the Balkans, built d run by Kellogg Brown & Root. Immediate- after the American bombing campaign ainst Yugoslavia in June 1999, the United ates seized from private owners a thousand res of farmland at Urosevac in southeast osovo, near the Macedonian border. Built in t under four months, Camp Bondsteel is the gest and most expensive base constructed ce the Vietnam War, costing some $36.6 llion to build and approximately $180 mil- n annually to operate.

Kellogg Brown & Root maintains the bar- cks, cooks the food, mops the floors, trans- rts all supplies, and operates the water and wage systems. Employing about a thousand rmer U.S. military personnel and another 000 local Albanians, the company delivers 0,000 gallons of water daily, supplies enough ectricity for a city of 25,000, washes 1,200 gs of laundry, and cooks and serves 18,000 eals per day. The camp was so overstaffed that fices were cleaned four times a day and la- ines a mere three times a day. Soldiers serving Camp Bondsteel say the only patch missing om their camouflage fatigues is one that says, Sponsored by Brown & Root." The company rovides similar services for bases in Kuwait, urkey, and Uzbekistan.

Camp Bondsteel is a spooky place, surround- d by an earthen berm 2.5 meters high and ine wooden guard towers. All of the trees ave been removed to provide open fields of re. Dominated by a mass of communications ntennae, satellite dishes, and hovering attack elicopters, it has a six-mile perimeter and eems too large and permanent an installation nerely to meet the requirements of peacekeep- ng in southern Serbia, a mission that President Clinton asserted would last no longer than six nonths and that George Bush said in his elec- ion campaign he wanted to eliminate.

As it happens, Camp Bondsteel is located astride the route of the proposed AMBO (Albanian-Macedonian-Bulgarian Oil) Trans-Balkan pipeline. This $1.3 billion project, if built, will pump Caspian Basin oil brought by tanker from a pipeline terminus in Georgia across the Black Sea to the Bulgarian oil port at Burgas, where it will be piped through Macedonia to the Albanian Adriatic port of Vlorë. From there supertankers would take it to Europe and the United States, thus bypassing the congested Bosporus Straits, as of now the only route out of the Black Sea by ship, where tankers are restricted to 160,000 tons. The initial feasibility study for the AMBO pipeline was done in 1996 by Brown & Root, which updated it in 2000. Bondsteel appears to be a base camp for what University of Texas political scientist James K. Galbraith has called the "military-petroleum complex," of which Dick Cheney is assuredly a godfather.

THE PENTAGON HAS CONTRACTED OUT EVERY KIND OF SERVICE EXCEPT FIRING A RIFLE OR DROPPING A BOMB

Cheney was secretary of defense when Brown & Root first began to supply logistical services to the Army. It was his idea. In 1992, the Pentagon paid Brown & Root $3.9 million to produce a classified feasibility study on private outsourcing as a way to reduce the military's dependence on troops for basic logistics. The Pentagon subsequently added $5 million to the contract and then chose Brown & Root to implement its own plan—namely, a five-year logistics contract from the Army Corps of Engineers to work alongside G.I.'s in places like Zaire, Haiti, Somalia, Kosovo, the Balkans, and Saudi Arabia. After Cheney became head of Halliburton in 1995, Brown & Root took in $2.3 billion in government contracts, almost double the $1.2 billion it earned from the government in the five years before he arrived. In the late 1990s, Halliburton rebuilt Saddam Hussein's war-damaged oil fields for some $23.8 million—fields Cheney, as secretary of defense during the first Gulf war, had been instrumental in destroying.

Cheney brought with him to Halliburton several associates from his Pentagon days. Dave Gribbin, his former chief of staff, became one of Halliburton's leading lobbyists; and Admiral Joe Lopez, a former commander of the Sixth Fleet, assumed the post of Kellogg Brown & Root's senior vice president for governmental operations. During Cheney's term as Halliburton's chief, the company advanced from seventy-third to eighteenth on the Pentagon's list of top contractors, increasing its government contracts by 91 percent. Meanwhile, the number of Halliburton subsidiaries located in offshore tax havens increased from nine to forty-four. The company went from paying $302 million in taxes in 1998

to getting an $85 million tax refund in 1999. Cheney resigned from the company on August 16, 2000, to run for vice president, but his ties did not end there. According to the White House, Cheney had an adjusted gross income for 2000 of $36,086,635, which included $4,333,500 in bonuses and deferred compensation from Halliburton. Cheney's financial disclosure statement was not his actual income-tax return but a White House press release. As vice president, Cheney continues to receive payments from Halliburton in excess of $150,000 annually in deferred compensation.

When George Washington warned in 1796 that "overgrown military establishments" are "inauspicious to liberty," he had something quite specific in mind. He feared that the United States might develop a state apparatus, comparable to those of the autocratic states of Europe, that could displace the constitutional order. Indeed, the Declaration of Independence accused the English king of having "affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil Power," and the First Continental Congress condemned the use of the army to enforce the collection of taxes. These attitudes lasted about a century. With the Spanish-American War, the government began to build a military machine that by the end of the twentieth century had come to seem invincible. Now, despite warnings from Washington and Eisenhower alike, we take it for granted that the military-industrial complex is an appropriate place for high-ranking military officers to "retire," just as we take it for granted that defense executives will receive high appointments at the Pentagon. This "circulation of elites" undercuts attempts at congressional oversight of either industry or the military, and the result is an almost total loss of accountability in terms of public money spent or military actions taken.

It is hard even to remember that on the eve of World War II, our regular army was a mere 186,000 men. Now, the 1,400,000-strong "peacetime" military services, funded by a defense budget larger than most national budgets, are made up of both men and women living in a closed-off, self-contained base world that connects outposts from Greenland to Australia. The Pentagon has deployed a quarter of a million troops against Iraq while at the same time several thousand soldiers are engaged in daily skirmishes in Afghanistan, countless Navy crews are manning ships in the waters off North Korea, a few thousand Marines are in the southern Philippines assisting local forces in fighting an Islamic separatist movement with roots a century old, and several hundred "advisers" are involved in what might someday become a Vietnam-like insurgency in Colombia (and possibly elsewhere in the Andean region). We have a military presence in 120 of the 189 member countries of the United Nations, including large-scale deployments in twenty-five of them. We have military treaties or binding security arrangements with at least thirty-six countries.

This is expensive, and the United States is quite short on cash. The first Gulf war cost about $61 billion, with American allies such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Germany, Japan, and South Korea chipping in some $53 billion, more than 80 percent of the total, leaving the United States' financial contribution a minuscule $7 billion. Japan alone contributed $13 billion. Nothing like that will happen again. Virtually the entire world is agreed that if the lone superpower wants to go off in pursuit of preventive wars, it can pick up its own tab. The Congressional Budget Office projects a federal deficit of $480 billion for next year, swelling by $1.4 trillion over ten years, on top of an already existing government debt in February 2002 of $6.4 trillion.

Not only are our armed forces seriously overstretched; we are going deeply into debt to finance them. And yet the money keeps flowing. According to White House projections, which are traditionally low, the Bush Administration expects, if reelected, to spend an inflation-adjusted $3.2 trillion on defense over its two terms—about half a trillion more than the Clinton Administration did in its two terms. By comparison, the United States spent $3 trillion on defense between 1941 and 1948. In real dollars, the "war on terror" will cost more than World War II.

None of this bears any relation to private enterprise, whatever else it might be called. Without the "rigors of the marketplace" only the profit remains. The biggest of all munitions companies, the Lockheed Martin Corporation, played an important behind-the-scenes role in developing support for Bush's war with Iraq. In 2002 its former vice president Bruce Jackson became chairman of a "private" lobbying organization, the Committee for the Liberation of Iraq. Charter members include George Shultz and John McCain. In fiscal year 2002, Lockheed Martin received $17 billion in contracts from the Pentagon—up from $14.7 billion in 2001—and almost $2 billion for the design of nuclear weapons from the Department of Energy. In the year prior to the war, the company's profits rose by 36 percent.

This is the future. When war becomes the most profitable course of action, we can certainly expect more of it.

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THE TWO OF THEM

By Annie Dillard



She shipwrecked on the eets. Her body, hitherto hav- g served her adequately, was w an autopsied doll, a broken own. Her fingers swelled. unned, she surfaced like dy- mited bass.

How courteously he had ex- ored, and how slowly! At first, nused, she answered his sub- est inquiries with an encir- ing tweak that he acknowl- lged by as it were tipping his at. Astonishing she had dis- vered those muscles and their vitch in her brain only a few eeks ago—but not egregious- astonishing, as she had a com- itment to lifelong learning.

Somewhere the world had ieaved and dropped, leaving nly a tissue of consciousness ne cell thick. The two titrat- d their reserve by increments hey controlled together, and he key changed and they en- ered blinded pitches whose anges rose. The couloir appeared, the arrowing long hall whose only exit vas through. At the hall's end in the lark she perceived the doors, the rush- ng barn doors, which presently began o swing on their hinges and strike valls. Funny, she thought later: she was by no means sure she had ever seen a set of barn doors in her life.

She lay spread as a film and as frag- ile. She opened her eyes to learn where on the bed she had fetched up. She aligned herself sensibly, steering by bed frame. Then she oriented herself to the rest of it too, and took on faith the consensus world. She cobbled to- gether, from repeated chips of various states of being, a clastic self, Lou Maytree, a working simu- lacrum with a history. She was a tall girl, big rib cage, aslant and tucked on a Marblehead love seat, who read a red- bound book that stained her palms. She was broad-boned, young; her high eyebrows drew brown arches like the bed's arching headboard. A young woman of no special gifts— unless looking like Ingrid Bergman was a gift; she guessed it was, and hoped Ingrid Bergman, who at least escaped always hearing she looked like Ingrid Bergman, found her form agreeable too for a while—who somehow won all the considerable love of Jay Maytree in Provincetown. So she found herself in bed with a thousand freckles. In a New- foundland book she read that a boy's mother told him people's freckles washed off in protracted rains; the freckles floated in puddles whence unwise chil- dren filled up on them and spoiled their dinners.

Maytree, flexed beside her, was al- ready asleep. He was a crisp sort of tall redhead. Clean from daily out- door showers, his neck smelled of salt and hot sand. Was this the man of only a minute ago? She often wanted to ask, Have we met? Now he looked like a fellow whose parachute had

Annie Dillard's most recent book is For the Time Being, *a short nonfiction narrative (Knopf, 2001).*

Illustration by Clifford Alejandro

[illegible] He slept with a long leg flung over her, as their yellow dog claimed a stick. Once while he slept on his side his legs thrashed and he panted. She pressed his shoulder. Chasing a rabbit? He exhaled and said, Tap dancing.

He told her once—they were walking the gassy mudflats—that his brain was like a shadow box, like the cherry shadow box friends hung on their porch to store beach debris. Every day, he said, he packed each compartment with information—he called it knowledge—like seeds. Maybe like thistle seeds, she thought, or poppy seeds. When he had jammed every compartment tight, it was night. As he fell asleep the shadow box emptied. Its contents, the seeds, spilled, box by box, into deeper parts of his brain. Now she stopped kissing his temple. She imagined chicken feed stuck to her lips.

Nothing so moves a woman as the boyhood of the man she loves. Lou thought, Is this true?

She had searched old family photographs for signs of that wild and delicate gentleman he would become. She found instead only his slight figure, and his bright forehead curved back before his hair, his brows like a shed roof over his eyes, his sharp jaw. The boy Maytree dwarfed by his father on a Provincetown wharf. The boy Maytree, after his height came, kneeling with his cross-eyed grandfather by a catboat.

Jay Maytree back there stood eager, restrained—in a wind harsh with that present's brine, in that present's glare—between his hairy mother and his visibly half-dead grandmother. These women he now barely acknowledged. Lou knew those two taught him to spend his heart, for which this day and many days she thanked them both, if they could get the message, being dead. For was not spending your heart, all the way down, everywhere, called for?

She rolled and stared at the wall's thumbtacked print, "Sinbad the Sailor." She had seen, too, in those snapshots—whose actual subject, as in all photographs, is nostalgia—an uncertainty or unease in the boy's blurred frown, as if he had been scanning the offing for his own arrival. Perhaps she only imagined unease in his expression. Actual boys look certain enough. They are not searching for anything; they think they possess it already. It was she who sought for the man in the child. She could not find him, so the boy seemed to her lost. The boy seemed—wonderfully—to need her. But he did not, not yet. Perhaps, she asked later, he never did.

Morning sun heated the sheet and the soles of her feet. She wished she were there in the lost past to protect him, on the one hand, and to admire and hearten him, on the other.

Actually, she wished—while she was wishing—to know and admire all those vanished boys she never met: the baby whose scalp she could then smell, the boy who rowed out from shore to catch a witch flounder with a worm, who sold codfish cheeks door-to-door from a bucket, the bony boy distraught and silent on the beach, and the reading youth intense as the man who always surprised her and always wanted her.

In school pictures he was pale-eyed and sullen or silly. At sixteen, seventeen, eighteen—why, there was a team of brainy redheads, a scrimmage of growing lovers, a hayload of future husbands. She could not turn from any of them: their clumsiness, their arrogance, the long-boned way they walked with their eyes on hers and smiling. Silly, immortal, fleet. She should get a bigger bed.

She could not yet lift her legs. Love was a home sea, and ordinary consciousness was a stony island, pricking the feet, from whose various shores the two dove, again and again, and emerged dripping, and dove again. She knew she might rise soon—here, where the tide was flowing in and they were yet so young—but she could not fancy why. Her staked sensations pinned her; she was the girl spread on the spinning disk whose body the knife-thrower outlined. Don't move, honey. I wouldn't dream of moving.

In these two months since they married, she learned the scars on his knees. I jumped from the bowsp[rit] he said, I jumped from the chu[rch] roof, the treetop, the bike seat [illegible] You might have killed yourself, [illegible] then where would we be?

Supple and irrigated, Maytre[e] skin took a shine to the light. B[lue] tinted his white parts, where th[e] skin made catenary curves. The s[un] on his kneecaps looked yello[w] pulled so tight his freckles vanish[ed] Now: Were those bony manly kn[ees] here on the sheet, knees from wh[ose] hairs coiled, once naked boy kn[ees] and ignorant of all t[hat] man knew?

Awareness was a braided riv[er] It dropped down time in cascad[es] now in dribbles, now in torrents. [He] woke. We should tie up the do[ry] Tide's coming in. When they r[ode] this past June, on a cliff backin[g] Truro beach, she noticed he co[n]trolled his voice's force. Now [he] stood and brushed sand from his s[eat] of the sheet. They always had sa[nd] in the bed. It was a wonder she w[as] not slimmer.

One night on the bed Mayt[ree] had said to her, Was that you? Th[en] discovered themselves seated faci[ng] Was that you? she asked silen[tly] now; he was stepping into bath[ing] trunks before the window. Lig[ht] from sea and sky shone through [his] right ear. Red right returning. I[n] wide lips cracked. His redhead's sh[ine] already showed laugh creases. [He] was thirty. In summer his cap et[ched] lated his forehead. A startling figu[re] his red hair, his agitated height, [his] long-faced humor and alertness. [He] looked like the thin Picasso clow[n] like orange-browed Van Gogh p[ort] of eye; he looked like a pileat[ed] woodpecker the thought of wh[ose] body made her blush.

We should tie up the dory. Did [he] not just say that? They lived [on] Provincetown's West End, on t[he] water, facing south. Next week th[ey] would plaster tongue-and-groo[ved] walls, to stop wind and save co[al] Did this familiar, friendly man h[ave] long to the same vertebrate order [as] that agent of tonal shifts on the be[d]

Her legs were sawdust; they wer[e] line of shreds a rope left on sa[nd] True, the tide would float and lo[ose]

dory. Lou rose, put on her red
ning suit, and descended the
s—had she no knees? Outside
quiet and light alone.
he dog woke as they passed. Its
l knobs felt hot. Full tide swelled
way up the beach. Its smoothness
e the bay seem to bulge. Their so-
ed yard beyond their crawl space
a few feet of gray sand. Gray sand
ed in tan sand that gave way, when
tide was out, to mud sandflats. This
ch ran south and north from here
t of the way around the hemi-
ere. They carried their yellow
into the water and walked it to its
oring. Sometimes a lady crab
ched Lou's toe so she cursed; now
ough the water she saw one, green,
l sand and flee. The water's skin
ped where it met her dry arms.
ytree tucked its oars into the boat.
found her eyes—what larks—for
duration of one click, and left the
er. She swam deeper and turned a
ersault to wet her head.
Lou saw her friend walk barefoot
ween houses to the water. The
nd carried a baby and held a child's
d; she wore a scarf around curls, a
nt bandeau, and flared shorts. She
y-sat; she had the first degree in
hitecture MIT awarded a woman.
e joined Lou in the water. From
p water the two women watched
child walk on her hands nearer
re. Lou saw Maytree shower and
inside.
These were some peeled, protoplas-
c people: held baby, a green shred of
ae stuck to his calf and grayed at
e top; child upside down in the wa-
, woman tall and woman small, and
in man behind the window waving.
ey all stuck out forty miles into a
neral world where almost nothing
ntained carbon but the few people,
me birds, fish, snails, goldenrod, and
utal pines. They lived as if at the
ge of Saturn's rings, legs dangling
ose and kicking like kids' too short
r the floor. It was the rim of eterni-
out here.
Here came the milkman's piebald
are. Lou saw the wagon stop be-
veen houses while the milkman
ve her hoyden friend a lift; the
ebald mare carried on. She saw
eroy and Matthew heading toward
er front door with supper. Maytree

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Our program, one of the oldest and most prestigious in the nation, is small (no more than a dozen students admitted in any genre, with all workshops limited to twelve members); very intensive (the Master's degree is ordinarily awarded after the academic year of eight courses); and highly competitive (normally twenty-one students apply for each spot in fiction and poetry). We are best known for the quality of our graduate workshops. All of these are held in the same small room, which allows through its dusty windows a glimpse of the Charles River. Perhaps the most remarkable such workshop occurred when Sylvia Plath, Anne Sexton, and George Starbuck gathered for instruction by Robert Lowell—gathered, by the way, less often in that little room than at the Ritz Bar. These days, the poetry workshops are run by our regular faculty of Poet Laureate Robert Pinsky and Nobel Laureate Derek Walcott, who also conducts the playwriting workshops; and those in fiction are led by Leslie Epstein and Ha Jin and distinguished visiting writers. Of course our students have about them the resources of a great university. That means they often take courses with a superb faculty in literature that includes, besides the poets Geoffrey Hill and Rosanna Warren, the scholar Christopher Ricks and Boston University's two other Nobel Prize winners, Saul Bellow and Elie Wiesel. It is difficult to know how best to measure a student's success, or the worth of a program to a writer; we can say that our graduates in each genre have accomplished a good deal. Among numerous awards, our playwrights can list The Heideman Award, The Charles MacArthur Award for "Best New Play," and six national playwriting awards from the American College Theater Festival. Quite recently our graduates in poetry have won the $30,000 Whiting Award, the Barnard New Women Poets Series, a grant from the NEA, and the Norma Farber First Book Award from the Poetry Society of America; there have been three winners in three years of the Discovery/*The Nation* Award, and two winners of the National Poetry Series. In fiction, our students have also won the Whiting Award, along with an inordinate share of the nationwide Henfield Awards. A few years ago our writers swept every major literary award in the country, with Ha Jin winning the National Book Award and the PEN/Faulkner, and Jhumpa Lahiri the PEN/Hemingway and the Pulitzer Prize. Not a year goes by without a graduate of our program bringing out a book with a major publisher, and some, like Sue Miller and Arthur Golden, spend a good deal of time on best-seller lists. Over the last decade we have placed more than a score of our graduates in tenure-track positions at major American universities. We make, of course, no such assurances. Our only promise to those who join us is of a fair amount of time in that river-view room, time shared with other writers in a common, most difficult pursuit: the perfection of one's craft. For more information about the program, visiting writers, and financial aid (our teaching fellows conduct undergraduate creative writing classes) write to Director, Creative Writing Program, Boston University, 236 Bay State Road, Boston, MA 02215 or visit our website at *www.bu.edu/writing/*.

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called the two "Quemoy and Matsu." Already time for drinks? Leroy bent like a bow under his suspenders.

Matthew carried a twitching cod by its gill cover.

That July, Reevadare Weaver had thrown a crushing lawn party for the Maytrees' short engagement. Reevadare Weaver was a henna-haired old Provincetown woman, *un peu superbe*, who wore wax-fruit-elongated hats. As her party began she discovered to her vivid dismay that all her liquor was gone. Be a dear, Lou heard her tell Maytree, and run get two bottles of everything—I'll pay you back, you're marvelous. But Maytree and all her guests had long ago learned that to Reevadare's lawn parties, as to beach picnics, they should bring everything but the place. Maytree revealed to Reevadare a bottle of rye. Everybody had bottles. Someone also brought a turkey, someone a ham, and Lou, whose mother shipped fruit from

New York, brought peach and plum pies.

Reevadare Weaver had run through five husbands like a brochette. When she married Joe Jernigan, her first husband, family and friends gave her monogrammed towels and sheets. Subsequently, when she married in succession the Messrs. Jarvis, Johnson, and James—

—I never needed to change monograms! she told Lou, delighted all these years later. By the time she married Five, Trudeau, she was poor; her friends and family had wearied of buying her presents, and monograms were out of the question. A year later Trudeau, suppressing laughter, sailed as one-way crew on a schooner for Papeete, Tahiti, and Reevadare resumed her maiden name, Weaver.

Sleek clouds wandered off toward Portugal. There in her garden, Reevadare told Lou and Maytree about marriage: It's a marvelous way to get to know someone. Lou and Maytree smiled. Reevadare wore her hair in a Gibson-girl pouf, which perhaps also filled her fruit-piled conical hat.

Lou stayed at the party late. With Reevadare she emptied ashtrays, cleaned the outdoor kitchen, and drank whiskey sours. She ask point-blank: Can love last? Ru people get to philosophizing, a will say anything.

Oh, darling! Reevadare pull Lou to a pinching metal bench.

No, not that heart-thumping p sion. Give that eighteen months. E it's replaced by something even bet

Yes?

Lovers!

How the upright prized Reev dare. She fought their secret batt for them like a mercenary. Why people fret about such a simply m velous thing as love? After a bo with Reevadare, her friends' g goyle scruples fell from their sho ders and did not climb back hours. Maybe she would even go hell for them. She was already fr Virginia or Oklahoma or Mississi or one of those.

That night on her bench Reev dare offered Lou advice. With ma killing rings she pressed Lou's ha and said, Keep your women frien darling. Men come and go.

Lou had walked home by the bea holding her shoes and avoiding tra Of course Reevadare's exotic life her to think men came and we Overhead she saw a bleary planet n igating among stars. No one kn what she and Maytree knew.

They knew it even better n they were married. Back from t beach, the woman fastened her shorts by the window. Water h chilled her skin only; she still f his heat. Awareness was a fiber l tween them—or a corpus callosu he said, and she looked it up la and rolled her eyes. Twined th made a filament by which etern tugged time.

At Reevadare's buggy pa Maytree had kept his gaze on her always. His face, firm and mob showed—not his but—her feelin he laughed or deepened when s did. They shared like conjoin twins a single organ of feeling; it w the same organ that perceived g strolling in gardens in the cool the evening.

At sea stiff clouds appeared and st ed to color. Did natural beauty, ho ever overdone, serve or permit a thing needful? Was beauty necessa

Th question she was perhaps put here o k. Evidently she was not put here o nswer it, since it called to mind only the Thurber and White title *Is Sex Necessary?*

From their bedroom window she w hed Maytree in the yard. He spread h hand's fingers alternately as he w ed. She knew he was siphoning s ome energy, a form of happiness. He threw a ball in the water for th dog. He wore white overalls over a nce-blue shirt. All his clothes h g loose. Sunlight made the over- all bleached canvas blinding as sail. H hair was wet again. Their out- d r shower was a black-ribbed hose th y looped on a nail. Within the p two hours, the private awareness b nging to that man on the beach th wing a ball had, in a replicable i possibility, touched hers more n rly than had his cells. She could n er thank him enough.

Two fishing boats were coming in f n the bay, Vito Cue's and Tico F a's. In Maytree's eyes that morn- i and often, and in his restraint, s read his astonishment at the un- r rldly power that grew, or they d de it, at their shared boundary— t skin that parted and joined t m—as a tree grows both ways f m its cambium layer.

The dog dropped the ball at M aytree's feet. Maytree faked get- g the ball and throwing it high; t dog looked up; Maytree grabbed t ball. The dog seemed embar- s sed and pretended it had been c asing terns all along. Maytree's h ir dried pale again. How lightly he h ld himself! His head and arms' b ue shadow on his overalls con- c cted or grew when he moved. The tide slacked and its lip, rolled on sand, flattened.

Remember this. She touched h r forehead to hot glass. Remember t is: Now Maytree, light of limb, is t ssing sand. We made love all this M nday morning on our bed. We w ke to ordinary awareness like two w nds a gale passed. There was an i mediate future, which was—next? N ext they moored the boat.

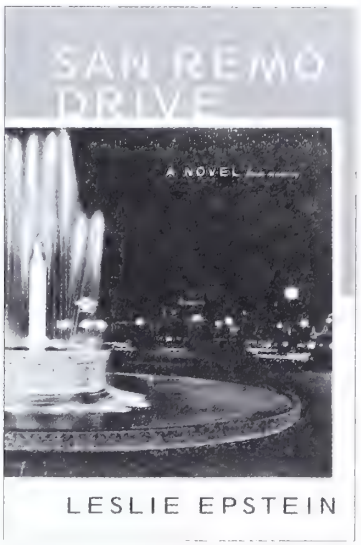
Remember this. The dog will die; M aytree and I will at best grow old. It will all unroll from now. I am twenty-three and Maytree thirty; before the sea he fools with the living dog and squints. It will never again be like this. I see from our bedroom window Maytree in the yard holding sun everywhere. Just now a flaw of wind the size of a thumb drags a glissando across the sea. The air apparent.

She remembered that day years later, out of all the flapping days, because she had vowed she would. She fancied it would be difficult, or she would have vowed to remember every other day as well. For that was many years ago, and she was right; it was never again like that. ■

November Index Sources

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A NORTHERN FRONT

Seeking refuge in oil and in wilderness

By John Hildebrand

ast March, when the outside nperature in Alaska was –30°, I sat the TV lounge of a construction- mp-turned-hotel in Kaktovik, a all Inupiat village on an island the state's northeastern corner, ıring at the big color console. llagers checking for packages)m the last mail plane would)mp the snow off their boots, re-)ve gauntlet mittens, and pull ck parka hoods to look over my oulder, hoping to catch the girls' ıte basketball championship live)m Anchorage. What they saw stead was CNN's telecast of ex- osions in the desert sky over ıghdad. The bombing was not ıexpected. Still, watching it from ı island in the frozen Beaufort :a, on the other side of the world,)uld have seemed less surreal had 'ents in Iraq not been so publicly)nnected with where we sat atching them.

Three days before the scheduled ar was to begin, Senate Republi- ans had attempted to open the .rctic National Wildlife Refuge) oil development by attaching a ıeasure to a vote on a budget res- lution, a maneuver designed to avoid full hearing on an issue Congress has debated for at least twenty years. This time there was a new sense of urgency. Saddam Hussein had played a central role in past arguments to open the Refuge, and this would likely be the last chance to go to that particular well before cruise missiles obviated it altogether. The language of the Senate debate so blurred distinctions between oil reserves in Alaska and those in Iraq that a Democrat urged his colleagues not to "invade this snow desert." There were references to "national security," to "oil as a weapon," even to "the local people [who] are begging us to come in . . ." The "local people" in this case referred to the Inupiat Eskimos of Kaktovik, who favor oil development, rather than to the Gwich'in Indians on the other side of the Brooks Range, who don't. It was necessary that there be "local people" to add a moral dimension to a measure that might otherwise be seen as handing over public land for the profit of a few multinational oil companies. The measure failed by four votes. But nobody in Kaktovik felt this was the end of the matter. If the invasion of Iraq has demonstrated anything, it is that the Bush Administration's fixation on certain issues has remained, well, fixed, even as their rationales have proven flexible and opportunistic.



During the congressional debate, Senator Ted Stevens (R., Alaska) made the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge sound like the Slough of Despond. When a Democrat held up photographs of wildflowers, he countered with a bleak landscape of white on white. "As far as you can see, nothing but frozen tundra. . . . Ask anybody who's been up there in the wintertime."

)hn Hildebrand is the author of Mapping ıe Farm. *His last article for* Harper's Magazine, *"The Appraisal," appeared in ıe November 2001 issue.*

Illustrations by Raymond Verdaguer

So I'd come to see for myself.

My head was swathed like a Bedouin's—balaclava, fleece face mask, yellow-tinted goggles, parka hood—as I drove a clattering snowmobile through the village the day after the bombing of Baghdad began. The snow-banked streets looked milky blue in the early morning light, and a brisk wind had lowered the ambient temperature to –40°. To the windward side of the village, beyond the last modular house, a towering snow fence sixteen feet high—a Hadrian's Wall of slatted timber—kept Kaktovik from being buried in drifts.

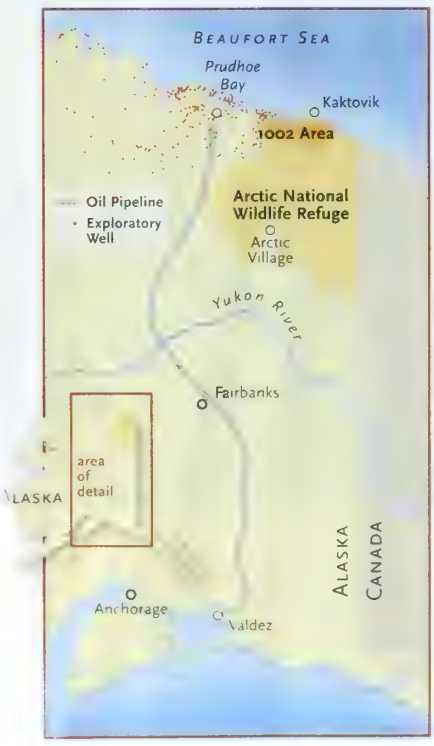
The coastal plain *is* a desert in terms of precipitation—less than six inches fall annually—but what falls as snow stays to be later distributed by the wind. Long, hard-packed ridges, or sastrugi, form in the direction of the prevailing winds, west-east in this case, and as we headed south across the frozen lagoon to the coastal plain, the surface was so deeply furrowed that snowmobiling across it felt like motocross. I was driving a Super Wide Track Ski-Doo that belonged to my Inupiat guide, Robert Thompson. It's designed for hauling rather than racing, he'd explained, so the suspension was fairly stiff. When I asked why most of the foam seat was missing, Robert said that a polar bear had eaten it.

Our plan was to travel southwest across the coastal plain to the mouth of the Hulahula River and follow its frozen course to the mountains, a distance of some fifty miles, and set up camp. It is a journey many Inupiat families make in late spring and fall to hunt and fish, a trip that in the future may require crossing oil fields and pipelines.

Two summers ago, flying over greenish-brown tundra, I had seen scattered gray dots along the riverbanks, each centered over its own shadow: the advance guard of the Porcupine caribou herd on the last leg of an 800-mile migration to calving grounds. Now the landscape looked utterly empty, empty and white, and yet winter unlocks the country to travel in a way impossible in summer. The plain tilts upward almost imperceptibly from the seacoast to the Brooks Range, the mountains looming to the south like a storm front. It is the abrupt rise of these mountains, from sea level to almost 8,000 feet, that accentuates the flatness of the coastal plain. The landscape tends to magnify anything set against it, and the physical world can be taken in at a glance—ocean, plain, mountains.

I was careful not to follow Robert too closely because of a twelve-foot wooden sledge he was pulling behind his machine. Heavily loaded with camping gear and extra gas cans, the sledge would occasionally swing wide of the snowmobile's wake in a determined arc until the towrope snapped it back into line. Between the immense snow horizon and the vault of blue sky, there were only these two objects—the snowmobile and the sledge. I couldn't take my eyes off them. To lose sight of them for even a moment meant unmooring myself from all that was human in the landscape, a prospect at once frightening and thrilling.

For some time we had been nearing what looked like the prow of a ship protruding from a snowbank, a prow that seemed always to recede even as we drew closer. It materialized finally as the peaked roof of a small frame house drifted to the window ledges in snow. We went inside



to warm up with a thermos of c

The one-room house had b built communally in Kaktovi hauled to this widening in the a place indistinguishable in w from the surrounding whitene cept that it had a name: Firs Hole. In another month vill would come here to fish throug ice for grayling and Arctic Some of them had scrawled names on the wall: Aishanna, Brower, Akootchook. Robert' is an Akootchook, one of the prominent families in Kaktovi father an elder and Presbyt minister. Robert's backgroun little different. His mother was the village of Wainwright o Chukchi Sea; his father had co Alaska by way of Utah. In ap ance, Robert favors the Inupia of the family, with heavy blac brows and a broad, handsome but he'd grown up on Lake chumina in the interior of A He traveled a lot, beginning tour of Vietnam, where one duties was guarding oil tank Cameron Bay. He and his Jane, had moved to Kaktov raise their family in a village subsistence hunting and other tional Native values could b anced with a cash economy. I increasingly difficult balancing

"This is where the pipeline w through," Robert said, looking open door. "And there'd be a je few miles from here."

Robert is an outspoken opp of drilling in the Arctic Refug thus is something of an anom Kaktovik, where nearly every connected to oil revenues. Las when he and his oldest daughte to Washington, D.C., with the ka Wilderness League to lobby a bill to open the Refuge, he r Senator Stevens, the bill's co-sp "So you're here to help us ANWR," said the senator, w learned the couple were fro tovik. "Actually," Robert tol "I'm against it."

When Robert and his wi came back to the village, ice ha cut in blocks from the freshwa west of the village and melt drinking water; streets we

NEW BOOKS

by John Leonard



On the winner of the 1993 Nobel Prize for Literature, I am not to be trusted. Norman Mailer said as much, in a bitter little note last March: "I assumed that some day you would give us a major work. Instead you now ride shotgun for Toni Morrison." And it's true that I've raved about all her novels except *Tar Baby*, with its puzzled clouds, stingless bees, fearful rain, and rain forests full of angel fear. But Sancho Panza also rode shotgun, and we know a windmill when we see one.

LOVE (Knopf, $23.95) is not a windmill. It is a music box and an echo chamber, an exquisite miniature in which mermaids sing. They sing of a seaside resort on the Atlantic Coast where black people used to go for "Nat Cole and Wild Turkey"; of Bill Cosey, the glad-handing owner who traded favors with local white pols to keep his hotel humming from the Great Depression till the civil rights era; of the many women Bill loved, not always wisely, including an eleven-year-old he married before she had her first period; of the several women with reason to hate Bill, though they are more forgiving than the reader may be and choose instead to hate one another; of poison foxglove and disputed wills, "dragon daddies" and "Police-heads," Booker T. and Malcolm X.

Those critics who insist on looking under Morrison's skirts for Faulkner's boll weevils will be confounded to learn that *Love* is more like a Scott Fitzgerald. Not that her black Gatsby would go tender into any night.

As always, she reimagines the lost history, nightmare passage, and redemptive music of her people, and rewrites our classic literature to include their expulsions and displacements, their love, work, gravity, grace, and torque. As always, she complicates our understanding of black communities that have nonwhite business to attend to and their very own power trips, scapegoats, and pariahs. As always, her naming evokes, signifies, and subverts, from Breedlove, Soaphead Church, Pilate, Guitar, Stamp Paid, Joe Trace, Juvenal, Seneca, Drum, and Chaste in the earlier novels to Righteous Morning and Heed the Night in this one. As always, ghosts show up, ancestors sermonize, and the blood, bone, and ligaments of the world find sensuous expression, rolling like berries on the tongue: pecans, fireflies, turtles; the little-girl scent of "butter-rum candy, grass juice, and fur." And as always, the Trickster plays games with herself and the reader: if *Jazz* was a book in our hands reading itself out loud, and *Paradise* refused to say which girl in the convent was the white one they shot first, *Love* features at least one narrator who doesn't know she's dead.

But *Love* is also a fairy tale—a sort of Greco-Freudian fable. Claws scratch and webbed feet flap. The hands of one character turn into wings. The "merged toes" of another make her foot, slipping into a sock, seem "like a hoof" to her suddenly fearful lover. And a third character, after her seventh abortion, sees an "unborn eye" in the flush, swirl, and blur of congealed red blood that will watch her the rest of her life. It is as if, while some down-home raunchy song was playing in the big house, Aesop, Oedipus, and maybe King Lear were outside in the stables whispering the unspeakable about bestiality and incest taboos.



The unspeakable is what Primo Levi insisted on saying about the death camps, in a prose as

mmer" by Jack Spencer, courtesy the Art Institute of Chicago; illustration of honeysuckle © Mary Evans Picture Library; illustration of a ... and its skeleton © Stapleton Collection/Corbis

purely Mediterranean as the best Greek poets, from his first book, *If This Is a Man* (1947), to his last, *The Drowned and the Saved* (1986), after which he threw himself down four flights of stairwell in the apartment house on the Corso Re Umberto in Turin, where, except for twenty months during World War II, he had lived his entire buttoned-up life. Besides a sixty-seven-year-old chemist, writer, and witness (Auschwitz #174517), something else died that Easter weekend of 1987. Primo Levi killed our wishful thinking.

He jumped. But also he was pushed. And since the balance he lost, his moral poise, was exactly what we counted on, there will be no end of autopsies. Ian Thomson's P
(Metropolitan Books, $32.50) is the third long biography I've read, after Myriam Anissimov's *Tragedy of an Optimist* and Carole Angier's *The Double Bond*. All three agree that the Nazis had help finishing him off. He had been subject to depression as well as bronchial disorders even before his internment. He suffered immediately prior to his death from insomnia, shingles, a blocked bladder, ulcerations on his feet, and a fear of losing his memory—his raison d'être—to Alzheimer's.

And maybe he was also going mad from the proximity of his ninety-two-year-old invalid mother, who banged on the wall with her cane whenever he sat down to write. His children, although they would flirt with radical politics, fled the room in tears when he tried to explain the numbers on his arm. Holocaust revisionists like David Irving seemed to be chipping away at every dreadful bone-deep truth he knew. The American magazine *Commentary* had published a shameful, bumptious attack. His best literary friend, Italo Calvino, was dead. Besides, Thomson assures us, "A suicidal tendency can be transmitted down the generations like a dangerous gene"; Levi's grandfather had thrown himself out of a window into a courtyard.



Thomson is relentlessly informative on Italian politics, from Mussolini to the Red Brigades to the neo-Blackshirts and P2 Masonic Lodgers, as well as on Levi's career as a chemist, from structural adhesives to lipstick synthesized out of serpent droppings. But he throws plausibility out of his own window when he insinuates that a species of sexual shame somehow crippled Primo from his childhood on. Levi was "delicate," "often ill," a "mother's boy," "girlish," "frail," "epicene," bullied for being Jewish and quick to "flush deep red" in "an agony of embarrassment," whose attraction to "more physically robust boys and men" had "a kind of homoerotic component." Which perhaps explains why his relations with women other than his wife seem always to have been "asexual." (Can you imagine? When they married, both were virgins!) Then they moved in with his mother, which Thomas calls "pathological" and "filial infantilism." And don't forget that "the most intense period of his life was spent almost exclusively in the company of men: Auschwitz. . . . From this one might deduce an ambivalent sexuality."

Or one might deduce an impudent biographer. The person he describes sounds like hundreds of intelligent and sensitive boys, geeks and nerds disdained by the sports-junkie high school culture, who grow up to be poets, physicists, flautists, librarians, and hackers, some gay, some depressed, some even happily married, most with many female friends whose bones it never occurs to them to jump. It happens, except in the kind of biography I'm inclined to call Bed Pan.

What troubles Elizabeth Seay isn't the unspeakable but the no-longer-spoken.

(Lyons Press, $22.95)

inquires into the whereabouts of c
munities still capable of talking
Muskogee-Creek, Kiowa, or Euc
and wonders why it matters if t
disappear. So what if, as seems lik
no one by the end of this century
speak Harsusi in Oman, or Saam
Finland, or Ainu in Japan? Althou
Gaelic, Maori, and Hawaiian h
been brought back from the gra
"the movement of the world's sm
languages is toward silence." In
rampant globalizing, should we ca

Seay leaves her New York job
the *Wall Street Journal* to follo
path in her native Oklahoma t
Toni Morrison blazed in *Parad*
The rainbow parabola of Morris
novel included Reconstruction a
the Trail of Tears, vanished tow
ships and murdered cultures. Se
too, discovers cul-de-sacs and sa
tuaries where a few elders still sp
Cherokee, Caddo, or Comanche
aren't considered qualified to te
it because they never went to
reservation schools where the pol
of forced assimilation was to pun
every kid who said anything in N
tive American. Nor are Chocta
Sioux, or Ponca the way seri
money talks.

Seay does meet the last livi
World War II Comanche co
speaker, whose European serv
never got the press that the Nava
did in the Pacific. And a spell-wea
without a younger generation
which he could pass on his secrets,
his herbs. And a couple of idealis
anthropologists who can't agree
whether archiving a language ab
to die is a worthwhile activity o
form of academic tourism. M
wonderfully, Seay finds the "l
city" of Ross Mountain in t
Ozarks, where almost everybo
speaks a Cherokee dialect. She ev
commits to learning Cherokee h
self. But this is after she has alre
learned to grieve for ways of seei
hearing, and feeling gone with t
buffalo, word-worlds nobody lives
anymore. "More languages equ
more possibilities for thinking," s
says, and proves it by seeking out l
specificities of time and space, u
packing gnarled metaphors, rec
noitering vanished realms, hear
phantom heartbeats.

"In Winter, Kiowa," by Frank A. Rinehart or possibly Adolf F. Muhr © Smithsonia
American Art Museum, Washington, D.C. / Art Resource, New York

ONS AND MONSTERS

hn O'Hara gains a defender

y Jonathan Dee

ussed in this essay:

Art of Burning Bridges: A Life of John O'Hara, by Geoffrey Wolff. Knopf, 003. 373 pages. $30.

n the preface to his unfashionably forgiving biography of John O'Hara, Geoffrey Wolff suggests : *The Silent Woman*, Janet Mal-n's cautionary study of the rlife of Sylvia Plath, helped him honest in his efforts to te credible narrative out of living's recollections of the d. But it's another of Mal-n's books that Wolff's emo-nal attachment to his sub- ultimately calls to mind. *ding Chekhov* (2001) is a hy-l work, a hymn of critical ise framed by a comic ac-nt of Malcolm's travels ough Russia in search of ne of the landmarks of her oject's life: his homes in scow and Yalta, his profes-nal haunts in St. Petersburg, of them now either gone or ttified into state-run muse-s. These trips don't yield ich in the way of under-nding, but then Malcolm esn't really expect them to— rs is less a research junket n a pilgrimage, and in her ef-t to apprehend the master, ne's casual destruction of ople and places keeps throw-g her back onto his art, the one rce time can't touch. It's a "biog-hy" meant to illustrate the very lim-tions of biography; in the end, it's t the sketchy record of Chekhov's e but the passionate acumen of Mal-

colm's reading of the stories and plays that somehow assembles itself, for a moment at least, into a flickering image of the man.



Writing hymns of praise to Chekhov, though, isn't exactly what you'd call critical trailblazing; it takes more of a pioneer spirit to mount a similar campaign on behalf of John O'Hara. There has never been anything close to a critical consensus about the value of O'Hara's work—no more so now than when he was alive. One of the most prominent names in American fiction from the 1930s through the 1960s, O'Hara wrote a dozen acclaimed, best-selling novels (*Appointment in Samarra*, *Butterfield 8*, *Ten North Frederick*), published an unrivaled 265 pieces in *The New Yorker*, won nearly every major literary award, and was mentioned (most often by himself) as a candidate for the Nobel Prize. At the same time, however, he was ridiculed by prominent critics (even in *The New Yorker*) for his delusions of grandeur, publicly mocked by Hemingway, and castigated as an author whose popularity was in large measure a function of his willingness to write explicitly about sex. And, unlike Chekhov, there wasn't much in O'Hara's personal life to warm the heart of a present-day acolyte—in his case, the known facts are less like carefully unearthed treasures than land mines. This was no saintly, tubercular country doctor; O'Hara's life was one of petty, well-documented nastiness, and he lived to the prosperous age of sixty-five.

Wolff's is the fourth major biography of this prickly figure in the thirty-three years since his death; what distinguishes *The Art of Burning Bridges* from those earlier efforts is its combative, protective tone. Although Wolff has conscientiously interviewed many of O'Hara's surviving colleagues and relations, he seems to have done so more for the sake of intimacy with his subject than in the cause of turning up fresh detail. His approach is gratifyingly free of solemnity (he finds room at one point for his personal endorsement of a certain Pennsylvania-brewed beer), and his interest in the sort of comprehensive academic sleuthing that fattens most biographies is nil. Confronted with an unresolved question about his subject's grade in a high school English class, Wolff simply "confesses to a lazy failure to chase down and pin facts of this nature," and moves on.

Wolff claims in his opening pages that *The Art of Burning Bridges* was motivated by the effete dismissals of "wiseass critics," and vows to "redress the casual disdain triggered in some

nathan Dee is the author of four novels, cluding, most recently, Palladio. *His last view for* Harper's Magazine, *"The 'I' y," appeared in the January issue.*

ustration by Andrea Ventura

influential strangers by [O'Hara's] very name." Before he even gets around to narrating the circumstances of his subject's birth, he has staked out his own position as defender of he who can no longer defend himself, determined to rescue O'Hara from the oblivion for which literary *fashionistas* have snobbishly marked him down. Like Malcolm, Wolff is treading where several other biographers have trod before; thus his primary claim to our attention would seem to be a freshly sympathetic reading of O'Hara's work, warmed by an open sense of mission, advocacy, tribute.

What emerges instead—honorably, engrossingly, if not always intentionally—is a book at war with itself. There's a straw-man quality to those "wiseasses" Wolff invokes, but no matter: watching him try to abide by his own proclaimed fidelity to O'Hara is like watching Jacob wrestle with the angel. What are we to make, for instance, of "tributes" such as these?

> For aversion therapy nothing serves like a session with [*From the Terrace*'s] erotic diction. . . . There were times, reading its densely printed pages, when I was distracted by calculations of just how many weeks remain to someone in early old age.

> Although this is an answer to a question he never asked, sometimes I just can't like this man. . . . There is no excuse for his self-indulgent brutality, his sullen refusals to discuss with his antagonists the very grievances he brought to their uninvited attention.

> After a while—after, say, a couple hundred short stories, half a dozen novels, and a half century of living—it becomes a vice to refuse to learn.

The peevishness of these denunciations, which seem less like critical judgments than cries of disappointment, only underscores the fact that writing about one's idol can be an emotional affair. If the news, for instance, that the astoundingly prolific O'Hara all but refused to revise his own work is a letdown to the casual reader (as it was to his legendary *New Yorker* editor, Katharine White), to Wolff it's a downright threat, so much so that he winds up lashing out at White before the book's emotional equilibrium is restored.

Born in Pottsville, Pennsylvania, in 1905, John O'Hara made an early career of disappointing his imperious father, a revered local doctor, mostly by getting tossed out of a series of prep schools (once for indiscretions committed on the eve of graduation as his parents slept in a nearby hotel). After a stint as a reporter for his hometown paper, O'Hara made his way to Manhattan, where he began a relationship with the fledgling *New Yorker* that, by childishly toggling between fits of pique and quests for approval, kept the family dynamic he'd left behind in Pottsville going for another forty years. A nasty, violent, confrontational drunk even by the exotic standards of the day, O'Hara was physically abusive to at least one of his wives, turned mercilessly on friends over mysterious transgressions, and once lost a bar fight to two midgets after snarling at one of them, "What the fuck do you think *you're* staring at?" Ulcers and bad teeth kept him out of World War II, but he nonetheless made back-channel inquiries about purchasing various combat-valor medals to wear in public, so that he might bask in respect he had done nothing to earn.

Whereas another biographer might pounce on these offenses against integrity, Wolff recounts them with the grim disappointment and protective spin of a family member. "So he added an inch," writes Wolff when he catches his subject lying about his height, of all things, in the author's note to one of his books. "Doesn't everyone?" We're more accustomed to the punishing arc of the "pathography," in which a publicly respected figure is revealed to have been, in his or her private life, a slave to dark impulses, but that schism between public and private, which lends most contemporary biographies their syncopated rhythm, just wasn't there in O'Hara. It was never really hidden (because he seemed incapable of hiding it) that he fantasized about having gone to Yale when in fact he never received his high school diplo that he was one of the handful of thors to have declined an intervi with *The Paris Review*, not out modesty or a distrust of the form because it hurt his feelings t Hemingway had been asked bef him; that he was, in Wolff's phr "an especially nasty Martin Lut King derider" (though in an odd plication of decorum his biograp declines to share any evidence this); that he spent years hounc Bennett Cerf, his publisher at R dom House, to steal a bunch matchbooks for him from N York's famed Racquet & Ten Club—a club O'Hara couldn't into—so that the author might c ally scatter them around his ho reasoning, as he did all his life, t social distinction was entirel function of totems and surfaces therefore, that the ersatz was at l as good as the real thing.

Crass behavior in an artist's p sonal life is precisely the kin chaff one might expect to blow a in the decades after his death that we might judge his work m soberly. In O'Hara's case, howe the ugly record of his petulance status-obsession isn't irrelevan his contentious afterlife; his ap to fellow authors persists in s measure because of his monstr personality, not in spite of it. Jus certain artists, in their epic, m lives, function as a kind of u strained id for the restrained soc that produced them, O'Hara rem an avatar of the ungoverned imp for writers themselves. Publi helplessly, noisily, he gave ir every selfish, egomaniacal desire ilized writers have learned to ch recounting his words in the p lished versions of magazine arti to make sure he hadn't been sho by a few cents; bitterly indicting their ingratitude the citizen Pottsville whose lives he'd appro ated for use in his work; threate hostile critics with physical beati And the primal fear, for him as all writers, is of course the spect oblivion, the overwhelming odd favor of one's work disappearing ever into the vast regions of the read. We pretend we're resigne

it O'Hara—who literally wrote wn epitaph—refused to pretend uch thing. So we can use him as ay to talk about mortality, her condescendingly (as Harold lkey did in a blistering *New er* essay about O'Hara in 1993) what amounts to a kind of plea eniency at a sentencing hearing Wolff does). Either way, ara's life seems to be enjoying a ge afterlife of its own, at least some similarly cathartic mon- (Michel Houellebecq, perhaps?) es along to displace him from imid imaginations.

till, the drama of that life is now fixed; it's the work that sits in limbo between the fondly re- bered and the canonically vital. ara's writing embodies a few deeply servative ideas about what fiction specifically about what "character" ction means and how it operates— when it comes to the defense of se verities against the threat of nging tastes, there's never any ques- where Wolff's own loyalties lie.

n the course of defending one of Hara's least successful novels, *The Laugh*, Wolff describes it with ing offhandedness as "a fiction e all others in that it communi- es interior turmoil by means of face representation," and else- ere dismisses "psychologically de- mined characterization" as "a fic- nal fashion of the day." Leaving le, for the moment, the fantasti- ly reductive quality of these re- rks (the notion that man's interior e isn't necessarily exposed by ech or action is as old as the novel elf, and has driven most literary ion since Flaubert), the technique "surface representation" with ich O'Hara is most closely associ- d is dialogue. The plots of even s earliest stories ("The Doctor's n") and novels (*Appointment in marra*, his first and easily his best) re propelled by the speech of the aracters, and by the time he ached his amazingly prolific final ars—between 1962 and 1968 he blished five story collections and ur novels—O'Hara had refined this proach to the point where the late ort stories are made up almost entirely of dialogue, like blackout sketches written for the stage.

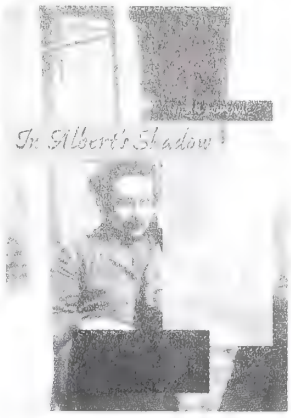
In fact, Wolff makes an imaginative, if ultimately unconvincing, case for O'Hara as the artist who cleared the path for the colloquial art of David Mamet. And although a comparison of O'Hara's fiction to that of the late William Gaddis may seem no less counterintuitive, there is a crude but instructive kinship there. Gaddis's novels, as thorny and difficult as O'Hara's were popular and accessible, consist of little more than dialogue, and in a 1987 interview he offered a rationale for this profound formal asceticism:

> The attempt . . . was to make the characters create themselves, which is true of movies or the stage, and essentially of life itself. . . . None of [my] books has got any interior monologue, easy effects, any of "he wished he could see her that afternoon." I mean he's got to show it, to *tell* someone, "I wish I could see her this afternoon." Authorial absence so that the characters create the situation.

It's a fine principle, if also a somewhat repressed, masculine one (what's private remains private until inadvertently exposed), and you can see it guiding O'Hara as well; yet O'Hara's work and Gaddis's are about as far removed from each other as it's possible for two *oeuvres* to be. The difference, perhaps, is that Gaddis's fiction—not just the dialogue itself but the whole imaginative space in which his novels unfold—is radically stylized, a Beckett-like alternate universe where panic is held at bay by a tangled, compulsive, endlessly ramifying forest of words. O'Hara, though, as Brodkey pointed out, used this technique not to represent an aestheticized vision of life but instead to portray life *as it is*—a reportorial sort of realism in which speech, if one just listens closely enough, reveals everything about the character of the speaker.

It's a suspect idea, in life as in art. Still, when he allowed his dialogue to function more simply as surface, O'Hara could be brilliant fun. Julian English, the character whose tragic decline forms the plot of *Appointment in Samarra*, runs awkwardly into one of his employees at a Prohibition-era

ALBERT EINSTEIN
his private life



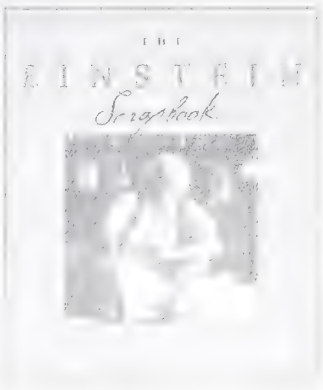
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Christmas party, and his drunken speech is like a runaway train:

> "No, I only have rye, I'm sorry to
>
> "What of it?" said Julian. "Who is that man over there, Luther?"
>
> "Where?"
>
> "The one that's staring at us. I think he's dead. Did you ever hear the story about the dead man in the subway, Luther?"
>
> "No, I don't think I did."
>
> "Lucky boy. Lucky boy, Luther. I always said you were a fine fellow. Are you having a good time?"

But other signature techniques are less impressive. The phonetic "realism" of a line such as "Wukkan I do fya?" is cheaply obtained, and becomes even less enjoyable once the reader realizes that this treatment is generally restricted to minor, uneducated, or "ethnic" characters.

The real issue, though, isn't O'Hara's ear but the consequences of his technical dependence on speech, which became, over time, almost complete. He turned it into a kind of narrative beast of burden, in which his characters sometimes revealed their feelings and their histories in a fatally inorganic way. In the late story "Exactly Eight Thousand Dollars Exactly," for instance, a middle-aged ne'er-do-well returns to his hometown to borrow money from his successful brother:

> "When we were boys and you used to knock me around I used to feel sort of sorry for you. You'd beat the hell out of me and walk away with something of mine. A fielder's glove, or a necktie. But what you didn't know was that I was dying to give you the God damn glove or tie. Anything you asked for of mine, you could have had. But you preferred violence and theft, and naturally I could only take so much and then I began to hate you."

One can almost feel O'Hara, the doctor's son, pounding on the chests of his characters in order to get them to yield up motivations that, in the normal course of things, would remain interior.

In regard to O'Hara's eye for other, more visual sorts of surface detail, Wolff puts it pithily: "He seems to have been undone by his confusion of plenty with magnificence." O'Hara was not concerned with "surfaces" in any remotely pictorial sense; his interest was in brand names, and depending on one's own inclinations either this makes him a very modern sort of "novelist of manners" or it makes him a novelist of the fetishism of commodities. The manufacturer of a shirt or a car or a shoe, the differences between clubs or between fraternities—these things mattered enormously to him, and one is tempted to say that the reason he makes so many American critics uncomfortable is that he violates a political taboo by writing mostly uncritically about class. But in the end the problem with O'Hara's acceptance of American droit du seigneur is not a political but an artistic one, because the novels in particular are front-loaded social parables of that which he had his mind made up about in the first place. The narrative logic of *Appointment in Samarra*, for instance, circles something like this: the social codes of the upper class are too powerful to be violated; therefore, three days after throwing a drink in a man's face at the country club, Julian English decides to kill himself; ergo, social codes are too powerful to be violated.

The short stories, though—especially the later, briefer, more indirect ones—are made to bear less of that self-conscious social agenda; and it's in those stories, such as "Zero," "The Flatted Saxophone," and the novella-length "Imagine Kissing Pete," that O'Hara's best, most enduring writing is still to be found. Here the question of O'Hara's influence becomes less of a whimsical construct, for in their open-endedness, their lack of affect, even the preponderance of question marks in their titles, the late stories certainly prefigure Raymond Carver and his many inheritors.

What it all amounts to, then, is that a long career of relentless prolificacy has sifted down to a handful of short stories that are still vital long after their author has left the stage: not only a good career, in other words, but more than any writer with an ounce of humility would ever dare to be caught hoping for aloud. Yet we can't seem to shut out the sound of O'Hara's bitterness over his own obsolescence, thirty-three years after his death. Which brings us back to the outsized, blustering, oversensitive charact[er] O'Hara himself.

In Donald Barthelme's comic n[ovel] *The Dead Father* (1975), a y[oung] man, with the aid of his girlfri[end] eighteen hired laborers, and a stee[l] ble, drags his monument-sized f[ather] across the countryside toward th[e] of his grave. Although technically [dead] the father goes on talking—abou[t] legacy, his regrets, the ingratitu[de] his children, grand plans for th[e] ture—until the moment when th[e] covers him up. It's a wonderfully [co]tic parable of fathers and sons an[d] anxiety of influence, and as easi[ly] one can apply it to the political or [the] personal, it fits literary purposes ju[st] neatly. Irrational, tempestuous, fla[w]needy, reactionary, powerless yet [so] intimidating, John O'Hara has bec[ome] one of American literature's dea[d] thers, and as such the drama of [his] death goes on long after he's act[ually] died. For a while at least, his chil[dren] remain trapped in their labors—h[is] oring him, burying him, supplan[ting] him, or all three simultaneously.

Geoffrey Wolff is an accomplis[hed] novelist, and the author of a prev[ious] biography of the doomed Jazz [Age] writer Harry Crosby, but it woul[d be] fair to say that he's best known [for] writing *The Duke of Deception* (19[79]), a poignant attempt at an objec[tive] portrait of his own charismatic, [but] maniacal, dishonest, profoundly d[is]aged, yet still loving father. "Du[ke] Wolff was a swindler, a pretenti[ous] liar, a master of the magnanim[ous] empty gesture ("buying" his son [ex]travagant gifts that would later be repossessed when the check bounc[ed]) and his boy worshiped him, at l[east] until he wasn't a boy anymore. "[I'm] not even now certain what I wish [he] had made of himself," Wolff write[s] once believed that he was most na[tu]rally a fictioneer."

The break comes when Wolff [is] having miraculously graduated fr[om] college, is preparing to leave [for] Turkey, where he's secured a job tea[ch]ing English; a call from the San Di[ego] police informs him that his father [has] been arrested on an outstanding gra[nd] theft auto warrant. They will rele[ase] him on bail only if his son will gu[a]rantee his court appearance—wh[ich]

staying in the country, which
forgoing the teaching job. In
d, Geoffrey goes to Turkey and
his father in jail (after which
s decline is precipitous), but first
is this exchange:

talked to him through the sturdy
e mesh, above the bedlam of San
go street folk. . . . I told him that
at he had done was wrong. I had
ny times suggested such things to
with sullenness and despairing sighs,
I had never before directly charged
with doing wrong. When I told my
er that what he had done was wrong
stared at me, as though I had at last
ly puzzled him.
'Don't you understand me at all?" he
ed.

his introduction to *The Art of ing Bridges*, Wolff anticipates the r by acknowledging some of the superficial similarities between e" and O'Hara (who liked to go ne unearned nickname "Doc"): owned, for vanity's sake, black- n walking sticks; both were the of doctors; both were expelled several prep schools yet nursed ong fantasies of having attended . Wolff, however, no sooner brings ne comparison than he dismisses it mptively via the trite formulation only by writing the book did he over how different the two men ly were. One senses that he's ac- ly well aware of the depth of the re- blance between these disappoint- father figures but, excellent yteller that he is, he knows better n to look at it too closely.
If writers differ intrinsically from er people," Wolff notes, "their dif- nce is defined by a vocational obli- ion to be dissatisfied," and in de- se of his literary father Wolff is more n willing to take up part of the bur- n of that dissatisfaction. O'Hara was ever mystified by the cold shoulder received from his hometown of ttsville, whose real-life denizens he norselessly exploited as material for own fiction; Wolff justifies this by mparing it to his similarly unpleas- t experience as the author of a nov- called, and set in, *Providence*. One of Hara's many ridiculous feuds with e *New Yorker*, which published him re often than any other writer in history, is written off as "a show of

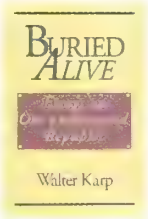
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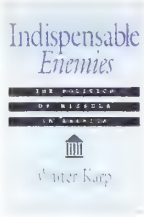
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we will—aggrieved by neglect." And blame for O'Hara's caustic response to a woman who said she liked one of his books (but committed the offense of failing to mention the others) is diffused thus: "What babies writers can be about this kind of thing!"

When Wolff arrived to interview the late William Maxwell—who, by virtue of his patience and skill as O'Hara's final editor at *The New Yorker*, emerges as one of the heroes of *The Art of Burning Bridges*—he was surprised to be asked what exactly it was about O'Hara that interested him. "I won't know," Wolff replied, "till I'm finished." It's precisely that lack of self-consciousness, that instinctive, intelligent not-knowing, that allows the reader to surrender to the emotional pull of Wolff's filial defense of this often indefensible man. Does he absolve O'Hara too easily, too reflexively, for his many egregious failings, both personal and artistic? Probably. But Wolff is so clearly dispirited, as a son might be, by these instances of failure—whether it's those awful sex scenes in *From the Terrace*, or the squandered promise in O'Hara's petulant refusal to revise his work, or his drunken violence toward his first wife—that the subsequent eagerness to spin them favorably becomes part of the drama about which we're reading. Far from hobbling the book, Wolff's resolute subjectivity, in the face of evidence he himself has scrupulously assembled, is ultimately what makes *The Art of Burning Bridges* such a moving success on its own partisan terms.

"I was loyal to my father behind his back," Wolff writes in *The Duke of Deception*. "I was a scourge to his face but I wouldn't hear a word said against him by anyone else." It's not a bad stance for a biographer: the child acting out the fantasy of redeeming the parent, offering proof of a loyalty that's beyond the reach of reason. Every writer should have such a champion. The dead are so vulnerable as it is. ■

REVISITING THE ICONS

The intimate photography of Diane Arbus

By Francine Prose

Discussed in this essay:

Diane Arbus: Revelations. Random House, 2003. 336 pages. $100.

Among the ominous hallucinations that terrify the little boy who tricycles manically through the deserted hotel in Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining* is a pair of female twins whose appearance, posture, and affect is a quotation from, or an homage to, Diane Arbus's photograph "Identical Twins, Roselle, N.J. 1967." The little girls in the film are harbingers of the hotel's gory past and the boy's violent future, and the vision of Kubrick's eerie sisters, superimposed upon our own memory of Arbus's portrait, not only telegraphs its sinister import with the eloquent concision of a Chinese character but provides an extra somatic jolt, a shiver of apprehension.

If, however, you actually study the photo—included, in several variant versions, in *Revelations*, a new collection of Diane Arbus's photographs and biographical material—the girls hardly seem like candidates for cameo roles in a horror film, no matter how nuanced and brilliant. The news they bring is not about death but birth; they're p children for DNA, witnesse heredity's power to send us int world fully formed—double that's our luck. It would seem r to deny the fact that there's a herent strangeness about twins. like all serious art, Arbus's wor sists generalization to focus on specific, or, more accurately, ar at a general truth by examini highly particular reality.

And so, if you look closely, seems strangest about these spe twins (aside, perhaps, from t Siberian-husky pale eyes) is they're dressed and coiffed as metrically as the two halves Rorschach blot—even their b pins are in the same places. A began her career as a fashion ph rapher, and everywhere in her traiture she intends details of d hairstyle, makeup, and gesture way someone holds a cigarette example) to communicate as ar lately as they do in life.

Unlike the Kubrick image, w flashes by at a speed that man to evoke the instincts of those tures that credit twins with ne mantic powers, the Arbus ph graph gives us time to contemp the twins' faces, which are act quite lovely and not menacin freakish in the least. The signifi differences in their facial exp sions would be (if we could onl terpret them) keys to the dee mysteries of individual persona and whatever secrets they ha seem less like sources of horror t causes for their own bemusemen

"Identical Twins" has, like nu ous Arbus photos, become an ico which may not be the most fortu fate to befall a work of art. Bec when we call something "icon partly what we mean is that it become possible to see it with looking. And once we can sum an image from memory, reconst it in our minds, interpret it in v that become convenient subst tions for the image itself, we lose our motivation to revisit the tual object as often, and to stud as closely, as we should. We stop turning to it for the periodic sou ings that it can provide on the

Francine Prose is a contributing editor of Harper's Magazine. *Her most recent book is* The Lives of the Muses, *published by* HarperCollins.

of how we, and the world
d us, have changed with age
naturity, and in the course of
(One could argue that the
thing that can happen to a
of art is to wind up on a cock-
apkin, as have Monet's water
and Georgia O'Keefe's poppies;
ily for Arbus fans, it's hard to
ne her portraits of the transves-



in curlers or three geriatric Russ-
midgets becoming the sorts of
as that decorate drink coasters.)
One of the most welcome and cor-
tive aspects of *Revelations* is that it
shes off the obscuring patina of
nography and invites us to see her
in fresh ways, amending and
pening our own partial memories
l surface impressions. Published in
njunction with a major Diane Ar-
s exhibition that debuted this fall
San Francisco, *Revelations* features,
ng with more familiar works,
res of less famous and previously
known photographs, contact
eets, and variant prints of single
ages. The book includes essays by Sandra S. Phillips, who with Elisabeth Sussman co-curated the show at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, and by photographer Neil Selkirk, the exclusive printer for Arbus's estate since her death. Jeff Rosenheim, a curator at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, has contributed capsule biographies of the friends, family members, and colleagues who surrounded and influenced Arbus. Finally, there is an engrossing and, as it were, revelatory Chronology. Compiled by Sussman and by the artist's daughter Doon, it lists the major events in Arbus's life, quotes from her letters and notebooks, and includes biographical documents and artifacts ranging from family photos to grant applications, from her high school report card to her autopsy report.

The fascinating assemblage of history, jottings, and detritus that compose the Chronology hangs solidly on a structure built from the facts of Arbus's life, and from the many photographs in which she herself always looks beautiful and wholly different from image to image until her last years, when exhaustion evidently slowed the mercurial shifts in appearance. The biographical material contradicts the myths that have come to surround her, the aura that has had a great deal—too much—to do with her suicide in 1971. For it seems to be the particular fate of female artist-suicides—Virginia Woolf and Sylvia Plath naturally come to mind—that self-murder lends a sort of romantic and even ghoulish luster to their reputations and causes their art to be seen, selectively and often inaccurately, through the narrow prism of the manner in which they died.

Born in 1923 to the wealthy owners of a Manhattan department store, Diane Nemerov led a cosseted childhood, attended private school, and, at eighteen, married Allan Arbus, whom she'd met when she was fifteen. An extremely close couple with a palpable sexual charge, the Arbuses collaborated on fashion photographs for such venues as *Vogue* and *Glamour*.

Increasingly frustrated by the restrictions of her day job, Arbus—who by then had two daughters—separated from her husband in 1959 and quit the studio in order to pursue her own work. Her inclusion, along with Garry Winogrand and Lee Friedlander, in the 1967 "New Documents" show at New York's Museum of Modern Art boosted her reputation, and from then on she enjoyed a combination (more common then than it is now) of artistic celebrity and penury. She received a Guggenheim grant, published in magazines such as *Esquire*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *New York*, and the London *Sunday Times Magazine*, won an award from the American Society of Magazine photographers, and sold work to numerous museums. Nonetheless, she was always scrambling for money, and she spent her final years living in Westbeth, a fortresslike subsidized-housing complex for artists in the far West Village, where tenancy required that residents earn no more than $8,400 a year.

The admirable, hard-working, resilient, and gifted woman who emerges from these pages bears only

entical twins, Roselle, N.J. 1967" © 1971 The Estate of Diane Arbus, LLC

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an intermittent resemblance to the spectral depressive seeking risky thrills on the dark side and having casual sex with strangers—that is, the Diane Arbus one encounters in the popular imagination and in such books as Patricia Bosworth's 1984 biography. It's true that, in Arbus's occasional writings, profound doubts about her self-worth recur with increasing and chilling frequency over the years, as do accounts of physical illness, rejection, alternating periods of elation and depression. "Energy, some special kind of energy, just leaks out," she records, "and I am left lacking the confidence even to cross the street."

But despite daunting health and financial problems, she worked continuously. The list of professional assignments that sent her to cover events ranging from Tricia Nixon's wedding to an antiwar demonstration is dizzying, and the urgency and gratitude with which she sought and received commissions make more sense when you realize that, at the time, top dollar for a magazine shoot was a few hundred dollars. She interacted productively with several generations of photographic colleagues, from Walker Evans and Helen Levitt (who wrote Arbus's Guggenheim recommendation) to Bruce Davidson and Joel Meyerowitz, and she recorded her responses to influences such as Lartigue, Brassaï, August Sander, and her teacher and mentor, Lisette Model. Driven by the exacting demands of her unique vocation, she nonetheless seems to have had limitless love and energy for her children and a genuine, passionate interest in their individual personalities. Her postcards and notes to them are chatty and sparkling; in one letter to her daughter Amy, Diane bravely, if not entirely convincingly, portrays a grim hospital stay (for hepatitis) as a glorious adventure. "I am having a terrific time in the hospital where I have gone to get all sorts of tests made on my liver and all the rest of my inner workings."

Yet lest we mistake Diane Arbus for a respectable single mother supporting herself as an artist with a taste for eccentric folk, there is one especially astonishing image amid a series of contact strips. The repeated subject is a couple, two lovers: a handsome, bare-chested black man in a pair of white pants, the white woman naked or wearing a transparent nightgown. The caption states simply, without elaboration, "In the frame second from the top of the center strip Diane is lying across the man's lap in place of the woman." There is no point noting the obvious, that the photographer is naked. This, and the inclusion of numerous photos of several models, among them a blond transvestite with terrific cleavage and a "young Brooklyn family," taken in different settings and apparently on different occasions,





acknowledges that Arbus's relat
ships with her subjects were often n
intimate, intense, and prolonged t
for example, Weegee's. All of this
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draw from Arbus's own comme
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the interviews
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Aperture monogr
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camera. But that
is really sort of fu

In its austere sh
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date, and quotat
the Chronology
trays one of th
artists who seen
have been destine
do what they would eventually
complish. A high school paper
Chaucer reads like a prescient an
sis of the preoccupations that w
animate Arbus's work: "His wa
looking at everything is like that
newborn baby; he sees things and
one seems wonderful . . . simply
cause it is unique and it is there. W
he describes the nun's daintines
doesn't seem as if he thinks that
is a standard of good conduct . . . ra
he turns separately to each one
looks on them as whole miracles n
compounds of abstract qualities."

She was, from early on, an
reader, and *Revelations* is filled w
references to writers ranging f
Plato to Rilke to Italo Svevo.
herself wrote beautifully, with a g
gift for narrative and description
for reflecting on her process in w
that are often witty, incisive, an
tantalizingly elusive as the work
self. "I think I must have b
brought up to be a sort of magic
ror who reflects what anyone w
to believe because I can't beli
they believe it, like Atlas holdin
a bubble and groaning." She thou
in grand, ambitious terms, plan
future projects, mapped avenue
investigation, and made simulta

encyclopedic and idiosyncratic subjects to explore: "a certain of young nihilists, a variety of ges, a retirement town in the west, a new kind of Messiah, a ular Utopian cult who plan to ish themselves on a nearby is- Beauties of different ethnic s, certain criminal types, a mi- elite."

n as the Chronology expands iew of the artist herself, the hundreds of familiar and unknown images collected here and the elegance and exactitude with which they are printed refute and dismantle the half-truths about, and kneejerk responses to, her work. In its crudest possible form, one notion of Arbus's *oeuvre* describes a limited palette: high-contrast, confrontational portraits of tormented freaks—a categorization that could be applied, just as unhelpfully, to the majority of Gogol and Dostoevsky characters. Included is a quotation from a memoir by Diane's brother, the poet Howard Nemerov, in which he expresses something uncomfortably close to this received opinion of the work of his sister, "a professional photographer, whose pictures are spectacular, shocking, dramatic, and concentrate on subjects perverse and queer (freaks, professional transvestites, strong men, tattooed men, the children of the very rich)."



As *Revelations* suggests, little could be more reductive, or more unfair. In fact, her range was wide, and included not just portraits but landscapes such as the surrealistic "Clouds on Screen at a Drive-in, N.J. 1960" and the simultaneously ironic and romantic "A Castle in Disneyland, Cal. 1962." Her subjects were not only sideshow performers but dancing couples and newborns, not just anonymous women with an unfortunate relationship to cosmetics but celebrity heartthrobs such as Marcello Mastroianni, not just retarded inmates but geniuses such as Jorge Luis Borges, not just sword swallowers but pretty kids. Reminiscent of certain of Helen Levitt's pictures, "Two Boys Smoking in Central Park, 1962" radiates admiration for the insouciant style and beauty of the boys.

If the light and the lens—and an eye for composition—are a photographer's principal tools, *Revelations*

tract Sheet #6582. The Jewish Giant at home with his parents in the x, N.Y. 1970" © 2003 The Estate of Diane Arbus, LLC. The image rinted is frame #1, bottom center.

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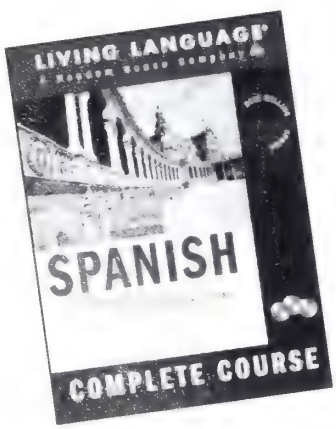
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proves that Arbus could, at will, make her technique invisible or, conversely, achieve theatrically virtuosic effects. Two photographs of a movie screen showing the film *Baby Doll* and another shot of a darkened theater in which a movie is being shown are dazzling visual dissections of how cinema deploys darkness and light. You don't have to understand the full implications of what it means to print on pre-cadmium-purged Agfa Portriga Rapid paper developed in Beers solution to grasp how Neil Selkirk's essay informs what we can plainly see in the photos—namely, that Arbus knew what she was doing and what she wanted, not only on the street but also in the darkroom. She knew how to let the light locate and pick out telling, glittering details: the wedding-cake-like trophy that a muscle builder displays in his Brooklyn dressing room, or the Asian knick-knacks, shiny dress, jewelry, coffee cup, and pill bottle of a widow in her Manhattan apartment.

The contact sheets in *Revelations* function as a quick lesson on Arbus's working methods and on photography in general. The remarkably contradictory information conveyed by each separate frame dispels any notion that photography is about uncovering and telling "the truth." Or perhaps it argues that there is no such thing as a single truth about a complex human being. In only one shot does the sweet, eager-to-please, fussily dressed little boy expose the twisted maniac Arbus depicted in "Child with a Toy Hand Grenade in Central Park, N.Y.C. 1962." And the different poses and fleeting moods caught in multiple images of a single sitting reveal the intelligence and the compositional sense that inspired Arbus to choose the version of "A Jewish Giant at Home with his Parents in the Bronx," which shows the two diminutive (or are they normal-sized?) parents grouped on one side of their son, staring up, in apparent wonder, at their prodigious offspring; other shots, in which the giant stands between his parents with his arms draped around their shoulders, are merely a joke about size—and not, like the final version, a metaphor for the astonishment parents fe ward the fully grown beings can barely believe they created.

In an afterword to the curren ume, Doon Arbus writes t photograph should be allow speak for itself, without explan contextual, or biographical data. indeed, we hardly need a word o in order to respond, cerebrall viscerally, to the intricate mys ousness of what Diane Arbus is s ing us. We can, without help, the visual and thematic obses that lasted throughout her caree fascination with the tension bet how people wish to look and they actually appear (what she c "the gap between intention an fect") as well as with ambiguities types: with people whose appear confounds whatever we had assu to be the signal divisions betv male and female, young and old, b tiful and ugly. Without reading Guggenheim application, in w she outlines a project involving als and ceremonies, we intuit tha was drawn to the rites that estab a community's hierarchies and t en the bonds of a common iden Without learning that she worke journalistic projects on the them love and the family, we gather these subjects were of consum interest to her, objects of a curi that grew in proportion to the tance between her family const tions and our traditional assumpt about how these groups should l And even without noting how r ences to mirrors recur in her n books, we can tell how profou she identified with her subjects, she was always looking for someth of herself in them, and how that i tification and that search prevent pictures from seeming exploita clinical, superior, or judgmental

But even if we believe in the macy of the work itself, in the trality of the object that nimbly el any attempt at summary or inter tation, still we can't much supp our appetite for those document Woolf's diaries, Chekhov's lette in which an artist steps out from

Continued on pag

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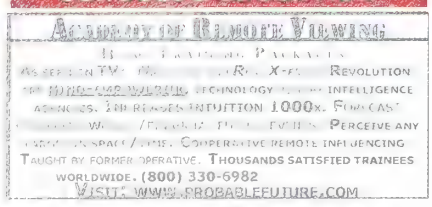
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hind the scrim to comment directly on matters of art, the self, and the world. And so it is with the text of *Revelations*, in which Arbus's own words function as guides of a sort, tactful and unobtrusive, but nonetheless encouraging us to notice things that we otherwise might have overlooked.

One such helpful prompting arises from the fact that many of the extracts from Arbus's writings—indeed, most of the ones set in a larger typeface and given pages of their own—employ the vocabulary of religion and of spiritual autobiography. Scattered throughout are references to conversion, God and the devil, Adam and Eve, divinity, blasphemy, and faith. The book's title and its epigraph are taken from an Arbus quote: "And the revelation was a little like what saints receive on mountains—a further chapter in the history of the mystery . . ." She writes about Mae West, whom she photographed, hearing the voice of God and longing to lift the hemline of the unknown, and describes a roomful of baton twirlers as practicing "a most ascetic mystic moral discipline."

Once you allow your thoughts to be nudged ever so gently in that direction, it becomes easy to spot, along the way, images that evoke the classic tropes of Western and Eastern religious art: the kitschy "Buddhist" altar decorating the Manhattan widow's living room; a nudist Adam and Eve, holding hands in a forest glade; the windblown crucifixion of the "Albino Sword Swallower at a Carnival, Md. 1970"; the benediction offered in "Bishop by the Sea, Santa Barbara, Cal. 1964" by a white-haired old woman who apparently called herself the Bishop, and who is shown wearing a silvery robe and a goofy, homemade miter, extending her arms and holding, in one hand, a cross patterned with smaller crosses. In one of the volume's most moving images, a dominatrix embraces a customer, extracting a moment of tenderness from a presumably ritualized cash transaction and enacting a tableau reminiscent of any number of paintings in which saints (this one improbably clad in a bustier and patterned panty hose) are clothing the naked or comforting the sick at heart.

All this cannot help but influe[nce] our sense of what Arbus was search[ing] for in her art. She remarked that th[ere] were things that no one would see [un]less she photographed them, and [it] obvious, even banal, to note tha[t] taking pictures of people from wh[om] we might instinctively turn away, [Arbus] was not only allowing us to stare [but] insisting that we look beyond the [star]ring physiognomies of what she ten[ds] "singular people." Studying her p[hoto]trait of Ronald C. Harrison, you [may] register "The Human Pincushion," [and] then you may find yourself tryin[g] look beyond the needles—to rem[ove] them from his face, by sheer forc[e of] imagination, in order to figure out w[hat] the guy actually looks like.

In the Chronology, one of Di[ane] Arbus's friends refers to the p[hoto]grapher as being headed "to [the] absolute inside of the inside." C[on]templating her unblinking, fearless p[hoto]traits, we register all the details of [the] presentation and milieu, and yet [we] keep checking this information aga[inst] whatever agreement or demurral [we] read in the subject's eyes, as if this t[ime] we will succeed in seeing beyond th[em].

Looking through *Revelations*—visiting the icons, as it were, in [the] new light of the artist's writings—l[et] gan to contemplate the existenc[e of] something deeper than the psyche [or] the trappings of personality, more p[ow]erful than fear, desire, or aspirati[on] more formative than the residu[e of] personal history and experience [Is] there is such an entity as the sou[l]? could be argued that it is the ultim[ate] object of Arbus's explorations. L[ike] Flannery O'Connor, she employed [the] grotesque as a staging ground in [her] quest for the transcendent.

Even as we grow more restive w[ith] conventional religion, with the in[to]erance and even brutality it so [of]quently exacts in trade for mean[ing] and consolation, Arbus's work [can] seem like the bible of a faith to wh[ich] one can almost imagine subscribin[g]: the temple of the individual and i[ts] ducible human soul, the church of [ob]sessive fascination and compassion [for] those fellow mortals whom, on the [ba]sis of mere surface impressions, [we] thoughtlessly misidentify as [the] wretched of the earth.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32
33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48
49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56
57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64

It Was a Dark and Stormy Knight

By Richard E. Maltby Jr.
(with acknowledgments to Zander of The Listener*)*

A well-known mystery character is the subject of this puzzle. To learn his identity, solve the Clues (written for fun in the style of a murder mystery), and enter the letters of the answers in the appropriately numbered squares. (All letters in the diagram appear twice in the answers.) Then, starting with one of the four central squares, you will be able to trace further instructions by visiting each square once and only once in a succession of Knight's moves (two squares in one direction and one square at right angles: e.g. 14 to 24 to 39 to 45 to 62, etc.). These instructions will lead you to the identity of the mystery character (and the title associated with him).

There are no proper names among the answers. As always, mental repunctuation of a clue is the key to its solution. The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 75.

CLUES

A. The man, moving to off someone, almost makes, like a mass movement. 32-56-44-4-58-53-23-35

B. Time after time, head of assassins let off squeal: 16-62-27-2-64-7

C. "I'm too accepting of being put in the pen. 39-6-29-55-47

D. Beat this! To initiate murder and then do it again! 14-38-21-16-48-21 *(hyphenated)*

E. Not one murder rap will stick if this is the case! 49-17-63-12-15-47

F. Evil! Evil! Evil!" In pursuit is a great G-man. 60-50-64-26-11-7-43-33

G. "Some dope returned the gangster's gun—Excellent, but I'm in a stew: 34-51-36-31-32-1-22

H. The Medical Examiner has misplaced a character." He sings: 9-13-38-48-49-25-28

I. "The grandstanding guy's performance is canceled! 30-4-6-24-59-29-41 *(hyphenated)*

J. He's dangerous to others, frenetic, unstable. 5-56-18-61-35-19-25-57

K. Here's the more horrible proposition: 55-45-42-51-13-26-53

L. Ending goodness prematurely." One left, in effect, . . . 60-5-28-2-20-62-10

M. . . . running and getting pretty . . . 8-46-19-3-45-23-11-1

N. . . . mad at the second murder's outcome. As the sides break up . . . 33-40-52-31-14-54-37

O. . . . dead, empty tears emerge raining. Heads turn away. 15-54-27-22-37

P. One look behind, muscular New York City . . . 63-20-8-18-52-10-17

Q. . . . gang members zip into church. Barbaric sort: 3-12-40-59-57-44-39

R. "Shoot off pieces for money? 30-34-58-9-50-61

S. Least it's a bit of the life we stopped." 41-46-24-42-43-36

Contest Rules: Send completed diagram with name and address to "It Was a Dark and Stormy Knight," *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Entries must be received by November 11. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive one-year subscriptions to *Harper's Magazine*. Winners' names will be printed in the January 2003 issue. Winners of the September puzzle, "Dedicated Dodecahedron," are Gwen Baker, Tallahassee, Florida; Misha Hoekstra, Aarhus, Denmark; and Gene A. Lawrence, Spokane, Washington.



RUNNING WILD

1. In 63 B.C., what Roman statesman was the first to use a Candidacy Treatise, or "Handbook of Electioneering," in his campaign for consulship?

2. What U.S. president bemoaned the "baneful effects" of the party system in his farewell address?

3. What U.S. governor's controversial redistricting plan inspired the word "gerrymander" in 1812?

4. How many constitutional amendments added to the Bill of Rights since 1800 address elections?

5. According to an 1874 Supreme Court ruling, upon whom does the U.S. Constitution confer the right to vote?

6. In 1932, who conducted a public-opinion poll correctly predicting his mother-in-law's election as Iowa's secretary of state?

7. Which former first lady advised first ladies in reelection campaigns to "Do as little talking as humanly possible . . . lean back in the parade car so everybody can see the president. Be sure not to get too fat . . ."?

8. Whose presidential inaugural parade was attended by Apache warrior One Who Yawns?

9. Yale's president predicted that "The Bible would be cast into a bonfire . . . our wives and daughters dishonored" if who was elected U.S. president?

10. What U.S. president took office months after losing both the popular and the electoral vote?

11. The face of what U.S. president was the first to appear on campaign buttons?

12. For what presidential candidate did talk-show host Jerry Springer serve as a campaign adviser in 1968?

13. What U.S. president was the first to appoint his campaign media adviser to a White House job?

14. What presidential candidate said, "The people might be better served if a party purchased a half hour of radio and TV silence during which the audience would be asked to think quietly for themselves"?

Contest Rules: Send numbered answers with name and address to "Quiz," Harper's Magazine, 666 Broadway, New York, NY 10012. If you already subscribe to H er's, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Entries must be received by November 14. The sender of the first correct set of answers opened at random w ceive a one-year subscription to Harper's Magazine. The winner's name will be printed in the December issue. The answers to last month's quiz, "Hearts and M *appear on page 76.*

Research by Andie Pichet. Illustration by Ralph Ri



Two refugee girls at risk of joining the hundreds of thousands of child soldiers worldwide.
Photo: Peter Marlow/Magnum

imagine

(nothing to kill or die for)

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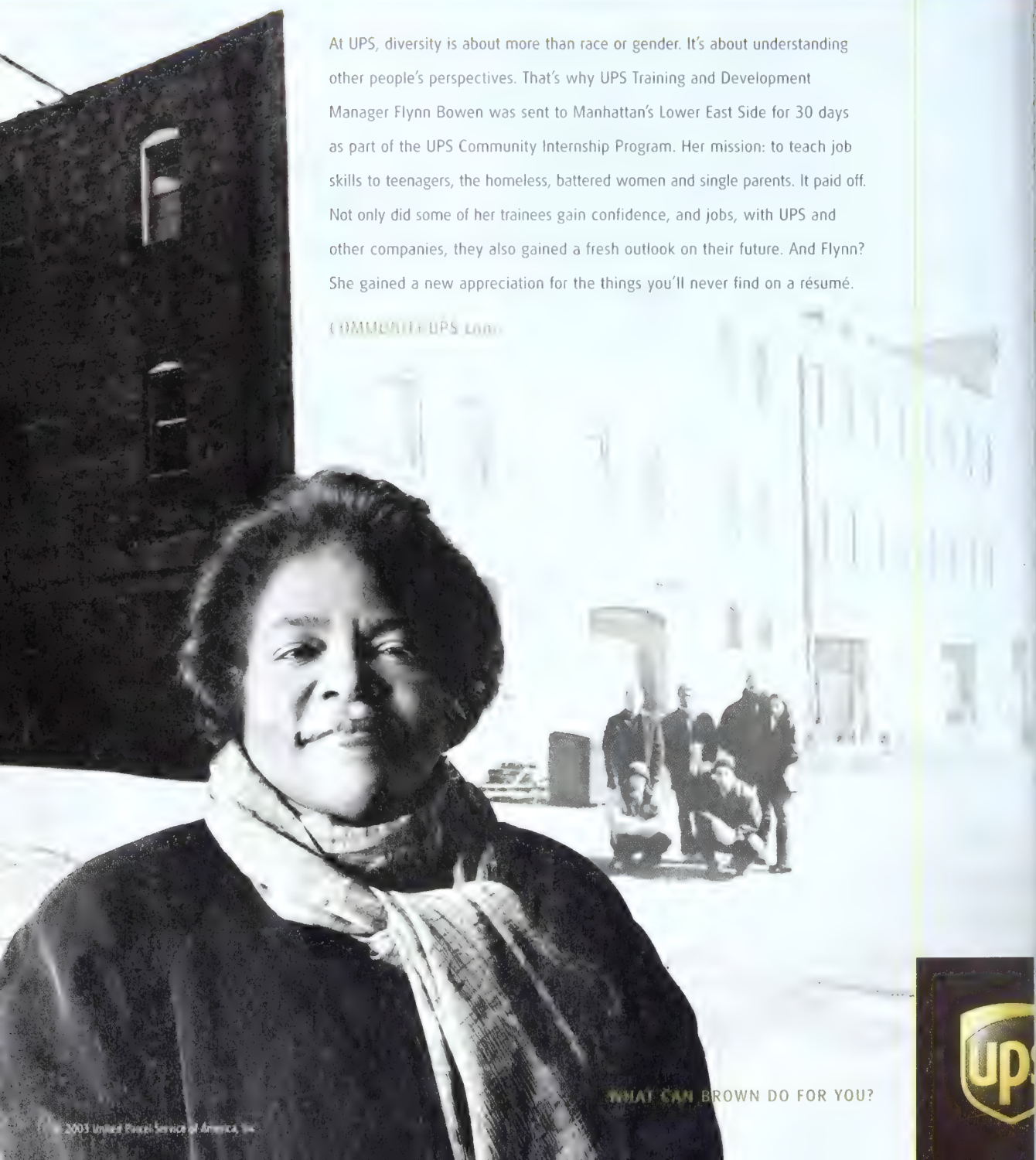
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LETTERS

Jones and the Giant Impeachment

Gene Lyons falsely accuses me of journalistic deception in "The Media Is the Message" [Reviews, October]. He claims that I concealed "documentary evidence" that undermined Paula Jones's lawsuit in 1994, only to reveal that I had this evidence buried all along in a footnote in my 1999 book, *Uncovering Clinton*. The evidence in question was Jones's personnel records showing that she received a favorable job performance and a merit increase months after what she described as a humiliating encounter in a hotel room with then governor Bill Clinton. I first reported these records in a May 13, 1994, *Washington Post* article and noted that they "may undercut her claims" that she suffered on the job as a result of what happened between her and Clinton. This is exactly the same information that appeared in *Uncovering Clinton*. Job discrimination, in any case, was only one element of Jones's lawsuit. The central thrust was that C ton's conduct, in and of itself, stituted on the-job harassment.

Lyons also misstates the resol of the Jones case. He writes th was dismissed. In fact, Jones's la appealed to the Eighth Circuit C of Appeals, and oral arguments heard in October 1998. At point, Clinton's lawyers, fearing Jones's claims were about to be stated, offered to settle. The didn't end until the following m when Clinton paid Jones $850,0 exchange for Jones's agreeme withdraw the suit.

Michael Isikoff
Washington, D.C.

Gene Lyons responds.

Silly me. I plead guilty to u estimating Michael Isikoff's d genuousness. Like Nabokov's *L* Isikoff's *Uncovering Clinton* h unreliable first-person narrator a hidden agenda. And a Nabokov's *Pale Fire*, the real emerges in the footnotes, whic knowledge that persons called in the book's text may have tol truth. What I failed to grasp is closely Isikoff's newspaper re followed the same pattern.

According to his book, Isi knew on the day Paula Jones

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awsuit that her claims of job dis-
ination were materially false.
ce the murky "he said, she said"
nony surrounding the events at
e Rock's Excelsior Hotel, he
orts to possess straightforward
mentary evidence bearing di-
y on her truthfulness. "As my
ection of Jones's personnel
ds had already established," his
ale footnote reads, "she had in
received at least one merit in-
se after the incident." He pro-
s to speculate that her lawyers
simply bungled "in their rush" to
t the statute of limitations." Yet
off's May 7, 1994, front page
hington Post article announcing
lawsuit's filing gives no hint of
discrepancy.

ikoff's May 13, 1994, *Washing-
Post* article, headlined "Christ-
Coalition Forms Legal Expenses
d for Clinton Accuser," ap-
ed on page A11, the newspaper
ivalent of a footnote. Attribut-
doubts about Jones's credibility
White House aides and some
inist leaders," the article men-
is the matter only in the next to
paragraph, which consists of a
gle sentence stating that after
encounter with Clinton, Jones
ceived favorable performance
luations in August 1991 and a
percent merit increase." The ar-
e ends by citing a claim of "re-
atory punishment" subsequent to
t pay raise.

By January 13, 1997, Isikoff had
tten a *Newsweek* cover story ac-
ing the "establishment press" of
"elitist attitude" toward Paula
nes. Her false job-discrimination
ims alluded to in his book went
mentioned. Seven months later,
orneys Joe Cammarata and Gil
vis petitioned the court to be re-
ved from representing Jones, and
rned Jones that her inability to
ove intentional infliction of emo-
onal distress would cause her to
e at trial. After granting Clinton a
mmary judgment dismissing the
se on precisely those grounds, U.S.
strict Judge Susan Webber Wright
ve the two attorneys one third of
e $850,000 settlement the presi-
nt's lawyers agreed to during the
onica Lewinsky affair, when the



Photo: Tony Rollo Newsweek

A witty, just, and affectionate portrait of
the impossibly belligerent writer
[drunk, he got into a fistfight with a midget—and lost]
who miraculously kept his friends,
who wrote *Appointment in Samarra*
and equally brilliant short stories,
[more than anyone else in the history of *The New Yorker*]
not to mention *Pal Joey* and *Butterfield 8.*

THE ART OF BURNING BRIDGES

A LIFE OF JOHN O'HARA

"GEOFFREY WOLFF has written a remembrance that's given me the greatest kind of anticipatory joy a reader can have:
With this odd, provocative, immensely thoughtful and illuminating account...he has sent me back to O'Hara's books with a renewed and refreshed interest."
—André Bernard, *The New York Observer*

"Wolff's biography sets for itself an O'Hara-esque goal and meets it with a brilliance worthy of its subject on the best day of his best year."
—Tom Nolan, *L.A. Times*

"He has accomplished an extraordinary feat: He has written a touching biography of a pugnacious and difficult man ...There's not a dull moment in the book...A great pleasure."
—John Skoyles, *Associated Press*

"Passionate and strongly argued"—William H. Pritchard, *The Chicago Tribune*

"One of the most readable guides ever written on the making of good fiction...
He leaves no doubt that O'Hara's literary reputation is more than ripe for rehabilitation."
—Ariel Swartley, *Los Angeles* magazine

"Wolff is able to get a fix on O'Hara that O'Hara was never able to get on himself
...[The book is about] what it means to be a writer: how writing gets done."
—Jonah Raskin, *Washington Post Book World*

"A keen, stylis[illegible] acerbic port[illegible]

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case was appealed. As with the impeachment, I assumed everybody knew all about it.

Poetic Injustice

Although I agree with Daniel Anderson's assessment of the technical flatness and moralistic simplicity of Jahan Ramazani's identity-driven *Norton Anthology of Modern and Contemporary Poetry* selections ["Sounds and Sweet Airs," Reviews, September], his application of W. H. Auden's Prospero/Ariel paradigm is trite. This schema may have had relevance in Auden's reading of Robert Frost, but subjecting a poetry anthology to this formula hardly does justice to the variety of American poems Ramazani strives to represent.

With such narrow expectations, Anderson disregards the more challenging poetics that slip past the categories of "beauty" and "truth." To dismiss Michael Palmer's work as "driven by spastic word association and a thoroughly self-satisfied display of alliteration," for example, reflects an impatient reviewer skimming only for the surface glare of formal control and recycled wisdom.

Nathan Hoks
Iowa City

According to Daniel Anderson, Jahan Ramazani has slashed the entries of Richard Wilbur and Howard Nemerov in the new Norton anthology to accommodate writers who represent a particular ethnic background or sexual orientation. From a pedagogical perspective, Anderson is right. Poetry anthologies should emphasize the elements in poetry that make it aesthetically relevant and disregard unpoetic postmodern political and social agendas.

Michael Colson
Santa Barbara, Calif.

Daniel Anderson performs the over-rehearsed ideological gesture of imagining himself to speak from an objective position; to be uniquely capable of distinguishing between "truth and beauty" on the one hand, and heavy-handed, tedious politics on the other. It is precisely this ruse, what Roland Barthes describes as the insulting myth of "the great family of man," that has justified the exclusion of writers such as Zora Neale Hurston from serious scholarship.

Julia Shaw
New York City

In the third edition of *The Norton Anthology of Modern and Contemporary Poetry*, I aimed to provide a wide-ranging and inclusive selection of the best poetry written in English since Walt Whitman. Because of the sharp divisions in the contemporary poetry world, I knew I would irk partisans of the avant-garde left *and* of the traditionalist right. Indeed, my anthology has been attacked for including too many formalists and too few experimentalists. Daniel Anderson's limited and sectarian review drops the other shoe.

Anderson faults me, rather predictably, for giving insufficient space to postwar traditionalists. He proceeds to criticize my introductions for foregrounding the sexual identities of writers such as Carol Ann Duffy and Henri Cole, though homosexuality is a preoccupation of their poems. Relying on the New Critical commonplaces that dominated U.S. poetry and criticism in the 1950s, he laments the poets' increasing exploration of sexuality and ethnicity and "a growing fascination with the raw experience of language," as evidenced by the avant-garde.

Contrary to Anderson's assertions, I embrace more than a few postwar poets who have brilliantly reworked inherited forms. I retain and update Dylan Thomas, Donald Davie, Richard Wilbur, Anthony Hecht, Howard Nemerov, Donald Justice, John Hollander, Thom Gunn, and Marilyn Hacker. I expand W. H. Auden, Elizabeth Bishop, Robert Hayden, Amy Clampitt, Philip Larkin, James Merrill, Derek Walcott, Tony Harrison, Seamus Heaney, and Paul Muldoon. And I include, for the first time, May Swenson, Louise Bennett, Derek Mahon, Les Murray, Michael Longley, Agha Shahid Ali, Carol Ann Duffy, and Henri Cole. They jostle alongside poets of the "open" form, from Allen Ginsberg Sylvia Plath to John Ashbery Jorie Graham.

Anderson gripes that the anth gy has grown overlarge because marginal and fashionable writ But many of the new pages have fact, gone to major writers, like W lace Stevens, Ezra Pound, Maria Moore, T. S. Eliot, Langs Hughes, Hart Crane, Robert Lov Frank O'Hara, and Adrienne Ric

What Anderson calls the "sig cant and lamentable imbalance my idea of contemporary poetry ter describes his own. Despite t massive influence, he begrudges increased space given to Ginsb Plath, and Ashbery. Favoring "tr over "beauty," he would make room for Sherman Alexie, Ca Song, and Marilyn Chin, tho they inventively—at times hun ously—hybridize Euro-American ditions with ethnic inheritan Nor would he include avant-ga poets experimenting with poetic guage and form, such as Su Howe, Lyn Hejinian, and Mich Palmer. To limit an anthology Anderson's aesthetic—self-effac sexually discreet, ethnically s pressed, formally traditional— w be to diminish beyond recogni the great, booming babel of cont porary poetry.

Jahan Ramazani
Charlottesville, Va.

Daniel Anderson responds:

For a minute there, Jahan mazani even had *me* convinced my review was irrelevant on acc of my right-wing ideology and "self-effacing, sexually discreet, nically suppressed, formally tra tional" aesthetic. Ramazani's le although it attempts to disparage credibility as a reviewer, does li to address the questions I raise ab his editorial judgment.

I do not "begrudge" the increa space he gives to Ginsberg, Pla and Ashbery, nor would I advoc an anthology that downplays th undeniably significant influen Rather, I lament Ramazani's d sion to *reduce* simultaneously the

of poets such as Anthony
ıt, Howard Nemerov, and
ard Wilbur, who worked in tra-
ıal forms even as their contem-
ries pursued more exotic and
aesthetics. I observed that the
s occupied by Ginsberg, Plath,
Ashbery have doubled to a total
xty-five, and that those of
ıt, Nemerov, and Wilbur have
diminished by half to fifteen.
, Ramazani really want to sug-
that slicing the space occupied
lecht, Nemerov, and Wilbur is
ɔracing" them?
lthough it may be true that
ri Cole and Carol Ann Duffy of-
write about homosexuality, it is
their preoccupation with it I re-
but Ramazani's. Many of his in-
luctions for the anthology's
nger poets place as much of a
ium on who poets are as on the
ry they write.
amazani claims that he "aimed
rovide a wide-ranging and inclu-
selection of the best poetry writ-
in English since Walt Whitman
is anthology." If Ramazani truly believes that, for example, Sherman Alexie's poem "Evolution" and Marilyn Chin's "How I Got that Name" fall into this category, and that they meet the same standard for greatness as "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry," "September 1, 1939," "At the Fishhouses," "Skunk Hour," and "The Schooner *Flight*," his expectations for poetry written in the next few decades are, in my opinion, sorrowfully grim.

It Ain't So

If Joyce Hackett ["The Reawakening," Reviews, October] were to reread my article in *Harper's Magazine* ["Say it Ain't So, Huck," Criticism, January 1996] about Mark Twain and Harriet Beecher Stowe, she would not distort the point I made, which was that, in my opinion, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is not as great as it has been portrayed by critics, especially those writing during the Cold War, and that Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is not as bad as it has been portrayed by critics who dismissed it for decades as being unworthy of inclusion in the American canon. I did not write anywhere in the essay that *Uncle Tom's Cabin* "was a greater novel than *Huck Finn* because it denounces the institution of slavery," though I did remark that Stowe's more uncompromising and complex analysis of slavery better suited my taste.

In a subsequent storm of letters to the editor, my right to like *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and find *Huck Finn* boring was challenged in every way, but the fact still remains—a reader is free to prefer one novel over another, since the essential characteristic of being a reader is freedom of taste. If it is indeed true that my essay has been "widely taught and discussed in the academy," as Hackett states, then perhaps it has achieved the only thing I intended it to achieve: more readers for a worthy and important novel, which is always a good thing.

Jane Smiley
Carmel Valley, Calif.





AL GREEN

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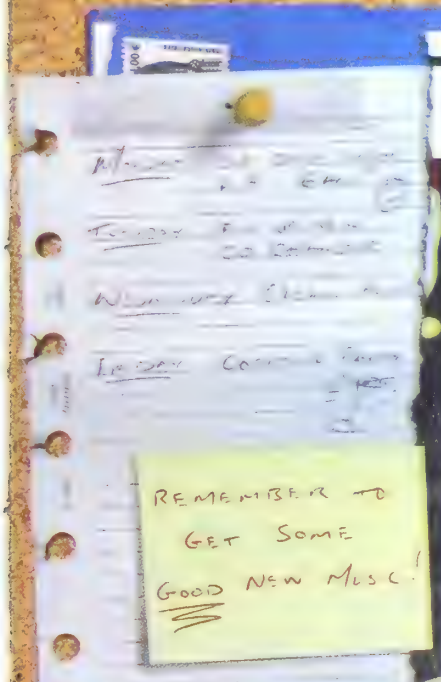




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NOTEBOOK

Pilgrim's progress

By Lewis H. Lapham

u come to my funeral,
ıe dressed in red.
ıse I got no business being dead.
—Langston Hughes

Neither has George Plimpton any business being dead. Maybe r, when or if he could spare the e from one of the other projects which he was embarked; certainly now or yet. Such was the feeling ong those of his friends (850 of m, all eligible for the adjective st") who showed up for his party October 14 at Cipriani on East ty-second Street in Manhattan. e party had been on the calendar six months, billed as "a revel" celating the fiftieth birthday of *The is Review* that George never had d of editing since he sharpened first blue pencil aboard a barge ored to a quay four miles downeam from the Louvre. He died in sleep on the last Friday of Sepnber, at the age of seventy-six, in apartment alongside the East Rivin New York, six miles upstream m the Brooklyn Bridge.

The altered circumstance changed e party into a requiem scored for nce band and indoor fireworks disıy. The guests came dressed in the uivalencies of red. Garrison Keil- introduced a literary program renbling an especially amiable issue *The Paris Review*—selected poetry ıd prose declaimed by E. L. Docrow, Billy Collins, Alec Baldwin, ıd Lee Grant. Kurt Vonnegut proısed the toast. "If anyone can come ıck from the dead and write about ," he said, "it will have to be eorge Plimpton."

None present doubted the proposition because the room was so crowded with affectionate remembrance of George that it was as if he had already come back, late as usual (delayed in traffic or detained by customs) but surely somewhere en route, bringing a sack of odd anecdote and eccentric observation—death really quite different than one had been led to believe (a matter of changing trains or camera lenses rather than a final destination), the climate Mediterranean but invigorated by a heavy snowfall every second Tuesday, all the birds and animals capable of speech, the Atlantic seagulls better conversationalists than the London pigeons or the Chinese cranes.

If by midnight George was still nowhere to be seen in the flesh, he was everywhere present in the word, which spoke to the truth of the benediction pronounced by W. H. Auden (an occasional and valued contributor to *The Paris Review*) on the ancient alliance between reader and writer:

Time that is intolerant
Of the brave and innocent,
And indifferent in a week
To a beautiful physique,
Worships language and forgives
Everyone by whom it lives.

Film projections came and went on an immense screen behind the stage at the south end of the room larger than most Broadway theaters, the narrative montage matched to the chapters of George's long and happy pilgrimage from one thing to the next—George in Paris at the age of twenty-six, at the Café Tournon with Evan Connell, William Pène DuBois, and a mysterious lady known as "Gloria the beautiful cloak model"; George ten years later in New York, telling a joke to Jackie Kennedy, considering a manuscript with Marianne Moore; George in the uniform of a New York Yankee, frowning at the bat in the hand of Willie Mays; George on a football field and a flying trapeze; George in Hollywood being taught by John Wayne how to walk into a gunfight and a saloon; George alone at a desk with what he called "the melancholy task of writing."

The montage alluded to nearly every one of George's more than thirty published books about the graceful art of losing the ball or the match (*Out of My League, Shadow Box, Paper Lion*), as well as to his wanderings off the page in company with the famous names that embodied the sense and sensibility of an age coincident with the second half of the century defined, even by French historians, as America's own. As the pictures passed across the screen (still photographs, scraps of television and movie footage, old postcards, stylish magazine portraits) they evoked among the assembled guests the echoes of long ago delight. Everybody remembered something else, another scene in another story testifying to George's generosity of spirit and kindness of heart. Some people mentioned their first meeting with George—on African safari in search of the white gorilla, poolside at one of Hugh Hefner's lingerie parties, playing [illegible] his own composition (his never-yet-recorded "Opus One") on a piano at the Apollo Theater in Harlem, at

the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles on the night that Robert Kennedy was shot. Other people referred to the last time they saw George—two days ago on a bicycle in Central Park, yesterday with an architect's blueprint of Ernest Hemingway's house in Havana, where George expected to find, if it hadn't been mauled by mice, the unpublished epilogue to *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. For five hours the recollections of time past but not lost filled the vast room like a drift of balloons held aloft in the updrafts of fond and corroborating memory.

I expect that George would have been well enough pleased with the proceedings to bestow upon the evening the honor that he was apt to express in the word "blowout." He understood the science of giving parties and knew that what was important was the spirit in which the wine was poured, not what the wine had cost, or where it came from, or whether it was temporarily housed in Venetian glass. For forty years his apartment on East Seventy-second Street had served as the headquarters tent for the New York literary crowd, the place where people went to redress the sorrows of Grub Street. For forty years no week went by in which George didn't give at least one party (sometimes preceded by invitations, often extemporaneously) in praise of a newly published book—a first novel, a volume of essays, an epic poem, a revised biography, a collection of short stories, a translation from the medieval Latin.

It didn't matter how many people were present—sometimes twenty-odd, sometimes upwards of 200—nor did it matter whether any celebrities were to be found, like Easter eggs, under the pool table or asleep in a chair. People didn't come with the thought of reading their names in the next day's papers. They came for the fun of it, drawn to the light of George's insatiable curiosity and irreducible enthusiasm. His manner was patrician, a consequence of his having been born in the arrondisement of old money and educated at schools (St. Bernards, Exeter, Harvard, Cambridge) that teach a diffident and self-deprecating tone of voice; his temperament was democratic. He valued people not because they were rich or famous but because they were his fellow pilgrims, outward bound, as he was outward bound, on the road to who knows where. One never knew who among them—the third baseman, the zoologist, the poet, the first violinist—might stumble upon something great.

I trace my first encounter with George to a winter evening in the Kennedy Administration, both of us standing with drinks in our hands in the long drawing room on East Seventy-second Street, looking out the window at a tugboat coming upriver against the current. I remember him correcting my impression of an author about whom I'd said something edged with sarcasm. You don't know enough about the man, George said; you forget that his great-great-grandfather commanded the Union artillery at Antietam, and you haven't read his monograph on the three-toed sloth. The remark was characteristic. During all the years in which I counted George a friend, I never once heard him speak unkindly of anyone with whom he was acquainted. He preferred the favorable interpretations of human nature, and he would listen to no malicious gossip—would walk away from any conversation in which it surfaced like a dead fish or a stale hockey sock.

During the two weeks between George's death and the revel at Cipriani, the New York news media bloomed with appreciative farewells from well-known literary figures (Norman Mailer, Robert Silvers, Peter Matthiessen, Elaine Kaufman, others too numerous to mention) who touched upon the same talents and traits of character (gracious after-dinner speaker, indefatigable optimism, intrepid bird-watcher, boundless energy, witty raconteur) on which, over the course of our friendship, I had come to rely as if upon the proverbial light at the end of the not always metaphorical tunnel. But of all the stories told about George's many qualities, the one I like the best I heard on Leonard Lopate's radio program from a c
who identified herself simp
Francie. She had graduated
Bennington College in 1975, a
way of doing a favor for a fr
somehow associated with the sc
George staged a fireworks sho
the commencement ceremony
instructed the Grucci famil
Long Island, for many years his
plier of bespoke pyrotechnic
make a rocket specific to each n
ber of the departing class—diff
assortments of color, varied dur
and shape of burst. As each stu
was handed his or her diplo
George fired off the custom-tai
thunder, meanwhile shouting, a
top of his voice, the name of
newly minted alumna or alu
exploding downrange into the a
ished future.

George conceived of the futu
an empty canvas or a blank p
ripe with heroic possibility and
er further away than the next
guess, the next play from scrimm
the next sentence. What delig
him were the acts of courage an
telligence in whatever costume
made themselves manifest, and
city of New York he regarded a
Circus Maximus to which perf
ers of every conceivable descrip
came to enlarge—by a fraction
inch or second, or maybe with a
ter choice of word or more gra
chord progression—the playing
of the human imagination.

As a writer George placed his
in verbs and nouns, careful not t
the narrative go astray in
flowerbeds of showy adjectives.
the same reason he was equally
as an editor, careful not to mes
somebody else's prose with dec
tive improvements. "Editing,
once said, "is much simpler t
writing. The image that come
mind is one of a sculptor (the ed
improving on the clay figure of a
bit (a writer's manuscript), ju
tuck here and there to make it
ter: the ear needs to be fixed up,
maybe the author forgot to put a
on it."

Taking to heart that same inst
tion, I can think of no happier
ing for this eulogy to an abs
friend than George's own descrip

place in which, with any luck, w finds himself admiring the nd remarking on the weird va- f musical instruments. Twenty ago I asked several New York rs to contribute to *Harper's zine* their notions, in a thou- words or less, of the perfect bal- of form and content otherwise n as Paradise. George proposed lscape more nearly akin to the cal Arcadia imagined by the nt Greeks than to the baroque ns of Heaven and Hell dreamed the preachings of the Christian h. The elegance and humor of dea embodies George's civiliz- pirit, and if I've subtracted a entences from the original text, lone no more than find the rab- the hat:

n island. Something along the lines e Seychelles—with a coastline of te rocks, like Henry Moore sculp- , rising out of a warm tropical sea. few incidentals: a large and per- y balanced boomerang, some t-colored bathtub toys with small ellers and keys to wind them up, ngredients and tools for making and g off large aerial fireworks (along an instruction booklet), athletic pment, and a substantial amount of ng gear, including a number of l red and white bobs.

he island compound would feature ning pavilion among the palm trees, hall, rather, a somewhat baronial ce with excellent acoustics, so that versations, even very whispery ones, ld not drift up into the rafters and lost among the ceremonial flags. On d would be an excellent butler, quite f, but faithful, and willing to help the fireworks.

The compound would contain a nber of guest houses. These small shroomlike structures, set apart from h other, would all have views of the . They would be well appointed in- , each one having a white fan turn- slowly on the ceiling and a large celain washbasin with a neatly fold- fluffed-up towel alongside. Every af- noon I would know my guests were ng installed into these accommoda- ns by the sounds of the houseboys uttering excitedly among themselves as y carried the baggage from the quay.

I would not see my guests before dinner, my own day being quite somnolent. Oh, a little boomerang tossing, perhaps, the construction of an aerial bomb or two, some bait-casting in the mangrove swamps, and surely a bit of a tub before dinner. (It's not that I would feel unfriendly toward my guests, simply that my personal pursuits, especially sitting in a tub winding up a small blue tugboat, would not be especially conducive to their companionship.)

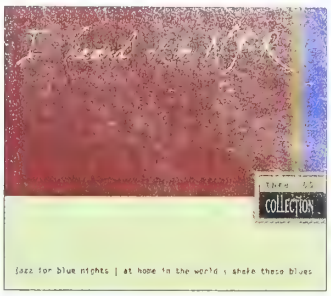
The guest list would be composed of people I have never met. Not only that, they would be dead. Ludwig II, the mad king of Bavaria, dined alone with busts of various dignitaries—Louis XIV and Marie Antoinette among them—set on chairs down the length of the banquet hall at Linderhof, and carried on an animated if slightly one-sided conversation with them. My guests would be the real shades.

Many of them would be seagoing people—the captain of the deserted brigantine Mary Celeste*; Joshua Slocum, who also disappeared at sea; Richard Haliburton, who may have fallen off the stern of a Chinese junk; and Captain Kidd, to discuss the whereabouts of his vanished treasure. Shubert, to inquire about the "Lost Symphony," and perhaps to persuade him to play a bit on the stand-up Yamaha in the corner.*

Some of my dinner partner choices would be more quixotic. I've always wanted to know why Thomas Cromwell, Oliver's great-uncle, was so anxious to get Henry VIII to marry Anne, the daughter of the duke of Cleves. (The king took one look and hated her. The marriage took place but was never consummated, and Cromwell lost his head. Frightful error of judgment.) So he could have a brandy or two at dinner and perhaps give an odd little talk on matchmaking. And General James Longstreet. Why, I would ask, did he not roll up Cemetery Ridge when he had the chance?

I don't know how much of this it would be possible to take. So my Arcadia would also have a swift means of escape—preferably a drug-runner's cigarette boat with a deep rumble of a motor in it, which, after a time, would tie up at a New York pier where, waiting in a fine mist, there would be a yellow cab. ■

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HARPER'S INDEX

Chance that a civilian federal worker is employed by the Department of Homeland Security : 1 in 12
Number of new government jobs created since 2000 : 721,000
Number of private-sector jobs lost since then : 2,692,000
umber of times Democratic presidential candidates used the word "jobs" in their first four debates after Labor Day : 111
Number of times they mentioned Bill Clinton : 36
Chance that a mention of Clinton was made by Wesley Clark : 0
te on which Arnold Schwarzenegger met with Enron CEO Kenneth Lay to discuss California's energy policy : 5/17/01
hances that a participant in California's September 24 gubernatorial debate grew up speaking English at home : 2 in 5
ercentage change last year in the number of applications for the most common U.S. professional-worker visas : –40
Percentage change since last year in the annual U.S. cap on such visas : –66
Number of refugees the United States accepted in the last year, expressed as a percentage of the legal maximum : 40
Rank of 2002 among fiscal years since 1980 in which the fewest refugees entered the United States : 1
Percentage of U.S. Muslims who said in 2000 that they would vote for George Bush : 40
Percentage who say this today : 2
in which a terrorist threat against "S. Claus," the "Prime Minister" of the North Pole, was declassified by the CIA : 1997
ys after a 1961 meeting with Khrushchev that President Kennedy leaked claims of U.S. nuclear-missile superiority : 29
Months after those leaks that nuclear missiles were assembled in Cuba under Khrushchev's order : 10
ending Winston Churchill approved in 1943 to research making an aircraft carrier out of ice and wood pulp : $136,000
Estimated number of artificial Christmas trees displayed in U.S. homes each year for every real one : 2.6
Percentage change between 2001 and 2002 in G.I. Joe sales : +46
Percentage change since 1999 in the number of desertions from the U.S. Army : +36
Average number of U.S. soldiers wounded in Iraq each day since the invasion began : 9.2
Average number killed : 1.6
Average number of Iraqi civilians killed by gunfire in Baghdad each day last August : 17
Percentage of Iraq's urban areas with access to potable water a year ago and today, respectively : 92, 60
Percentage of Baghdad's citizens asked to participate in a Gallup poll last September who agreed to do so : 98
Average percentage of Americans asked to participate in Gallup polls who do : 40
mber of citizen reports on file at the North American Reporting Center for Amphibian Malformations : 2,240 (see page 31)
Average number of gallons of blood spilled to produce one mink coat : 1.65
Percentage change since last year in the number of U.S. millionaires : –3
Percentage change since 2001 in the number of U.S. families in poverty : +6
Amount by which the number of U.S. deaths in 2000 from lack of medical insurance exceeded those from AIDS : 967
ctor by which antibiotic treatment before the age of 6 months increases the chance of developing asthma by age 7 : 2.6
Average price paid per metric ton last September at the first U.S. auction of carbon-emission allowances : 98¢
Factor by which the average price paid on Europe's open market exceeds this : 11
Percentage change in the price of a share of Edison Schools stock since February 2001 : –95
Number of New York City eighth-graders deemed "proficient" on last year's end-of-summer-school reading exam : 0
Percentage of those who took the test who were promoted to the ninth grade : 78
Number of candidates who ran for a school-board seat in the South Mississippi County School District last fall : 1
Number of votes he won : 0

Figures are adjusted for inflation and are the latest available as of October 2003. Sources are listed on page 102.
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READINGS

[Paean]

THE SPINSTERS OF ELD

By Richard Selzer, from the Spring issue of West Branch.

The greatest loss to American education was the disappearance from the classroom of the Irish spinster schoolteacher. Pedagogy has yet to recover from the blow. Time was when in every Irish family there was one daughter who dreamed of rising above the general ignorance and sooty poverty that were the lot of the recently immigrated. With no little fear did she announce that no, she would not go into the mills and factories; she would not enter the convent; she would not place herself in "service" or the department stores. Instead, she would go to Normal School, the low-cost system of teacher training that existed throughout the Northeast. To learning, culture, and refinement she took with all the gusto of long deprivation. It was not without cost, for the learning lifted her above her peers and made her unsuitable as wife to one of the hardworking Irishmen who were all but illiterate. Were she to marry such a man, one who saw art and culture as objects of derision (never mind that the derision likely sprang from rage and frustration), bitterness and estrangement would be her lot. And so she remained single and, in all likelihood, virginal. The wealth of her unrealized passion was there to be delivered intact in the classroom and lavished on her pupils.

Upon receiving her certificate from Normal School, the Irish spinster came to reign in the classroom, transforming that stuffy, overheated, malodorous place into very Heaven. Her presence at the front of the classroom was a rebuke to all that was base and ordinary. Year after year, she humanized us with her noble love of learning and her instinct that if you arouse a perception of beauty and truth in a child, you will create a better person.

Sharp of eye and ear she was, her senses growing more acute with age. From the front of the room, she could hear the click of a mouse's tooth against a grain of rice in the coat closet at the rear. Coiffed, perfumed, and beautifully dressed, she was an eternal mystery. We were besotted with her, died to know how old she was, spent hours guessing all the way from twenty to forty-seven. From where she sat, the sight of her pupils could not have been edifying. Whose spirits could possibly be lifted by a roomful of thin dirty necks and ribbons of snot? Called upon to recite, Reluctance Personified would stand beside his desk, give a hitch to his britches, run the back of his hand under his nose, and begin:

> The shades of night were falling fast,
> As through an Alpine village passed
> A youth who bore through snow and ice
> A banner with the strange device,
> Excelsior!

Miss Feerick had a way of looking out the window while you were reciting, then saying "Thank you" in a manner that let you know you'd performed abominably. Miss Maroney

was a congenital knitter. She knitted in the classroom; she knitted at the library; she knitted on the trolley. She would have knitted at the foot of the Cross. Miss Vaughan, long after she'd gone stone deaf, continued to call out "Silence!" from time to time, out of sheer habit. Miss McInerney was a large woman of the type called "handsome," which I have since come to recognize as faint praise for a plain woman with good posture. Indeed, she carried herself well and was gifted with body English to an astonishing degree. She had a way of lengthening her nose when she wished to express disapproval and could cause her bosom to swell to alarming proportions at the least lapse of decorum. Miss McInerney's method of teaching was to waft small puffs of temperament over the class.

"You must all sit up perfectly straight," she admonished. "The compass needle must always point due north." And she would walk up and down the aisles tapping each spine into alignment with a yardstick. "It is scandalous the way children are nowadays permitted to tilt in all directions. I cannot think for the disorder."

On the last day of school, I muttered the word "hag." It was amazing how good it made me feel to say it. But I had been overheard, and was sent to the principal's office for a stroke with the ferrule. I thought my punishment easily worth it, only to find out that, come September, Miss McInerney had been transferred to the next grade higher. I was to pay for that "hag" all year long. Ever since, I've learned to keep my tongue "engaoled . . . doubly portcullised with my teeth and lips." That's how to get along in grammar school, matrimony, and a hundred other predicaments. It is entirely due to Miss McInerney that I have never learned when to use *which* and when to use *that*. Even now, I will spend a whole morning changing all my *that*'s back into *which*'s.

Of all the subjects taught at School 5, spelling was prime. Frankly, I'm opposed to any effort toward unanimity in spelling. Surely it takes a good deal of the charm out of writing always to spell a word in exactly the same way. Sir Thomas Browne's wife, Dorothy, wrote letters whose chief appeal lies in her intuitive vision of how a word should look on the page. She liked her "sheus" to be "eythar punke or blew."

I recall the winter that altogether too much was made of the twenty-ninth of February by Miss Rogers, she of the volcanic temper. We feared her as we would have feared one of the Weird Sisters in *Macbeth*.

"The twenty-ninth of February!" she rhapsodized. "'Tis rare as the visit of an angel, and more precious than the other three hundred and sixty-five." There is little question that Miss Rogers was certifiable. But then, what is insanity? This same Miss Rogers rendered "The Lost Chord" in a chesty contralto au jus that sent the very ink in our wells undulating. The lyre of Orpheus was not more expressive. No one alive could be that "weary and ill at ease." Whenever she sang, "Seated one day at the organ . . . ," Billy slew me with a filthy wink.

Second only to spelling was the agony of the Palmer Method of penmanship. Mastery of it was equivalent to moral purity. Inability to keep within the lines as you made the endless coil of *o*'s without taking the pen from the

[Conversion]

SUBSTITUTION CHART

By J. Robert Lennon, from the October issue of Lamination Colony, *an online literary journal.*

1 egg = 2 T vegetable oil
1 T prepared mustard = 1 t dry mustard
1 prune = 8 raisins
1 pizza = 12 dollars
1 C Coke = 1 C Pepsi
sunrise = sunset
1 wasp = 14 ants
1 hug = 5 handshakes
1 punch in jaw = 8 middle fingers
1 stomach flu = 10 staff meetings
completing free coffee card = spying nude neighbor through the window
licked by dog = gift of ugly necktie
cloud = crow
bowling trophy = promotional T-shirt
finding a $20 bill on the sidewalk = finding 20 $1 bills on the sidewalk
thunderstorm = trick-or-treating
car door slammed on fingers = testifying against brother-in-law
legalized gambling = Africanized killer bees
car alarm = painful urination
misspelling = untied shoe
2 lawyer jokes = 1 C bread crumbs
empty parking lot = dream-within-a-dream
shaving = sautéing
pinking shears = parsley
tapenade = *Rashomon*
bone spur = church pew
eleventy-twelve = 122



Quince and Pomegranate, *by Paul DuSold, can be viewed at the Gross McCleaf Gallery, in Philadelphia.*

paper was evidence of character deficiency. One would come to no good end. It was only a step from the Palmer Method to the science of graphology, which held that a person could be re-created from his handwriting—complexes, perversions, prejudices, and all. There was an itinerant penmanship teacher, Miss Kinsella, who made the rounds of all the grammar schools in Rensselaer County. She was also something of a poet, and chock-full of pithy sayings and rhymes.

"With time and patience, the mulberry leaf becomes satin." Whatever that meant. Of her poetry, I have only two stanzas.

> Who would not shun their time and sight to waste
> On a vile scrawl, blurred, shapeless, half-defaced?
> Not even Love's own patience could essay
> To read "I'm thine!" if marr'd in such a way.
>
> Then, Oh! Abuse not the Gray-goose quill,
> Make it indeed obedient to thy will.
> And bid it move in harmony with thought,
> Tracing in beauty what the mind has wrought.

The school janitor, Mr. Foley—bald, paunchy, and all but toothless—was no Irish spinster's dream of romance. Still, he served as the obsequious, dutiful "husband," whose attention each teacher devised to capture. He was summoned whenever it was suspected that a room be too hot or too cold, or should there be the least danger of running out of colored chalk. I suspect now that Mr. Foley could have had his way with any number of these ladies, but such inclinations were not given to him. Mr. Foley was utterly indifferent to the carnal side of janitation. Mr. Devlin, the principal, was the only other male in the building. He was given to bold colorful speech while delivering a stroke or two on the palm with his ferrule, one end of which was fattened into a disk with a central hole, the better to raise a blister with.

It was with Miss Feerick that I first studied poetry. All the poets taught at School 5 had three names: James Whitcomb Riley, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, John Greenleaf Whittier, James Russell Lowell, and so on. Trinomiality was the basic condition of the poet. How Homer and Dante managed to overcome that handicap, I'm sure I don't know. But the what did either of them write that could hold a candle to the one lit at both its [illegible] St. Vincent Millay?

It was in the third grade that Miss Feerick gave me a present of a book of poems. She had chosen them, cut them out, and pasted them onto the leaves of a blank notebook. In it were all my old darlings: "The Children's Hour," "The Wreck of the Hesperus," "Snowbound," "The Chambered Nautilus," "Excelsior," "The Village Blacksmith," "The Charge of the Light Brigade," and a dozen others. For years it was my favorite possession. At last, fingered and caressed beyond the durability of mere paper and paste, the book disintegrated in my hands. But not before I had committed all the poems in it to memory. So embedded are they in my brain that I have only to begin and the whole poem will come marching out. I have received no other gift since that can match it in price.

But now it is more than sixty years later, and I am at the Laurel View Country Club in Hamden, Connecticut. The event is the Annual Spring Luncheon of the New Haven Women's Club. I am the guest speaker. The audience is made up of a hundred or so retired schoolteachers—Irish spinsters ranging in age from sixty-five to ninety-five. They had scurried into retirement when the girls in the sixth grade were bigger than they were, wore great gold hoops in their ears, chewed wads of gum in class, and led active sex lives.

The schoolteachers have dressed for the occasion, mostly in bright-colored silk. From the podium, they are a bed of mixed tulips. I am the lone male present. Without these women, no one in New Haven County would have learned to read or write. Nor would anyone know who Joan of Arc was, nor anything at all about the French and Indian Wars. It was at the feet of these schoolteachers that I laid my heart. It was they who stirred the coals of memory.

Several days before the affair, Miss Peggy Coonan called up. "You can have baked scrod, baked chicken breast, or pork tenderloin. Which do you want?" I picked the pork tenderloin. "You picked the best one!" she cried, as if I had called out the right answer in class. I hadn't been at the Laurel View Country Club more than three minutes when Miss Ahearn came up and handed me a vodka on the rocks with a twist of lemon.

"I read somewhere that's what you like," she said, then further informed me that she had been my wife's fifth-grade teacher, which would put her age around ninety.

"What's that you're drinking?" I asked.

"A kamikaze," she replied, and took a demure sip.

"It means 'divine wind' in Japanese," I announced. She gave me a look that said to stop showing off. Immediately, where I had stood, there was only a little mist of insulted pride.

Either I fall in love with absurd ease or these hundred were each my cup of tea. My kamikaze, rather. They are engaged in charitable deeds; they do good works; they are generous and full of humor; they relish their retirement. Standing before them after lunch, I strove to acknowledge my debt, but for once I couldn't find the words. Instead, I told them about the notebook of poems and the Palmer Method of penmanship. And then I began to recite "The Village Blacksmith." What was my dismay when in the middle of the second stanza, my mind went blank! I could not think of the next line! There followed a long moment of awkward silence.

All at once, from a nearby table, picking up where I had left off, one of the teachers continued the poem, giving me a hint, her voice rich with urging and kindliness.

[Translation]

WHEN IRATE THAIS ARE SMILING

From Working with the Thais: A Guide to Managing in Thailand, *by Henry Holmes and Suchada Tangtongtavy, which states that any Thai can identify and perform each of the following smiles upon request.*

Yim thang nam taa: "I'm so happy I'm crying."
Yim thak thaai: "I do not know you, but I will be polite to you."
Yim cheun chom: "I admire you."
Fuen yim: "I should laugh at the joke though it's not funny."
Yim mee lessanai: The smile that masks something wicked in your mind.
Yim yae-yae: "I know things look pretty bad, but there's no point in crying."
Yim yaw: "I told you so."
Yim haeng: "I know I owe you the money, but I don't have it."
Yim sao: The sad smile.
Yim thak thuan: "You can go ahead and propose it, but your idea is no good."
Yim cheua-cheuan: "I am the winner."
Yim soo: "I am smiling in the face of an impossible struggle."
Yim mai awk: "I'm trying to smile but can't."

His brow is wet with honest sweat,
He earns whate'er he can,
And looks the whole world in the face,
For he owes not any man.

When she paused to let me go on, and still I couldn't, there came a voice from another table.

Week in, week out, from morn til night,
You can hear his bellows blow;
You can hear him swing his heavy sledge,
With measured beat and slow.

And so it went around the room, from table to table, until I heard

He hears his daughter's voice,
Singing in the village choir,
And it makes his heart rejoice.

With that I took up the poem and finished it to great applause. All at once, the decades rolled back, and I was once again standing at my small desk in the classroom at School 5, with my beloved teacher prompting.

The Irish spinster schoolteacher is no more. We shall never see her likes again. Now who will protect us from the vulgarity that has tainted the public taste? As it was foretold: And the teachers shall shine as the firmament. Just so has it come to pass. All praise to them, all praise.

[Pedagogy]

McBETH

From a set of required national exams for fourteen-year-olds issued by the British Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. After teachers complained that students, who had studied Shakespeare all year, could pass without any knowledge of the plays, the QCA agreed to rewrite the test for 2005.

HOW IMPORTANT IS WHAT YOU WEAR?

In *Twelfth Night*, what the characters wear and how they look affects the ways other characters react to them.

You read the following editorial in a teenage magazine:

We're looking for young people's comments on style and image to include in an article in next month's magazine.

—Do you worry about your image?
—Is fashion all a fuss about nothing?
—Does the style of clothes you wear affect how people react to you?
—What do you think about these issues?

Write your views for the teenage magazine.

WE ALL LOVE TO HATE A VILLAIN!

In real life, no one wants to meet a villain like Macbeth, but in books, on stage, or on screen, villains can be strangely compelling.

Your English teacher has received the following request:

Dear English teacher,

We are planning to publish a lighthearted book about villains.

For one section, we want short pieces that analyse why villains, despite being so threatening, can be so enjoyable to watch or read about.

We would welcome contributions from your pupils, perhaps commenting on a couple of particular villains!

Yours sincerely,
Ros Payne
Commissioning Editor

Write a contribution for this book.

GIVE IT ALL YOU'VE GOT!

In *Henry V*, Henry gives a number of speeches to encourage his troops into battle.

Imagine you are:

—captain of a sports team facing an important match; or
—the director of a school play; or
—responsible for organising a big charity event.

You want to speak to everyone just before the event starts, to persuade them to do their best. These are your notes:

—this is the big day . . .
—do your best . . .
—last-minute advice . . .
—thank you . . .

Write your speech.

[Stratagem]

CRAZY LIKE A FOX

From the North West Hunt Saboteurs Association's "Tactics Booklet," issued in Manchester, England, to instruct animal-rights activists in effectively sabotaging fox hunts. A measure banning fox hunting in England and Wales passed the House of Commons last June and is pending in the House of Lords.

If you are thinking of going out to sabotage a hunt for the first time, here are some basic tactics to use. Remember, these are often best learnt on the day by watching experienced saboteurs, and advice is free, so do not be afraid to ask!

It is often a great advantage to look like a hunt follower and thus gain information.

Dress in dull-colored clothes will assist in avoidance detection. Do not wear bright clothes. If possible, find dull green or brown wax jackets. Also, dull trousers or breeches with thick socks and Wellingtons. A cap or hat may be worn for added effect or to hide long hair.

A lot can be done to sabotage a fox hunt before it meets. Pre-meet spraying of hedges with Anti-mate or garlic can cover scent. Spraying should be conducted at hound-head height, with particular emphasis on gates. If pre-meet spraying is used, it is strongly recommended that pre-beating take place at the same time. To carry out pre-beating, walk through the wood using whistles, horns, and hunting calls in an imitation of the hunt. Pre-beating may take time to perfect.

Search for blocked earth-tunnels, and remove the blockage. Make a note of the tunnels for future reference. Secure gates in the area; this will cause the hunt considerable inconvenience and delay. In doubtful weather conditions, ring the local papers and tell them that the hunt has been canceled; if it is a pub hunt, ring the pub and tell them also. This can lose the hunt support and create confusion.

At the hunt, if you have contacted the press, hold a banner. Otherwise, it is better to act as a follower, mingling with and chatting to supporters. Spray your hand with Anti-mate and pat the hounds, rubbing it into their coats. The hounds are very friendly and love to be made a fuss of. If you are late, scout around the area; country folk gazing across fields, fresh horse droppings on the road, or a large number of cars by the side of the road usually mean the hunt is nearby.

When acting as a supporter, remember to remove identity badges and use the correct terminology. When describing the death of a fox, the word "kill" is not used. The usual terms are "bowled over," "rolled over," "accounted for," "brought to book," "punished," "dealt with," and "broken up." The fox is usually termed "Charles James," or "Charlie," or "the Pilot."

During the hunt, horn blowing and calling the hounds are the most effective tactics. It is essential that you become proficient in both. To call the pack, one person only should blow and call, imitating the huntsman. To split the pack, two horn blowers should operate at either side of the hounds. Do not blow the horns at the same time.

The most important call to know is short notes on the horn. This excites the hounds and will encourage them over to you. This sound is made by keeping the lips tightly together while darting the tongue between them. Interspersed with this call you should give a high-pitched "hoick" noise two or three times. This is made from the back of the throat. To slow the pack down, blow long notes on the horn. It is especially important to learn the horn calls of your local huntsman and to imitate his calls and his voice. If you can't blow a horn, try calling the hounds to you with a sharp "'Yut," or "Yut-Yut,"

[Counsel]

OBLITERATE THE BRUTES

From "Obliterating Animal Carcasses with Explosives," a pamphlet issued by the Technology and Development Program of the U.S. Forest Service.

There are times when it is important to remove or obliterate an animal carcass from locations such as recreation areas where a carcass might attract bears, at a popular picnic area where the public might object, or along the sides of roads or trails.

Explosives have successfully been used by qualified blasters to partially or totally obliterate large animal carcasses (horses, mules, moose, etc.). It is important to consider location, time of year, and size of the carcass when selecting the quantity and type of explosive to accomplish the obliteration task.

The following instructions pertain to partial obliteration (dispersion) for a horse that weighs about 1,100 pounds. In this first example, urgency is not a factor—perhaps the public is not expected to visit the area for a few days, or perhaps bears will not be attracted to the carcass. In any case, in this example, dispersion is acceptable.

Place three pounds of explosives under the carcass in four locations. The carcass can then be rolled onto the explosives if necessary. Place one pound of explosives in two locations on each leg. Use detonator cord to tie the explosives' charges together. Horseshoes should be removed to minimize dangerous flying debris.

In situations where total animal obliteration is necessary, it is advisable to double the amount of explosives used in the first example. Total obliteration might be preferred in situations where the public is expected in the area the next day, or where bears are particularly prolific.

Carcasses that have been dispersed will generally be totally gone within a few days. Carcasses that have been obliterated will generally not show any trace of existence the next day.

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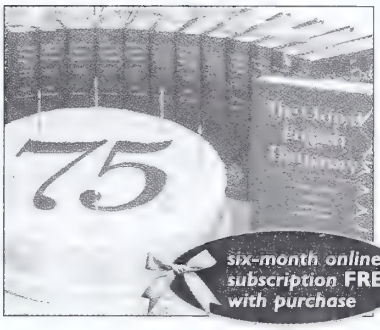
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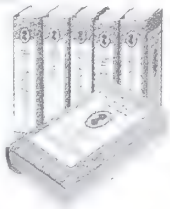
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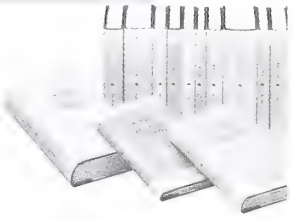
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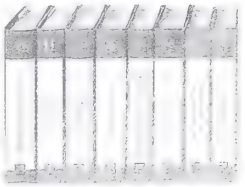
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or try "C'mon, Yut, Yut-Yut." Do not practice horn blowing while at a hunt.

Pretend that you have seen a fox and "holloa." This will often bring the hunt and/or the hounds over. Then you have to "disappear." If you do see a fox, never point, as the hunt might not have seen this particular animal, and may come over to where you pointed to try and find it. If there are a lot of saboteurs, keep tightly together in the field. Avoid running noisily toward the hunt.

Violent hunt reactions may occur, but do not go out expecting them. If a rider is chasing you, it helps to have a safe escape route planned; e.g., over a fence and into a thick wood.

It is quite possible for just two or three experienced people using the above tactics to successfully sabotage a hunt and save lives.

[Theme]

LIMNPHOMANIAC

The following lines were culled from Michiko Kakutani's New York Times *book reviews by Christian Lorentzen, an editor at* The New Leader. *In some cases, tenses have been changed.*

Limn an entire life in a couple of pages
Limn the trajectory of an entire life in a handful of pages
Limn the suffocating atmosphere of small-town life and the alienation experienced by those who defy its provincial mores
Limn the last days of an alcoholic frontierswoman living in a small western town
Limn a man's sudden apprehension of vulnerability and loss—all brought on by his discovery of a dead rat on his kitchen floor
Limn his inner life or probe the sources of his equipoise
Limn the inner life of people, surprised by the deceptions of time
Limn, with tenderness, wisdom, and humor, a vast array of human relationships, both straight and gay
Limn the rituals of hunting, trapping, planting, and canning with a wry mixture of amusement and respect
Limn the daily minutiae of life
Limn the human condition
Limn the complicated emotional geometry
Limn the delicate geometry of emotions
Limn a marriage of enduring passion and shared ideals
Limn Willy's fears of losing Biff's love and his own longings for immortality
Limn the brutal, perilous, and harrowing art of killing a forty-ton creature with a hand-thrown weapon
Limn some of its burgeoning manifestations
Limn the social and geopolitical fallout
Limn the surrealness of contemporary life
Limn the rhythms of the universe and an artist's inner state of mind
Limn a future in which Pop Art gives way to Poll Art
Limn the nervous, almost flirtatious banter
Limn a hero's efforts to achieve self-understanding
Limn girls' secret struggle for womanhood in the post-sexual-revolution world
Limn the dangers posed by emerging diseases
Limn the spiritual yearnings and dislocations of an entire nation as it lurched from the certainties of the World War II years toward the confusions of the 1970s
Limn the irrationalities of history
Limn the impermanence—and emotional chaos—that threatens to overwhelm ordinary people
Limn the fabulous
Limn the ordinary with seeming nonchalance
Limn this deeply felt, if somewhat limited, theme with clarity and moral vigor

[Perspective]

FREEDOM'S PLOW

From recently released testimony by the poet Langston Hughes on March 24, 1953, before the Senate Committee on Government Operations' Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations. The subcommittee, chaired by Senator Joseph McCarthy, interrogated 395 people between 1953 and 1954 in closed-door hearings designed to determine whom among them to try in public session. Roy Cohn served as chief counsel; Senator Everett Dirksen was a subcommittee member.

ROY COHN: Do you remember writing this: "Good-morning, Revolution: You're the very best friend I ever had. We gonna pal around together from now on"?

LANGSTON HUGHES: Yes, sir, I wrote that.

COHN: Did you write this, "Put one more 'S' in the USA to make it Soviet. The USA when we take control will be the USSA then"?

HUGHES: Yes, sir, I wrote that.

COHN: Were you kidding when you wrote those things? What did you mean by those?

HUGHES: Would you like me to give you an interpretation of that?



"After Invisible Man *by Ralph Ellison, the Preface," by Jeff Wall, whose work is on display at the Walker Art Center, in Minneapolis.*

COHN: I would be most interested.

HUGHES: Very well. Will you permit me to give a full interpretation of it?

COHN: Surely.

HUGHES: All right, sir. To give a full interpretation of any piece of literary work one has to consider not only when and how it was written but what brought it into being, the emotional and physical background that brought it into being. I, sir, was born in Joplin, Missouri. I was born a Negro. From my very earliest childhood memories, I have encountered very serious and very hurtful problems. One of my earliest childhood memories was going to the movies in Lawrence, Kansas, where we lived, and there was one motion picture theater, and I went every afternoon. It was a nickelodeon, and I had a nickel to go. One afternoon I put my nickel down and the woman pushed it back and she pointed to a sign. I was about seven years old.

COHN: I do not want to interrupt you. I do want to say this. I want to save time here. I want to concede very fully that you encountered oppression and denial of civil rights. Let us assume that, because I assume that will be the substance of what you are about to say. To save us time, what we are interested in determining for our purpose is this: Was the solution to which you turned that of the Soviet form of government?

HUGHES: Sir, you said you would permit me to give a full explanation.

COHN: I was wondering if we could not save a little time, because I want to concede the background which you wrote it from was the background you wanted to describe.

HUGHES: I would much rather preserve my reputation and freedom than to save time.

COHN: Take as long as you want.

HUGHES: The woman pushed my nickel back and pointed to a sign beside the box office, and the sign said "Colored not admitted." It was my first revelation of the division between the American citizens. My playmates who were white and lived next door to me could go to that motion picture and I could not. I could never see a film in Lawrence again.

When I went to school, in the first grade, my mother moved to Topeka for a time, and my mother worked for a lawyer, and she lived in the downtown area, and being a working woman naturally she wanted to send me to

[Colloquium]

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT

From the June 24 session of Ask the White House, an online forum in which participants submit questions to Bush Administration officials. The following exchange features communications director Dan Bartlett.

MARTIN FROM MARSHALL, MN: Why have you opposed an independent investigation about 9-11?

DAN BARTLETT: In fact, President Bush supports an investigation into the attacks of 9-11. He is also concerned that we don't compromise current activities and intelligence gathering that will help us prevent future attacks.

LYLE FROM SALT LAKE CITY: I loved it when the White House gardener was on. Do you have any suggestions for crabgrass?

BARTLETT: I can't solve your crabgrass problem, but I did work one summer as a groundskeeper at a golf course.

BILLY FROM NEW JERSEY: If there was an iron-cage match and all Cabinet members were put in that cage, who would be the last man or woman standing?

BARTLETT: Well, Billy, that's a tough one. But I'll put my money on Colin Powell.

RICHARD FROM FRAITES: Why did the Bush Administration edit the latest EPA report regarding global warming? Are campaign donations that important?

BARTLETT: Global warming is a serious issue that requires answers based on science. That's why President Bush has dedicated new funding to research global warming.

JIM FROM BOILING SPRINGS, SC: Good afternoon. Is there really a red telephone? Thank you.

BARTLETT: Sorry to inform you that there is no red phone in the Oval.

DANNY FROM USA: Is there such a thing as a political groupie? Do women stalk White House staff like they do professional athletes? Please answer—I am trying to decide whether to get into politics or sports.

BARTLETT: To date I have not been stalked. I would recommend going into sports.

HOUSTON FROM TEXAS: Does the White House mess serve Big Red?

BARTLETT: I don't believe so, but we're checking.

MODERATOR: We checked; the White House mess does not serve Big Red. However, they do serve Code Red Mountain Dew, which I understand is tasty.

the nearest school. But they would not let me go to the school. There were no Negro children there. My mother had to take days off from her work, had to appeal to her employer, had to go to the school board, and finally after the school year had been open for some time, she got me into the school.

I had been there only a few days when the teacher made unpleasant and derogatory remarks about Negroes and specifically seemingly pointed at myself. Some of my schoolmates stoned me on the way home from school. One of my schoolmates (and there were no other Negro children in the school), a little white boy, protected me, and I have never in all my writing career or speech career as far as I know said anything to create a division among humans, or between whites or Negroes, because I have never forgotten this kid standing up for me against these other first graders who were throwing stones at me. I have always felt from that time on that there are white people in America who can be your friend, and will be your friend, and who do not believe in the kind of things that almost every Negro who has lived in our country has experienced.

I do not want to take forever to tell you these things, but I must tell you that they have very deep emotional roots in one's childhood and one's beginnings, as I am sure any psychologist or teacher of English or student of poetry will say about any creative work.

My father and my mother were not together. When I got old enough to learn why they were not together, again it was the same thing. My father as a young man, shortly after I was born, had studied law by correspondence. He applied for permission to take the bar examination in the state of Oklahoma, where he lived, and they would not permit him. A Negro evidently could not take the examination. You could not be a lawyer at that time in the state of Oklahoma. You know that has continued right up to recent years; we had to go all the way to the Supreme Court a few years ago to get Negroes into the law school.

Those things affected my childhood very much and very deeply. I missed my father. I learned he had gone away to another country because of prejudice here. When I finally met my father, at the age of seventeen, he said, "Never go back to the United States. Negroes are fools to live there." I didn't believe that. I loved the country I had grown up in. I was concerned with the problems, and I came back here. My father wanted me to live in Mexico or Europe. I did not. And my whole career has been built here.

When I grew older, I went to high school in Cleveland. I went to a high school in a very poor neighborhood, and we were very poor people. My friends and associates were very poor children, and many of them were of European parentage (some of them had been brought here in steerage themselves from Europe) and many of these students—and this story is told, sir, parts of it, not as fully as I want to tell you some things, in my autobiography, *The Big Sea*—many of these pupils began to tell me about Eugene Debs, and about the new nation and the new republic. I became interested in whatever I could read that Debs had written or spoken about. I never read the theoretical books of socialism or communism or the Democratic or Republican parties for that matter, and so my interest in whatever may be considered political has been nontheoretical, non-sectarian, and largely emotional and born out of my own need to find some way of thinking about this whole problem of myself, segregated, poor, colored, and how to adjust to this whole problem of helping to build America when sometimes I cannot even get into a school or a lecture or a concert or, in the South, go to the library and get a book out. So that has been a very large portion of the emotional background of my work, which I think is essential to one's understanding.

When I graduated from high school, I went to live with my father for a time in Mexico, and in my father I encountered the kind of bitterness, the kind of utter psychiatric frustration that has been expressed in some Negro novels—not in those I have written myself, I don't believe. A man who was rabidly anti-American, anti–United States. I did not sympathize with that viewpoint on the part of my own father. My feeling was: this is my country, I want to live here. I want to come back here. I want to make my country as beautiful as I can, as wonderful a country as I can, because I love it myself. So I went back after a year in Mexico, and I went to Columbia.

At Columbia University in New York City, where I had never been before, but where I heard there was practically no prejudice, by that time wanting to be a writer and having published some papers in Negro magazines, I applied for a position on the staff of the *Spectator* newspaper. I was the only Negro in the group. I cannot help but think that it was due to prejudice that of all the assignments—and there were various assignments: sports, theater, classroom activities, debating—of all the various assignments, they assigned me to cover society news. They very well knew that I could not go to dances and parties, being colored, and therefore I could bring no news, and after a short period, I was counted out of the *Spectator* group.

When I went into the dormitory my first day there, I had a reservation for a room. It had been paid for. I was not given the room. They could not find the reservation. I had to take all of that day and a large portion of the next one to get into the dormitory. I was told later I was the first to achieve that. In other words, to simple little things like getting a room in a university, one has to devote extraordinary methods even to this day in some parts of our country.

I am thinking of the early 1920s. I did not stay at Columbia longer than a year due in part to the various kinds of racial prejudices that I encountered.

SENATOR EVERETT DIRKSEN: I think, Mr. Hughes, that would be adequate emotional background.

HUGHES: No, sir, that would not explain it all, how I arrive at the point that Mr. Cohn, I believe, has asked me about.

COHN: Could you make it briefer, please?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Do you think we need more background to tell what you meant by USSA?

HUGHES: I think you do, sir. Because a critical work has a very deep background; it does not come in a moment. I am perfectly willing to come back and give it to you later, if you are tired.

COHN: No, we will sit here as long as you want to go on. But you are missing the point completely. What we want to determine is whether or not you meant those words when you said them.

HUGHES: Sir, whether or not I meant them depends on what they came from and out of.

COHN: Did you desire to make the United States Soviet, put one more "S" in the USA to make it Soviet? "The USA, when we take control, will be the USSA."

HUGHES: When I left Columbia, I had no money. I had $13.

COHN: Did you mean those words when you spoke them? We know the background. I want to know now, did you mean the words when you spoke them? I am not saying you should not have meant them. I am asking you—

HUGHES: Yes, sir, and you gave me the permission to give the background.

SENATOR DIRKSEN: That answers the question.

HUGHES: I did not say "Yes" to your question. I said you gave me the chance to give you the background.

SENATOR DIRKSEN: We have had enough background.

[Gleanings]

LIFE OF PIE

"Did You Know?" by Jeff Johnson, was published in the Spring/Summer issue of Fence.

Did You Know?
1957—U.S. public school elementary student pie consumption: at least 14 pieces annually (school year)
1982—student pie consumption: 4 pieces
1999—s.p.c.: 1.77777703 pieces

Did You Know?
That early pie in schools was mainly pumpkin. Or apple. Made annually from more than seven tons of felled, bruised apples from Oregon, Michigan, and Washington State.

Many school cooks were convicts (before government watch programs were started).

Many cooks had ailments and wore conductor's crème on their elbows and other joints.

Many cooks lied, gambled, swore, drank beer, abused their spouses. Many cooks were honest citizens and doubled as youth coaches.

During recess many cooks played tackle football with young students but would not hit them hard, often gently placing a rugged hand on the small of a child's back and easing him to the ground and saying "you're down."

Many cooks, over time, refused to bake pies from scratch;
schools grew;
pies were shipped in,
packed with preservatives and additives;
students shied away from them—bland pies that had been frozen for months on end;
sometimes a wristwatch or Band-Aid would drop into the pie
during the process.

Did you know that John Lennon's 1973 hit "Mind Games" has played on more transistor radios in elementary-school kitchens than any other song? Second place belongs to a Men at Work hit, "Down Under."

Did you know that the student pie revolts of the early 1960s put an ugly deep scar on the face of the school-lunch program? In fact, if the school-lunch program had a face, it became a pinched, worrisome, blemished face, peering into the windows of a diner, with cupped hands, looking for father and not finding him, then turning sharply toward the street and getting doused with slush from a passing taxi.

Cooks had nicknames for different pie situations: a dropped pie that was still baked and served was a hornet; a dropped pie that was unsalvageable was a bluebird; a pie that was too hot to be served without mitts was an eagle; a pie that tasted better with whipped cream was a goose.

The school-lunch program had an auxiliary army; in the summers many cooks would fight in Korea, Western Canada, Vietnam, or wherever duty took them.

The cooks liked to travel to war by ship and sang sea shanties.

Did you know that in 1975 the first ever national cooks vs. custodians bridge tournament was played in Bakersfield, CA?
The custodians won.

Many school-lunch cooks were women, and they resembled Rosemary Clooney and often doubled as nurses. Many of them worked without proper credentials, often diagnosing problems based on intuition.

Many cooks battled the flu on the job, unknowingly passing it to students who often passed it to their parents or pets, or the people their parents worked with or fucked on the side.

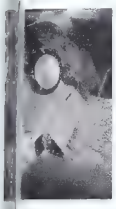
Once the flu is "baked in" to a casserole, it gestates and becomes fourteen times more lethal.

Many school lunchrooms doubled as gymnasiums and auditoriums and some of the worst student plays were performed in rooms where chow mein had been cooked not more than twelve hours prior.

Did you know that many of the worst singers, dancers, and actors in these performances were students who had large amounts of meatloaf digesting in their stomachs and intestines during said performances.

Did you know that there was often a free pine green or dark red telephone in the corner and that when time permitted, many cooks would quietly work out personal-debt problems or domestic issues and that many of the words uttered into these phones, with ladles shanking in the background, are among the saddest known to man?

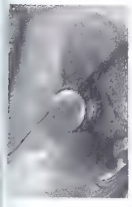
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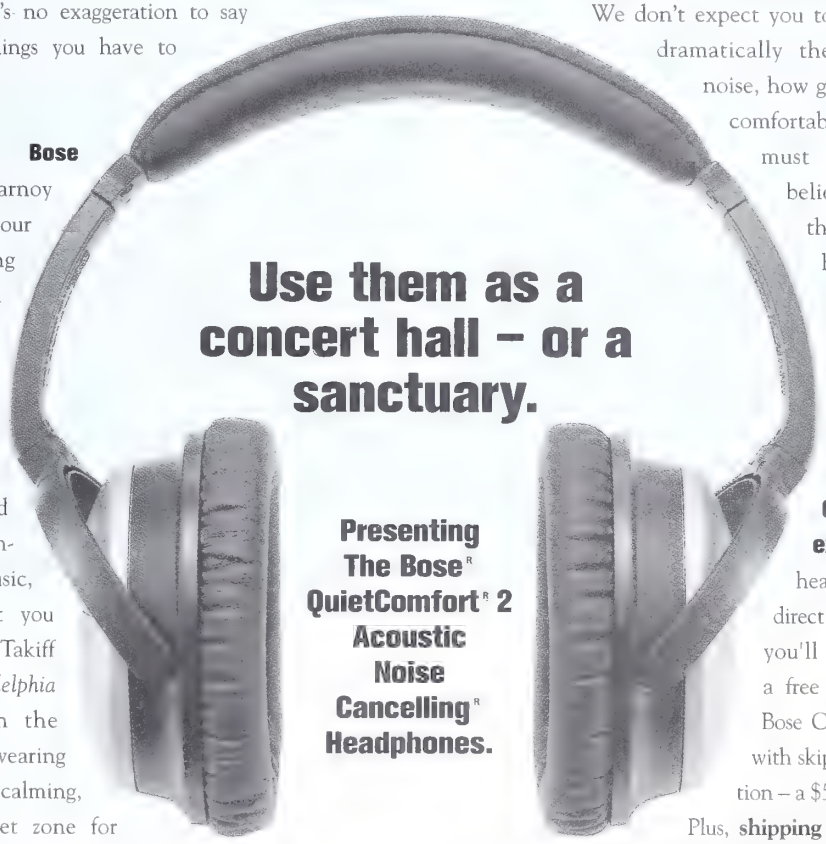
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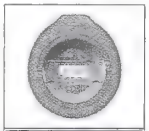
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Stage Fright, *by Gottfried Helnwein, was on display last month at Modernism, Inc., in San Francisco*

[Vestiges]

ALL THE NECESSARY TOOLS

The following suicide notes were left by Japanese schoolchildren, aged ten to fifteen, who killed themselves within the last several years. Some of them met in suicide chat rooms, which are becoming increasingly popular in Japan. Translated from the Japanese by Patrick Luhan.

Left by a ten-year-old boy who killed himself after being harassed for having an American father:
My blood is tainted and corrupt. I will fly from my apartment window, fall, and die. Why have I not died already? Because I have been waiting for tomorrow.

Left by a fourteen-year-old boy who hung himself:
I've always had my money taken from me. I could never have enough money to meet their demands, so they would hold me underwater until I agreed to do what they wanted. They'd always make me run errands for them. They forced me to dye my hair once. Getting bullied has become harder and harder, and I cannot go on with this life. Hopefully my death will excuse my failure in this life.

Left in a notebook by a fifteen-year-old boy who threw himself from a high building:
T. hurts me all the time. I've avoided going to school. I hate his kicking and punching. I can't stand how often these things happen.

Left by a fifteen-year-old boy who hung himself in his family's garden:
I am already tired.

Left by a fourteen-year-old boy who hung himself:
When I was in seventh grade, I was always bullied. Now in eighth grade, the bullying has become worse. They make fun of me, throw things at me, kick me, hit me, and do other violent things. It was a waste of time complaining to the teacher when I couldn't tolerate it. They'd throw my textbooks at me and harass me for telling the teacher. I have no friends who sympathize with me in class. My close friends in clubs outside school have learned

to hate me, too. I'm too tired to hold out any longer. The world's not right for me.

One of three suicide notes left by a fourteen-year-old girl before she threw herself off a high building:
I've been bullied with words and violence almost every day, but no one's been nice enough to even notice my situation. I've been hurt every day with insulting words like "dirty" from all the boys in my class. They will finally get what they want and I will die. I can't take this life anymore. Mama and Papa, I'm really sorry, but I'm finished. I'm afraid of death, but I know this will be a lifelong torment. I'm very sorry. Goodbye forever.

Left by a fourteen-year-old girl who hung herself:
I've continued to be bullied by the boys in my class. They say humiliating things. I can't help how I was born. Their bullying became too much, though. I've had so many humiliating experiences whenever any of the girls ask me, "did you dye your hair?" They only want to laugh at me too. I hate everybody in my class.

Left by an eleven-year-old girl and an eleven-year-old boy, respectively, who met in a suicide chat room and both hung themselves:
I think I might die now. I've prepared all the necessary tools. Bye-bye.

I don't understand why I have to study more hours than adults work while also going to school and cram sessions after school. There are many times when I want to die. Over the course of two days, an adult works twenty hours and rests twenty-eight. But children like me study for twenty-seven and a half hours while resting for only twenty and a half hours. I have no idea why adults have more free time than kids. Homework is like a mountain. I'll have an eleven-page assignment this weekend and fourteen pages of arithmetic homework. I already want to quit school. I want to be free, like a fish.

[Story]
THE YEAR ZERO

From Tonguecat, *a novel by Peter Verhelst, translated from the Dutch by Sherry Marx, published in August by Farrar, Straus and Giroux.*

That year the cold was a snake that struck your heels, your dangling hands, slithering up your spine, around your neck, between your lips.

Your brain turned to gelatin in the bone-white dish of your skull. The cold made glittering diamonds of your teeth. Your whole body took on the color of hardened candle wax.

That year the cold hit our country a thousand kilometers northward in one blow. Words stuck to our tongues like crystals.

[Harbinger]
IT'S NOT EASY BEING GREEN

From the U.S. Geological Survey's Field Guide to Malformations of Frogs and Toads. *These deformities have been reported in fifty-seven species in forty-four states, sometimes in as many as 60 percent of frogs in a given pond. Because frogs are amphibious and absorb nutrients through their skin, they are considered by scientists to be "excellent environmental barometers."*

Hand attached directly to body
Foot attached directly to body
Multiple complete limbs
Multiple split limbs
Incomplete limbs
Lack of an organ
Extra digits
Short digits
Missing digits
Short bone
No elbow
No hand
No knee
Partial foot
No foot
Short toe
Missing toe
Hunched back
Extended spine beyond rump
Small head
Iris abnormally colored or shaped
Iris missing
Small eye
Displaced eye
Missing eye
Protruding tongue
Tongue absent
Short jaw
Small jaw
Curved jaw
No jaw

It was the year watches stopped. Silenced. The year Zero.

Winter came after it had rained for days. Until the clouds had emptied themselves and the garden gleamed like polished leather in the moonlight. There was no warning. Nothing. It was an evening like any other. Maybe the stars shone a bit brighter in the sky, a bit redder, maybe they didn't.

You closed doors and windows.

You went to bed.

You woke up in a glass world.

Maybe it was the strange silence that woke us.

My brother came into my room, hopping from one foot to the other. Threw back my bedcovers. Cuddled up to me, shivering. Rubbed the cold out of his ears with my hands. Huddled like a chick under the heat of my breath.

Suddenly he sat up.

"Can you hear it?" he asked.

"I don't hear anything," I answered.

"That's what I mean."

We sat there shuddering, back to back, as if under a bell jar. And still I think my brother was wrong. We did hear something. Hold a glass to your ear and you hear the sea: that kind of silence. We didn't speak. His spine dug into my back. I watched my breath curl into a plume. Two heads protruding from a blanket pitched around us like a tent. Breathe in, breathe out. His shoulder blade against my spine.

"What's happening?" he asked.

I shrugged.

"Look," he said, scraping a frost flower off the windowpane. At that moment he screamed, and with that scream the house came alive. My mother had to use boiling water to separate my brother's finger from the frost flower. A fingerprint of matte red ice was left on the windowpane.

We ate our breakfast in silence, occasionally jumping at the sound of creaking that seemed to move through the walls of our house. No matter how hard we looked, we didn't see cracks in the plaster. I held a glass to the wall and put my ear to it. We held our breath.

The creaking sounded like breaking bones.

The sudden freeze had cut us off from the outside world. Telephone, radio, television: all dead. My father and mother spoke in whispers at the table, as my brother and I hovered near the stove. It was still morning, and the wood supply was already exhausted. My father put on his shoes and tried to open the front door. Nothing. No matter how hard he pushed and pulled, it was as if the door had fused with the walls. It took forever before he managed to separate it from the rest of the house. And that says a lot, because my father had the shoulders of a bull. He swore, snorted, took a running leap at the creaking door. Poured boiling water over the hinges, rammed it again. And again, and again. In the end the ice was no match

[Policy]

THIS EMERALD CUBICLE

From a memo sent last August by the British Department of Trade and Industry to its employees.

Following a recent tender exercise for Office Foliage Services, you will have a new foliage maintenance provider. They will be providing plants on a rental basis. The future foliage strategy will be implemented in one of two ways:

1. Where an area has moved to New Ways of Working (new-style furniture, soft-seating/break-out areas), centrally funded foliage will be allocated to the soft-seating/break-out areas, where it should be used to create an oasis effect; plant levels should be given maximum impact, enhancing the areas without the need for large numbers of plants: one specimen for three seats.

2. For areas as yet unchanged, or unlikely to make the transition to New Ways of Working, a second formula shall be applied to allow an equitable distribution of plants rather than the anomalous situations encountered currently. The allocation will be set at one plant per 120 square metres.

Generally Applicable rules are as follows:

- Centrally funded foliage is for the benefit of all staff and shall not be moved, particularly into offices, where its impact is dramatically lessened.
- No plants are to be provided in any public areas other than minimal allocations to soften the harshness of common areas.
- Wherever possible, tall plants should be used; low plants shall not be provided and existing ones shall be phased out.

Staff may continue to provide their own plants providing they are maintained by their owners and not intrusive or a nuisance to others. Should such a plant become diseased or pest ridden, the plant must be removed by the member of staff concerned. Plants provided by staff which die must also be removed by staff.

Consideration may need to be given to the use of lifelike artificial plants.



COURTESY BLUE SKY GALLERY, PORTLAND, ORE

This photograph of a former teahouse, by Simon Norfolk, appeared in Afghanistan Chronotopia: Landscapes of the Destruction of Afghanistan, *a collection of Norfolk's work published in January by Dewi Lewis.*

for my father's fury. My brother and I held our breath as he took the hissing pan off the stove and lugged it outside. My father and that steaming, bubbling cauldron. He wanted to drench the door in one broad sweep, but the stream froze midair and splintered onto the frozen ground.

With our eyes closed we could hear my father walking outside, grass shattering under his feet, icicles tinkling as he passed. One night had crystallized the garden.

When my father came in, laden with frozen firewood, my mother pointed to his feet. He'd cut himself on the crystal; dozens of red drops hung from his ankles like rubies. He struggled to lift his shoulders. It took hours before he could move his lips again.

While my parents fought to keep the hissing fire alive, my brother and I stared outside. At the bluish sheen on the stones, at the white stubble that had once been grass, at the icicles hanging from the eaves.

Despite my parents' desperate attempts to stir up a blaze, our house didn't get any warmer. My brother and I clung to each other and watched as frost flowers bloomed on the walls. Then my mother screamed, and at that same moment my brother and I saw the fire die.

No efforts were spared to defy the cold. A state of emergency was declared. The king ordered that the word "winter" be banned from all books. But the decrees whirled through the air like snowflakes. Then he outlawed the words "cold" and "warmth." His subjects nodded, beating their arms rhythmically against their sides. And we banned the words "cold" and "warmth" from our thoughts in the hope that our bodies too would forget them.

The archbishop urged the faithful to pray, but our prayers hardened and stuck in our throats.

The winter was pitiless, felling one citizen after another. It turned out the human body wasn't made for the cold, the assault on its tender, blood-laced flesh. Your body curled up, shrank, hoping the cold wouldn't see. But it lunged at your heels,

crept up to your brain. Crystallized there, formed tumors along your spinal cord, metastasized into your skeleton. Your bones were frozen milk.

Outside, your clothes stiffened into cardboard. You drew your head in and watched as a misty veil curled up out of your mouth. As if the cold were sucking the last bit of warmth out of your body. And sometimes, when the sun hovered yolklike in the sky, a rainbow would appear between your lips, as if your tongue were a prism and the cold were dividing your evaporating body fluids into a spectrum of color. But you closed your mouth in a hurry. The words for describing the cold pierced your tongue like icicles.

We hadn't been given the time to adjust to the cold. Our souls froze, together with our bodies.

Winter persisted, attacked the muscles until the bones were covered with white fish meat. Turned skin into plastic, hair into straw, changed eyes into marbles. We were nearly all frozen. When those of us who weren't ventured onto the street, we were instantly engulfed by a throng of frozen bodies trying to steal our last ounce of warmth.

Fits of shivering.
Chattering teeth.
Infected lungs.
Breathlessness.
Black toes, fingers, noses.

What was frozen had to be amputated, to keep toxins from reaching the heart. Doctors couldn't anesthetize their patients because the fluid turned to glass in the syringe. Moaning filled the air. Amputated toes and fingers lay scattered along the roadside, like blue sugarcoated scraps. We hid behind the trees until the few remaining dogs could no longer resist the offerings. Then threw ourselves upon their ravenous jaws, bound their snouts in leather muzzles, and sewed those bundles of flailing limbs into our jackets.

That kept us warm for a few days.

But when they died, the cold returned with a vengeance.

Frostbite.
Amputations.
Hallucinations.
Death.

In the mornings special squads arrived, all condemned men, to collect the bodies and take them to the churchyard. You couldn't get a shovel into the ground because of the freeze. Zigzagging across the churchyard, the corpses danced a choreography of death.

Because the church was on a hill, we had to pull stockings over our shoes to reach the top without breaking any bones. On Sundays the survivors gathered in a circle around the churchyard. Before long there were more statues than spectators. The only sound was a remote tinkling: exhaled air crystallized instantly, a cloud of glass blown from your lips. And with every breath, you could hear those powdery slivers whirling through the air. As if we were spitting ice.

Even the clocks on the church towers fell silent. Timepieces stopped in their tracks. Time froze, literally. The king assigned women to count the seconds, but their brains were soon cloaked with layers of ice. Time became no more than the memory of warmth. But even that faded, as we became increasingly obsessed by the trials of winter.

Then even this worry disappeared. It turned out that the human body is a chameleon. We became as white and cold as the world around us, for the simple reason that we no longer used our blood. How could we? The world was so cold even our veins froze in our bodies. Twigs of red coral.

So it will come as no surprise to hear that the word "love" quickly became obsolete. Rub two ice cubes together. Does that produce heat? Well then.

In the end there was no difference between night and day. Was that the moon up there, that luminous eggshell? That glazed yolk, was that the sun? The glare at night, was that the sun's reflection? Was the sun a figment of our imagination?

One night we woke up to the clamor of people in the street, everyone's head drawn deeply into his shoulders. Was that also an illusion? Had heaven gone mad? The sky was a writhing snake pit of color. We watched, and watched, and watched.

Someone said something about the northern lights, but we refused to listen.

Someone said it was heaven, that it had lapped up our warmth and the colors of our body fluids, and was now returning them.

Us and heaven. We nodded hopefully.

Someone replied that nothing was being returned. Heaven didn't exist.

Someone pointed to the colors, to the exploding sky, as if trying to lure the colors with his beckoning finger.

Someone crossed himself.

Someone fainted and instantly froze to the ground.

Someone clenched his fists, cleared his throat, tried to call the colors back. Demanded their return. *Here. Now.*

That lone, pathetic voice, under that reeling sky. That waxen fist.

We watched, and watched, and watched.

No one else was brave enough to raise a fist to heaven.

We said nothing, and watched, pummeled by motley fists from above.



"Untitled," a photograph by Sally Mann, from her book What Remains, *published in September by Bulfinch Press*

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June Osborne

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WAR OF THE WORLDS

PART ONE

BIG WORLD

How Clear Channel programs America

By Jeff Sharlet

On July 17, 2002, as a band called The Boils was preparing to play, seven men with badges, police officers and agents of Philadelphia's Department of Licenses and Inspections, walked into the basement of the First Unitarian Church at Chestnut and Van Pelt. Nobody knows who tipped them off, but it was clear that someone wanted the Church, as the club in the basement was called, shut down. The show's promoter, Sean Agnew, had been booking acts there for six years, but before the night when the inspectors appeared his shows had not warranted a single official complaint. A tall, lean twenty-four-year-old with a stubbled undertaker's jaw and long, dark eyelashes, Agnew almost always wore a black mesh cap, with DORM SLUT scrawled on it graffiti-style in silver Sharpie, crammed over thick black hair. He was known locally, and in little music magazines around the country, as "DJR500." Agnew's shows were "straight-edge," which meant that drugs and alcohol were not welcome. A local paper had recently named him a man of the year, alongside 76ers guard Allen Iverson.

The Department of Licenses and Inspections does not keep records of complaints. All the deputy commissioner could tell Agnew was that someone had gone down to City Hall, pulled the Church's permit, and discovered that the Church was not zoned to hold gatherings for entertainment purposes. No bingo, no swing dancing, and definitely no Boils. The inspectors gave Agnew a red-and-white-striped "Cease Work/Operations" sticker to affix to the Church's door and declared the concert over.

Agnew got on stage and told everyone to go home; his friends circulated through the crowd, whispering that the show was moving to West Philadelphia, to a theater called The Rotunda. Soon Agnew cut a deal to produce all his concerts there, but he was able to put on only one more show before the Department of Licenses and Inspections shut that operation down as well. Someone had gone down to City Hall, pulled the theater's permit, and discovered that it was zoned for drama only. Then inspectors visited the record shop where Agnew sold his tickets, with the news that someone had gone down to City Hall, pulled the shop's permit, and found out that it wasn't zoned for selling tickets. A few days later the inspectors were back at the shop, looking for a box under the counter in which the store kept Agnew's mail—another violation, reported by yet another concerned citizen.

Although he had no evidence, Agnew's suspicions fell on Clear Channel Communications. Clear Channel controls almost every concert venue in and around Philadelphia—from the Theater of the Living Arts on South Street to the Tweeter Center in Camden—as well as six radio stations and nearly 700 billboards. The company's local viceroy, a man named Larry Magid, once ran the city's live-music scene as a private fiefdom. Now, since Clear Channel bought him out in 2000, he manages it as a corporate franchise. Clear Channel maintains a similar chokehold on live music in almost every major city in America, as well as in most of the small ones. Agnew, who had managed to book bands that could have made

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far more money playing Clear Channel theaters, suspected that he was grit in the machine.

"Four or five years ago," Agnew told me one day in the record shop, where he also works as a clerk, "there were a lot more people aware of corporate power." Now, he said, money so dominated the music scene that a lot of younger kids didn't even

WITHIN DAYS OF A RADICAL CHANGE IN THE LAW, MORE THAN 1,000 MERGERS OCCURRED; BY 2000 FOUR BEHEMOTHS DOMINATED THE BUSINESS. TODAY, CLEAR CHANNEL RULES

know what "selling out" meant. When I asked him what had kept him in business, he corrected me: "I don't consider what I got into a 'business.'" Many Philadelphia music fans had rallied to his defense, he explained. After the closures, Agnew sent out word to his email list, 8,000 people who had attended at least one of his shows, and within days 1,000 of them had written to City Hall. He rented a paid mailbox. He persuaded a lawyer to represent the Church pro bono, and soon the Church had a dance-hall permit, the record shop had a ticket-selling permit, and Agnew had more events scheduled than before he was shut down.

Whoever was behind the attempt to close the Church, nearly every concertgoer I talked to blamed Clear Channel. They adored Agnew for "standing up to the evil empire," as one musician put it. Agnew, a vegetarian who lives with a cat and thousands of obsessively organized records, is now the most authentic rock and roller in the city. When he walks down the street, people nod and smile and pat him on the back. DJR500 is huge, and one day soon Clear Channel might make him an offer.

Some people complain about Clear Channel because they miss their old, independent stations, some because Clear Channel stations shrink playlists and recycle an ever smaller number of songs. Musicians say touring has become a cross-country hopscotch from one Clear Channel venue to another, each more sterile than the last; their agents and managers say that if artists don't play when and where Clear Channel says, they will suffer less airplay or none. As journalists point out, Clear Channel has made commercial radio nearly reporting free, believing that its syndication of Rush Limbaugh to as many stations as possible fulfills its mandate to provide news and political diversity. Evangelical Christians are distressed about radio firsts pioneered by Clear Channel DJs, such as torturing and killing live animals on the air (a chicken in Denver, a pig in Florida), but this can happen only where there's a DJ: Clear Channel has hundreds of radio veterans out of work, replacing them with canned broadcasts tailored to sound local and live. Consumer advocates argue that such robot radio is the only efficiency Clear Channel has passed along to the public. In the last several years, they point out, the cost of "free" radio—in terms of time spent enduring ads—has spiked. Concert tickets have jumped from an average of $25 to more than $40, and radio advertising rates have risen by two thirds, pricing small businesses off the airwaves.

Clear Channel says that its enemies snipe simply because it's big, and this is probably true. No one had imagined that a radio company could get so big. When Clear Channel was founded in 1972, with one station bought by a San Antonio investment banker named L. Lowry Mays, federal law forbade a company from owning more than seven FM stations and seven AMs. By the 1990s that cap had crept up to forty stations nationwide, no more than two per market. Then, in 1996, Congress passed the Telecommunications Act. Up to eight stations per market would be allowed, and as many overall as a company could digest. Within less than a year more than 1,000 mergers occurred; by 2000 four behemoths dominated the business. Today, Clear Channel rules.

Z-100 in New York? Clear Channel. K-BIG in L.A.? Clear Channel. KISS in Chicago? Clear Channel. KISS, POWER, the FOX, and the ZONE are all Clear Channel brands, and the dozens of radio stations nationwide that bear one of those names take their orders from San Antonio, where Clear Channel's headquarters is a main, in an unassuming limestone box next to a golf course. Rush Limbaugh is Clear Channel, and so are Dr. Laura, Casey Kasem, and Glenn Beck, the rising star of rant radio who organized the "Rally for America" prowar demonstration.

Last June, when the FCC raised the caps on how much access to the American public any one media company could control—a move grossly reminiscent of the days of robber barons—for even the Republican-controlled House of Representatives, which voted 400–21 to roll back—the one media company the commissioners hinted might actually be *too* big was Clear Channel. The recent debate in Congress over television ownership has focused on two numbers: 35 percent, which is the portion of American viewers to which a single TV-station owner can currently broadcast, and 45 percent, which struck media giants as a more reasonable number. Clear Channel, meanwhile, reaches roughly 200 million people, or more than 70 percent of the American public. It owns 1,225 stations within the United States, or around 11 percent overall, and greater portions in major markets. It broadcasts from at least 200 more stations abroad, many clustered

n of the border like radio maquiladoras, and
ns or controls more live-music venues than
other company. In the first six months of
, Clear Channel sold more tickets than the
-nine next largest promoters combined; in
, it claimed 70 percent of the total live-
c take. The billboards that ring the stadi-
line the highways, clutter the skyline? Clear
nnel owns most of those too.

s a business enterprise, Clear Channel is
xperiment. It is giant and potentially un-
e, more reliant on muscle than on finan-
finesse, and to date only moderately prof-
e. A sort of Frankenstein's monster, it was
from the parts of once-dying industries
jolted into life by the 1996 Telecommuni-
ons Act. Supporters of the law say there
no choice; at the time, more than half the
ons in the country were losing money. Op-
ents retort that Clear Channel is hardly a
ocratic solution. "I don't think there was
body in Washington in 1996 who could
e imagined that a few years later there'd be
company owning 1,200 stations," says
hael Copps, one of the two commissioners
he FCC's five-person board who opposed
ng ownership caps. "We should never give
body the ability to have that much power."

When I asked to interview Clear Channel's ex-
ives, a P.R. rep for the company told me that
ar Channel wouldn't talk to me, because it no
ger needs the media: a Zen koan of consoli-
on. After the company learned that several
erlings had talked nevertheless, radio CEO
n Hogan agreed to speak with me on the
ne. An amiable, forty-six-year-old former
o-ad salesman, he told me that "the key to ra-
is that it's a very personal, intimate medi-
" Hogan's first executive role was as the gen-
manager of WPCH, a fully automated station
Atlanta known as "the Peach." Hogan made
ning the station sound like changing a diaper.
was a 'beautiful music' station," he said. "You
n't have to make any decisions. All you did was
the tape on in the morning and you let it
for twenty-four hours and then you changed
ne next day. There were no decisions to make,
y were made for you. It was nice, you know,
as easy."

His idea of what radio is and can be does not
m to have changed since his days at the Peach.
ople use radio 'cause it works," he told me. "If
tops working for 'em, they stop it." The "they"
was referring to were the advertisers. "For the
t time ever, we can talk to advertisers about a
e national radio footprint," he told me. "If you
ve a younger, female-skewing advertiser who
nts access to that audience, we can give them
tions in, you know, Boston and New York and
ami and Chicago, literally across the country.
Los Angeles, San Francisco . . . We can take outdoor [ads] and radio, and *drive* people to live events and concerts and capture the excitement, the real visceral experience." The goal? "A different *kind* of advertising opportunity."

Hogan was promoted to radio CEO just over a year ago. He has tried to soften the company's image after several years of brutal acquisitions under the leadership of Randy Michaels, the former disc jockey who now manages the company's new-technologies division. Clear Channel wouldn't let me talk with Michaels, but not long after he left the radio division he gave a trade publication called *Radio Ink* an even blunter rationale for the company's push to dominate live music as it does radio. "People attending a concert are experiencing something with tremendous emotion," he said. "They're . . . vulnerable."

Across town from the Church, in a little club called the Khyber Pass, I went to see a show booked by Clear Channel's man in Philadelphia. The headliner was a band called The Dragons, best known for their album *Rock Like Fuck*, but the night belonged to the opening act, the Riverboat Gamblers, or, rather, to their singer,



Teko. Tall, skinny, gruesomely pretty, he vibrated across the two-foot-high stage, shouting loud and hard. No one was there to see the bands; the crowd, maybe a hundred strong, was there to

strations by Brad Yeo

get drunk, or to take someone home. But everyone in the room—a cigar box painted matte black from top to bottom, beer on the floor and loose wiring dangling from the ceiling—pressed forward, chins bobbing, drunken eyes widening. Near the end of a song called "Hey, Hey, Hey," Teko jumped and landed on the two-step riser at the front of the stage. It slid away, sent him crashing onto his spine. His left hand clutched the mike, into which he continued to scream; his right hand, flailing to its beat even faster, had begun to bleed at the palm. Then he jolted off the floor, bit the mike, and launched into another song: "I get the feelin' you're gonna need a feedin'! Let's eat! Let's eat! Let's eat!"

A few minutes later, Clear Channel's man jammed himself into the edge of the crowd,



grinning and rocking his head as the singer leaped from the stage and drove into the audience, swinging his bloody hand like a wrecking ball. Clear Channel's man loved it. Bryan Dilworth was a big man with small eyes and a head of thinning red hair that brought to mind Curly of the Three Stooges. He was in what he called "that moment." He grinned and rocked his head; he stopped scanning the room and actually watched the band. He elbowed me, nodding toward the Riverboat Gamblers, as if to say, "See? See?"

When the song ended, Dilworth stepped back from the crowd, returned to the bar in the n room, and ordered another Jameson's.

"Dude," he said. "*That* is what I'm fucking ta ing about."

Meaning the scene, the variables, "the co bustibles": everything he claimed Clear Chan could never buy. That included himself. At v ious times, Dilworth told me he worked for Cl Channel, or didn't work for Clear Channel. Clear Channel simply didn't matter. Sometir he called Clear Channel "the evil empire"; so times he said it was the best thing that ever h pened to his town. It was hard to know which worth to believe: the one who took me up to cluttered office of his private company, C Flood, two stories above the Khyber Pass, to p me tracks from one of his bands on a cheap bo box; or the one who took me on a tour of a Cl Channel hall and conceded that the payche that mattered came from Clear Channel, t he had a Clear Channel email address and a Cl Channel phone number, that he was in trut Clear Channel "talent buyer" responsible for ing the calendars of a dozen Clear Channel ven around the city. At times Dilworth spoke of C Channel Philadelphia in the first person. "I living proof," he told me more than once, "t Clear Channel Philadelphia is going to rock

This flexibility was what made Dilworth s a valuable asset. Unlike Starbucks or Bord Clear Channel does not build its empire fr new franchises but rather goes from town to t and buys local operations. Clear Channel Dilworths in every city with a scene, and w makes them so effective is precisely that their filiation with the company is subject to do even in their own minds. Dilworth develops "b bands" in clubs like the Khyber on his own t and filters the most marketable of them to more lucrative venues he books as his alter e a Clear Channel talent buyer. Such a double appears to be part of the Clear Channel busi plan, in which the independents who shoul an alternative to Clear Channel instead bec the company's farm team. As a result, live m is following the route taken by radio. Songs t sound the same are performed in venues t look the same and even have the same na identically branded venues, all controlled Clear Channel, brick-and-mortar embodime of KISS, the FOX, and the ZONE.

"Everything is so fucked," said Dilworth, other shot of Jameson's at his lips. "Music b ness my ass. Take the 'music' off and that's w it is." He drank the shot, and then he was t ing about the Riverboat Gamblers again: Th dudes got it, they're going places, and Dilw would take them there, Clear Channel all way. That's not monopoly, said Dilworth, business in America. "Deregulation set this t

ng time ago. I'm not taking a 'can't beat 'em
join 'em' attitude, but . . ." He trailed off, be-
e, of course, he was.

ilworth's contradictory relationship with
r Channel extended even into his home life.
wife, Kristin Thomson, worked for the Future
Music Coalition, the leading activist group
inst consolidation. FMC's head, Jenny
mey, had been a prominent witness against
ng ownership caps during last winter's Sen-
nearings, at which she laid out a specific and
pelling case for how Clear Channel has be-
e a near monopoly. Thomson and Toomey
once been minor rock stars together, as the
e group Tsunami, and Dilworth thought his
riage to Thomson was a simple instance of
ker dude meets rocker chick." He said they
n't talk about politics. Dilworth himself had
en lectures for FMC on the music business.
uck the art," he had advised a conference of
sicians. "Put the hit first.") Thomson, for her
, felt that her husband wasn't like the rest of
ar Channel.

One night, when Dilworth and I were in his of-
, he showed me his first gold record, awarded
a small role he had played in the success of the
d Good Charlotte. A very small role, he said;
d records get passed around freely when a
ord company sees a future in a relationship.

"A down payment?" I said.

"Yeah, man, it's like, a favor for a favor."

"What's the difference between that and
ola?"

Dilworth guffawed and looked at me like I was
dumbest kid in school. "It's *all* payola, dude."

Then his shoulders slumped and he stopped laughing.

What determines the course of music today
ot a zeitgeist or a paradigm or anything that can
dismissed simply as fashion. It's not even greed.
hat matters now is the process. "Cross-selling."
lustering." A confluence of car radios and con-
t halls, the drinks at the bar, the ticket that gets
u in the door, the beat you dance to. "Any-
ng you can do to be associated with the music,
u try to do," a Clear Channel executive with
ty years in radio told me. This is not entirely sin-
er, nor is it especially new. The music business,
its varied forms, has always depended on sym-
osis. Clear Channel wants you to identify with
e brand so fully that you don't recognize it as a
and at all but rather as yourself. The executive
ve me an example. "Suppose you like Dave
atthews," he said. "We like Dave Matthews.
e have Dave Matthews together."

To achieve this mind-meld, Clear Channel
is designed itself as a self-contained, nation-
de feedback loop, calibrating the tastes of its lis-
ners and segmenting them into market-proven
"formats." Today, Clear Channel operates in thir-
teen major music formats, and although some of
these formats are nearly indistinguishable, they are
nevertheless finely tuned: for example, listeners
can choose between "AC" (Adult Contempo-
rary) and "Hot AC," or among "CHR" (Con-
temporary Hits Radio), "CHR Pop," and "CHR
Rhythmic." John Hogan, the radio division's
CEO, boasted that in 2003 the company would
make more than 2 million phone calls to survey

CLEAR CHANNEL IS A SELF-CONTAINED, NATIONWIDE FEEDBACK LOOP, WHICH CALIBRATES AND SEGMENTS THE TASTES OF ITS LISTENERS

its listeners, a process that would produce "around
10,000 local-audience research reports." As these
reports are generated, the company can respond
rapidly. "If we have a CHR PD"—program di-
rector—"in, you know, Dayton, Ohio, who figures
out a great way to package up a bit, or a great pro-
motion, or comes up with something clever and
innovative, we can almost *instantaneously* make
it available to CHR radio stations across the
country." (At the time of our interview, Clear
Channel owned eighty-nine CHRs.) Then, for a
given advertiser, the company can align all its
CHRs to hit one "formatic target"—a demo-
graphic. Hogan suggested teenage girls. "A great
advertiser would be the Crest Whitestrips. In the
past, if Crest had wanted to use radio, they would
have had to call a different owner in every mar-
ket. There would have been no way to link to-
gether those stations with, you know, a common
theme, or a common execution."

Such harmony extends to the company's con-
cert business as well. "There's a lot of conference
calling between cities," a booking agent named
Tim Borror told me, "these former independents
talking to one another, letting each other know
what's going on." Another independent booking
agent and a Clear Channel talent buyer, neither
of whom would allow themselves to be named,
confirmed this practice, adding that such calls
take place almost on a weekly basis. The calls can
launch a band or flatten it. "At a certain point,
there's only one place to go—Clear Channel—and
it doesn't matter whether or not they make you a
fair offer," Borror said. "And pretty soon, they
don't have to make you a fair offer. And they can
decide what band is playing and what band isn't."

I asked John Hogan why I should believe that
Clear Channel would never use its combined
dominance of radio and live events to punish
an artist—or a politician—who did not coope

ate with the company. "I can't imagine a scenario where it would make any business sense at all," he replied. To use the power, he said, "would be to damage it." David T. "Boche" Viecelli, another booking agent, told me: "The thing people fear—legitimately fear—is that they're going to implement the threats they've intimated with radio airplay. It's not explicit. More often it's insinuation and innuendo." Clear Channel doesn't have to actively be "the evil empire," because everyone knows that it could be. With so much of music and entertainment determined by, produced by, broadcast by, measured by, and defined by Clear Channel, the company need not exercise its control in order to wield it. Clear Channel is a system so pervasive that it relieves its participants—consumers, bands, employees, even executives—of the responsibility to object, and the ability to imagine why they would ever do so.

In Denver, Clear Channel owns half the rock stations on the dial, as well as the region's number-one station, the news/talk KOA. It owns the Fillmore, co-owns the Universal Lending Pavilion, controls the rights to the Pepsi Center, and in 2001 pried a sweetheart deal out of the city for booking shows at the legendary Red Rocks Amphitheatre, carved out of the stone of the Rocky Mountain foothills—as much of a temple as pop music can claim.

I went to Denver to meet Jesse Morreale, an independent promoter who is suing Clear Channel. Morreale is one of the biggest independents in the country, but he is also one of the last. He persuaded one of the so-called Big Four law firms in Denver to represent him, but even if they can prove that Clear Channel Radio and Clear Channel Entertainment work together to shut out other promoters and threaten artists who work with them, there's a good chance his company, Nobody in Particular Presents, will be out of business by the time the case reaches any kind of conclusion. For now, Morreale has been silenced; Clear Channel won a protective order from the court, and although Morreale was happy to complain, he could not give me particulars.

Nor would the minor rock stars who came through town while I was there. The leather-clad lead singer of Cradle of Filth, a death-metal band from England, assured me that he would "never" say anything against Clear Channel. A punk-p threesome called the Raveonettes at first said th hadn't heard of Clear Channel, then admitt that they had, then offered me a beer and ask if we couldn't please instead talk about rock-an roll music. A record-company agent clinked sh with me and said, "Rock 'n roll!" but when M reale told him I was writing about Clear Chann he asked for my notes. "I'm going to need thos he said, trying to sound official. I would have s no, but since all I had written down was "Fr Durst," and the guy looked like he might cry, I t the page out and gave it to him.

The next morning, I was driving around De ver listening to the radio when I heard a p recorded spoof ad for "Butt Pirates of t Caribbean." It consisted mainly of the DJ readi in a sneering lisp, a list of actors he consider "homo." Which is to say, it was nothing unusu I had been listening to Clear Channel radio over the country and had found that gay jok ran second only to "camel jockey" or "towel he humor. Such slurs, I began to think, were simp the comedic equivalent of the mannered ro "rebellion" in the musical rotation. Like the kn jerk distortion of a Limp Bizkit song, the fag g of the local morning crew are there to assure teners that someone, somewhere, is being fended by what they are pretending to enjoy.

Back at my hotel, I called the local Clear Ch nel headquarters and asked for the man in char I was surprised to get a call back from Clear Ch nel's regional vice president, Lee Larsen, who vited me out to see him that very morning.

Larsen, who looked to be in his mid-fifties, w not a formal man. He put his loafers up on the c fee table between us and his arms behind his h and told me to fire away: he loved to talk ab radio. Larsen wore his sandy hair in a mod pompadour, and although he had some girth him, his tall frame and thick shoulders made h look like a linebacker. He started on the air fo years ago but made his career as a manager. O pedestal near the center of his office sat an antic wooden radio, flanked by Broncos helmets f ing inward. When I asked him what he listen to, he replied with a long and diverse list of s tions—none of them Clear Channel—t marked him as a man of broad but refined tast Nevertheless, he was a staunch believer in G ing the People What They Want. "This whole ciety," he said, "is based on majority rules." Th is no such thing, he said, as "lowest common nominator"; there is only democracy, and in t music world Clear Channel is its biggest purv or. The best thing about democracy, which likened to a pizza, is that there is so much of it. I take one slice of the audience, and it's the bigg slice, and it's the 'lowest common denominat slice, whatever you want to call it, guess wh

e's lots of slices for the other guy." As evi-
e of this bounty, he gestured over his shoul-
At first I thought he wanted me to look at the
of the Rockies behind him, but it turned
ne was thinking of the franchise-lined high-
I'd driven to get there. "Who'd have thought
e could be so many different fast-food restau-
s as there are?"
here were those among us, he said, who would
plain nonetheless. People "at odds with the
ses." People who believe that "the mass in
country are *stupid*." People who would tell you
you "should read *Atlantic Monthly*, not *Time*."
that was all right. "You can have anything you
t," he said. "You just can't have what you
t everywhere." He smiled. "Some people don't
that." He leaned forward and patted the cof-
able, a little gesture to let me know that he
w that I knew what he was talking about,
I was, with him, part of "the mass."
asked him about "Butt Pirates of the
ibbean." He reared back and looked at me
I was Tipper Gore. In a gentle, rumbling
e, he asked, "What are you saying? That it
uld not have been on?"
Well . . . ," I said, "switch 'Butt Pirates of the
ibbean' for something like, say, 'Jigaboos of Ja-
ca,' and I think you can see what I mean."
Larsen frowned. "I know clearly that you
ldn't do a bit like that that's *ethnic*. I know that,
y? Maybe, in the area you're talking about,
t might still be open. Society's still trying to fig-
out the line there. If you took that bit and put
n a classical-music radio station and played it,
l the people would be outraged. It's out of con-
t." But there was a time and place for such
ngs. "If every radio station was doing 'Butt Pi-
es,' then you would be saying, 'Well, what is
s?' But they are not." At the station I had heard
on, he explained, "the talent must have felt
t was within the bounds they could work with-
and was something that the audience that was
ening to *their* radio station could relate to."
I must have looked unconvinced, because
rsen seemed worried. "On the radio," he said,
e red light's on and you're talking. And you say
nething. Just like you do in real life. And you
'—he shaped his lips into an O and let his eyes
lge as he covered his mouth—"I. Wish. I.
dn't. Said. That." He shrugged his shoul-
ders, held up his palms in a "what can you
do?" gesture. "But it's too late."

From Denver, I went to Oklahoma City to meet
th former congressman Julius Caesar "J. C."
atts, who had recently been named to Clear
hannel's board of directors. During the hour
d a half we spent driving around and listening
the radio in his shiny new black Cadillac Es-
lade, the congressman referred to Americans
as "dogs" five times. Not in the slang sense—
Watts loathes what he calls that "hip-hop be-
bop rap" stuff—but in the idiom of business. He
was trying to get at what business is all about. He
wasn't concerned about Clear Channel's over-



whelming control of live music, he said, because "the dogs are eating the dog food." He said that the reason talk radio is so conservative is that "the dogs ain't eating the dog food" offered by liberals: "You can't force bad dog food on people!"

A former football star for the Sooners and a Southern Baptist preacher at a church called Sunnylane, Watts has an easy manner that can nevertheless be disconcerting, as when he took both hands off the wheel at 75 miles an hour, turned, and gripped my arm, saying, "I'm ready to go to the American people with my dog food." Then he found a song he seemed to like, "Get Busy," by Sean Paul, and turned it up. It was hip-hop, but it did have a spiritual message: "From the day we born Jah ignite me flame/Gal a call me name and it is me fame/It's all good girl turn me on/Till the early morn'/Let's get it on."

The former fourth-ranking Republican in the House, Watts may be out of office at the moment (he chose not to run last year), but at age forty-five he still wields considerable power as chair of GOPAC, an organization designed to develop Republican candidates at the state level, and as the G.O.P.'s great black hope. When President Bush made his recent tour of Africa, he tapped Watts as a traveling companion. When Democratic fixer Vernon Jordan retired from Clear Channel's board, he pushed Watts, a man who considers LBJ to have been a "wild-eyed radical," as his replacement.

But I don't think Watts's connections—or his politics—are why he "aligns nicely," as Clear Channel CEO Lowry Mays put it, with the company. Rather, I suspect it has something to do with his mix of aggressive amiability and angry defensiveness. Watts often gets called an "Uncle Tom"; Clear Channel's radio and concert guys are sick of being called "sellouts." Watts thinks it's unfair that as a black man he should have to defend himself for also being a Republican; Clear Channel can't understand why people seem shocked when it competes as fiercely as it does. Both Watts and Clear Channel look at what they're doing as revolutionary, unsentimental, *necessary*. Watts thinks Clear Channel simply needs to do a better job of telling the American people—the dogs—what the company is.

We pulled into the parking lot of a motel next to a Denny's. Watts said, "In politics or in business, you're either on the offense or you're on the defense. If you're on the defense, you're losing." Clear Channel, he explained, had to hit back, and hard. "Jeff, I think today that people are concerned with"—he reached out and banged the dashboard speakers of his Escalade—"this. They don't care where it's coming from!" Then he turned the radio on again and tuned it to his daughter's favorite station and cranked it up. "Get Busy," by Sean Paul.

"Same song!" Watts shouted. "Thirty minutes ago! I couldn't have planned that in a thousand years!" To Watts, this was a good thing.



He said Clear Channel needed a great sloga like Fox's "Fair and Balanced."

"You mean," I said, "something like 'Cle Channel: We Give You What You Want.'"

"Yeah!" Watts slapped my shoulder. "Yea Or maybe . . ." He paused to think, then held his hands to frame his idea. "Clear Chann Your Community, you know, Involvement, y know, Network, or, or Station, or Whatever.

"An enemy says, 'Jeff, I don't want you have what you have. You know, I'm gonna be self-righteous income distributor. And I' gonna balance this thing out.'" (Watts believ in balance, so long as it isn't, as he put it, "Co munist," which, presumably, pre-1996 radio America was.) "'And I'm gonna take from those who're producing and give to those th aren't producing.'" He shook his head. "Uh-u When we get to the point where people are e vious and we say, 'We're not gonna allow [co solidation] to happen'"—Watts clapped a ha over mine and shuddered—"that is *fiendish* business."

Regulation of radio ownership—Watt fiendish business—is rooted in the idea that t spectrum is a national resource, but as a real the "public airwaves" are close to extinct. Even p ponents of regulation now fight for it, perverse in the language of business, touting ownersh caps as a means to preserve the "marketplace ideas." This phrase, or even the "free market ideas," has become a rhetorical fixture of an consolidation activists, for whom it connotes a f and fair system by which ideas compete for t minds of the citizenry. Implicit in the phrase is th ideas compete in roughly the same manner as brands of soap; that, given equal price and pla ment, the most effective ideas will win the day. owning so many stations, the argument goes, Cl Channel reduces the number of songs, soun formats, and opinions from which American l teners can choose.

But to so frame the argument is already to ha lost. Media corporations want nothing more th to create new, popular formats with which to s ment their audiences on advertisers' behalf. As vocates of deregulation never tire of pointing o the "diversity" of U.S. radio content—in terms average number of different formats available each market—has increased with consolidati since 1996, not decreased. In fact, nothing sembles a "free market of ideas" so much as Cl Channel itself, where infinitesimal changes ratings are tracked, mapped, and responded where Boston's successful new format can app in San Diego overnight. This is what Lee Lars means when he speaks of giving the people wh they want. It is what J. C. Watts was trying to press when he jabbed the tuner on his radio a

ted, "*This* is democracy!" Clear Channel is a rmarket of ideas, which sells scores of differ- roducts all made in the same factory.

ctivists fret that Clear Channel is foisting a t-wing agenda onto its listeners. To the trary, the company seems to advance no logy whatsoever; nor does it seem to ad- e any aesthetic that could be called good, ugly, or beautiful. Perhaps the most in- ctive example here is the controversy over t has come to be called The List: the roster ongs that, immediately after September 11, e not supposed to be played on Clear Chan- stations. The List's recommendations ged from the obvious (AC/DC's "Shot n in Flames") to the saccharine (Billy Joel's ly the Good Die Young") to the grotesque n Halen's "Jump") to the unexpectedly po- (Phil Collins's otherwise unremarkable "In Air Tonight"). Antiwar activists pointed that The List "banned" Cat Stevens's ace Train" and John Lennon's "Imagine," ignored the fact that The List also pro- ed Judas Priest's "Some Heads Are Gonna l" and the Clash's "Rock the Casbah," said ave been popular with U.S. pilots on bomb- runs over Iraq during the first Gulf War.

veryone seemed to see The List as the ultimate e of censorship by a corporate head office, but act The List came together just as might a t promotion by John Hogan's hypothetical gram director in Dayton, Ohio. On his or her initiative (nobody knows for certain where, vith whom, The List started), a Clear Chan- PD drew up a list of songs; this PD emailed e List to a PD at another station, and he or she ed more songs, and so on. When, eventually, e List was leaked to the press, Clear Channel nted out that it was the work of independent gram directors who were free to play—or not play—whatever songs they liked.

Confusing The List for ideological censorship ects a fundamental misunderstanding of the aning of Clear Channel. It reflects the mis- ded notion that the company means anything ll. All the Clear Channel talent buyers, "on- personalities," news directors, and executives oke with shared a basic disregard for both the ntent of the product and its quality. The mar- would take care of those. Clear Channel's ctionaries seemed to view the company as ne marvelous but unfathomable machine with ose upkeep they had been charged. They knew ly that it accomplished a miraculous task— isfying the musical tastes of most of the people—and did not care to trouble themselves with how.

Bryan Dilworth swore to me he had noth- g to do with Sean Agnew's show at the Church getting shut down. He said that any suggestion to the contrary was "Davy and Goliath bullshit." He claimed he walked into his boss's office and asked them if they had been involved. He told them he needed to know, because he would quit if they had. They swore innocence. I tried to confirm his story, but his bosses never returned my calls.

One Sunday I met Dilworth at his home in South Philly. His wife needed a nap, so we took his ten-month-old for a ride in his stroller. We walked through the Italian market, dead quiet at six on a Sunday evening, empty wooden stalls fronting pork shops and bakeries. We stopped to watch a group of boys on skateboards work a ramp they had set up in the street, performing for a video camera one of the kids was holding. Dilworth laughed. "The dudes who own those stores knew these kids were out here, skating on their stalls like that? They'd break their legs." This delighted him, all of it: the men who owned the stores who wouldn't give a damn for the law, the kids who took over the street who didn't give a damn for the owners. "This place is totally . . . this place," he said.

I asked him how that squared with his working for Clear Channel, which seemed dedicated to making every place the same. Dilworth didn't look at me but he smiled. His grin pushed his baby-fat cheeks up and made his eyes small.

"All of a sudden I'm supposed to be super-evil?" he said. "FUCK THAT."

"No, that's not what I meant," I said.

"FUCK THAT. I just wanted to make money doing something I liked. There are different opinions about how far down the road America is businesswise, but dude, whatever, it's too far gone for anything to change."

He bumped the stroller up over a curb, and the baby began to cry. We walked without talking for a few blocks, the clackety-clack of skateboard wheels fading behind us. But closer to home, both he and the baby mellowed. Dilworth stopped smiling, and his eyes stopped squinting.

"Then," he said, "there's that feeling in your spine, and it's all right." His voice went up in pitch and grew soft, as if he were embarrassed. He was talking about rock. "When the arc is just starting to arc? And you're saying this could be Van Halen, this could be Neil Young. It's like you're bearing witness. It's not, 'Ching-ching, here we go.' It's 'I saw it. It does exist.' There's something really there. It's not just a need for chaos. It's—yeah. That's what I want." His voice deepened again, and his pace evened out. The baby had nodded off. We stopped in front of Dilworth's stoop. "Clear Channel?" he said. "That's money. I need it to buy liquor and baby clothes."

SMALL WORLD

Why one town stays unplugged

By Bill McKibben

When you think about Vermont, Barre is not the town you're imagining. Main Street has seen better days. There are few covered bridges and fewer rusticators in J. Crew sweaters. There is a heroin problem. The town's peculiar local geology—it is the self-proclaimed "granite capital of the world"—has given rise to a peculiar local economy. For nearly a century, Rock of Ages Corporation has been one of the town's biggest employers, providing tombstones for a nation. Barre is—literally and figuratively—a gritty town.

Thunder Road, "the nation's site of excitement," sits just down the hill from the quarry, and on summer Thursday nights (because quarrymen used to get paid on Thursday afternoons) it vibrates with noise—cars dopplering around the half-mile track, the whine rising and falling as they flash by the grandstand straight. It's glorious fun—the booth selling homemade videos of last year's best crashes, the "battle flags" of last year's champion cars flapping over the infield. Those grandstands hold ten thousand people on a big night, and most nights are big. Ten thousand—one Vermonter in sixty—is more people than gather anyplace else in the state.



"After the war, that's when all this started," said Ken Squier, who built Thunder Road. Car racing may be big time now, but it began as a local sport, and not just down South. "The soldiers came back from Okinawa, from Iwo Jima, from the Bulge. They were not going to play a children's game like baseball. This was their thing. It was always the people's sport. Always the sport for the unshined shoes."

I could listen to Ken Squier most of the night. He's a talker, and he comes by it honestly, having spent the better part of six decades in front of the microphone at the radio station his father helped build—"WDEV, Radio Vermont . . . the *friendly* pioneer . . . Ninety-six-point-one on your FM dial." Naturally he broadcasts races from Thunder Road, at least on those Thursdays when the Red Sox aren't playing at the same time. And of course he discusses the races in loving detail on his morning sports wrap. He even has a weekly auto-racing hour hosted by one of his sidekicks, Dave Moody. Any businessman would do the same—when Disney and ABC or AOL and TimeWarner do it they call it "synergy."

But here's the odd part. When Dave wraps up the auto-racing show on Monday evening, the next thing you hear is *Dinner Jazz*—two hours of Cannonball Adderley and Miles and Coltrane and Dave Brubeck, brought to you by the same advertisers (Lenny's Shoes and Apparel, Shore Acres restaurant) that bring you, at various times during the week, the bird-watching hour, *Music to Go to the Dump By*, and the station's own bluegrass band ("We don't want to be strangers . . . We're the Radio Rangers . . . from WDEV"). Some nights in the winter they'll carry two different girls' high school basketball games

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Illustrations by Stan Fell

to-back or hockey from Norwich College. e's some gospel preaching on Sunday morn- nd Dairyline with the latest hundredweight s in the five o'clock hour so you can hear it g morning milking. There's a conservative how for an hour in the morning, of course— ddly, in the afternoon, there's an hour of ving talk, hosted by socialist congressman ie Sanders and by Anthony Pollina, of the 's Progressive Party.

other words, this is a very ge radio station. Forget ed states and the blue s. WDEV exists in a kind urple state. Many parts of hedule sound like things can hear elsewhere. If e got the new satellite ra- , you can get bluegrass nty-four hours a day and teen flavors of jazz. Mod- adio stations aim for a par- ar niche—say, thirty-five- old males who want sports nd the clock. But it's a rare e in our society where lonious Monk and stock- racing coexist. It's radio actually reflects the real- f local life, and it seems very strange because it's all but disappeared everywhere else.



couple of miles downhill from Thunder d, on the slightly tired main street of Barre, Murphy opened up a diner about a year ago, t next to the hardware store. Ham and eggs, kfast all day, bottomless cup of coffee. A lo- joint. But the Farmer's Diner is maybe the t local joint in the whole United States— ething like 80 percent of the food it serves was d within sixty miles of the kitchen. In a coun- where the average forkful of dinner travels 0 miles to reach your lips, this makes Murphy's r perhaps the most interesting restaurant in erica. Sure, other chefs work with local food— e Waters has been doing it for years, to great deserved acclaim. But not at $5.50 for the nburger platter. Diner food comes frozen in at plastic sacks on the backs of trucks.

Great local food in a diner is as odd as jazz and k-car racing sharing a radio frequency. Amer- has been Clear Channeled and Olive Gar- ed with enormous success, but it's possible t success has begun to breed a reaction. Politi- ns were bowled over last summer when hun- ds of thousands of Americans from across the itical spectrum wrote in to decry new FCC egulation that would have let media giants n even more stations than they do now. And people are flocking in the hundreds, anyhow, to line the counter at Murphy's new eatery. Some are old hippies, and some are on their way to Thunder Road. But there are enough of them that Murphy has begun to think big—begun to imagine Farmer's Diners all across America, serving food grown from whatever region they happen to be in. "'Local' is the new 'organic,'" he said. "Everywhere that there's an Applebee's, there could be a Farmer's Diner."

In fact, the longer I spent around Squier and Murphy, the more I began to wonder if maybe "local" really is what comes next—whether as the globalized world begins to fray, socially and environmentally and even economically, people might start wanting to shorten their supply lines. Energy that comes from a windmill on the ridge instead of an oil tanker from the Gulf, say. We're not going to build computer chips in local workshops, but does every chicken need to come from some enormous Tyson shed in the Southeast? A resurgence of the local would be counterintuitive. The momentum in the direction of globalization seems too powerful to buck, the economic logic unmatchable. But in a region where jobs are draining away, and where an ethic of self-reliance remains a dim, vestigial, but honored memory, it seems at least an outside possibility. And inside the Farmer's Diner, with cops and housewives and truck drivers hunched over chili from local steers and local beans, it seems awfully appealing.

The train of thought that led to this Barre lunch counter began, oddly enough, in the 1990s, when Tod Murphy was working in a cool new coffee place in Seattle called Starbucks, soon to be the poster child for the destruction of local commercial culture. "I was a damned good Starbucks counter guy," Murphy said. "That's where I got my chops. I found out that I really liked customers. It fits in with my Aquarian personality—you don't have to make a long-term commitment to them, but you get to converse." He learned plenty of other things, too, watching Starbucks owner Howard Schultz. "He was always able to see the possibilities. He knew about the 'half hour vacation,' and how people wanted a new public space, and all of that. He understood what was happening in the culture."

In the mid-nineties, Murphy and his girlfriend, a Starbucks manager, moved east to Atlanta to launch their own start-up—"Coffee Station," they

called it. The plan was to make as much money as quickly as possible. "The whole idea was to flip it, to turn it—all those late nineties words." Murphy ended up in New York as operations director. "In three years in Manhattan, I saw Patrick Stewart in a Shakespeare play and that was pretty much my tourist life. We were full-out." Coffee Station didn't turn into Starbucks—in fact it went

IT IS THE SOCIETY WE INHABIT

out of business—but Murphy and his partners had sold out near the top of the boom, clearing a small bundle. "It made having a farm possible."

Ah, a farm. Murphy grew up suburban, but his grandparents were still farming in rural Connecticut (just down the road from what's since turned into Mohegan Sun, the gaudiest of the Indian casinos). He knew what he wanted to do: "I would get the Sears and Roebuck farm catalogue and price out what a laying flock would cost me," he said. So when he sold off his stake in overpriced Manhattan latte, he drove north to Vermont and started looking.

He found a place—a beautiful, scraggly hill farm ten miles south of Barre, where he started raising veal calves. "Great organic veal calves, nursing off old dairy cows. They were out on pasture too, so they actually had some flavor from grass. I went to start selling them because shortly they were not going to be veal anymore, they were going to be young beef. The first chef I talked to said, 'Great, I'll take three cases of top round.' Well, Christ, the entire herd didn't have three cases of top round. And no one wanted the front legs."

Murphy had discovered the essential fact of modern agriculture: veal calf, ear of corn, gallon of milk, what you've grown is a commodity. You either sell it into the huge industrial food stream, at a price set by the lowest-cost, highest-volume grower in some distant market, or you can begin the laborious task of figuring out how to market your product for a higher price: at a farmer's market, or through an organic co-op, or maybe marinated in some special sauce and Fed-Exed from your website. (You could also do what most small farmers in Vermont or elsewhere in America have in fact done: sell your farm to someone else, who will either try one of the above strategies or turn it into ski condos.) In this case, Murphy sold his veal calves to the New England Culinary Institute for use in their meat-cutting class. But that was clearly a limited market. And anyway, he was cursed with the brain of an entrepreneur.

"I started to ask myself, how do you create company that will take food off the farmer's han in the easiest way for a farmer, and set it in tro of the customers in the easiest way for them, a do it at a price point everyone could live wit And a diner was the answer I came up wit People know what to expect from it. It's a groun beef business. Nothing fancy."

In fact, though, a diner was not so intuitive obvious. Virtually all the other restaurateurs wh want to use high-quality local produce have go high-end, for the obvious reason that a $50 che covers a multitude of sins. You can afford to p the higher price of hand-raised organic veal, a the high price of having a chef take the time hack it apart, and the higher price of going dow to the farmer's market to shop for it, and th high price of the fresh flowers on the table make your customer feel as if $50 was mon well spent. If you're going to try to use the sa ingredients to compete with, say, Denny's, you going to have to think a lot harder. And if you going to try it in Vermont, where winter la awhile, you're going to have to thi harder still.

Local sounds good, but most of Americ history has been spent transforming local in national and now global. The result is the soci we inhabit. Considering only just these two c egories, food and communications, it's easy enou to see what's happened. Whereas once most peo grew their own food, and perhaps a small surp to sell, farmers now make up 1 or 2 percent the population. The rest of us have moved making the economy vastly larger by doing o er things. We now can get fresh food from arou the planet, flown or shipped in at every season, a it's all incredibly cheap—once upon a time orange was a rare treat in the bottom of a Chr mas stocking for most Americans, and now orar juice is a staple of our lives, available in low-a and high-calcium and everything in between. kind of a miracle that consumer capitalism can liver you an apple from South Africa for fo cents. Similarly, communication was once lar ly confined to the people in your immediate vic ity, unless you were willing to write a letter. N we are entertained virtually nonstop by hundr of channels of television and radio and Inter radio and legally and illegally downloaded tu and you name it. There is no vaguely musi sound emitted by anyone on the planet tha not available, again for a vanishingly low price any of the rest of us at any time. Vermont al has seventy-eight radio transmitters—the dia pretty crowded even in this small state.

Or, of course, you could say it another way. now grow our food with so few farmers that of rural communities have simply shriveled up

ppeared, and many of the rest are impover-
l and hopeless. Farmers working thousands of
apiece can't take good care of the land—soil
es, pesticides and herbicides go on by the
Animals grown in vast factory farms are, by
ition, animals abused. Flying and trucking
from one end of the world to the other spews
on into the atmosphere. By the time the ap-
rom New Zealand reaches your supermarket
stes like nothing special. Vast quantities of
p food have, in the last couple of decades,
ed to make us, well, vast.

hen a train car overturned in Minot, North
ota, last year, a large quantity of ammonia
ed out, sending up a cloud of poison gas. Lo-
fficials quickly tried to contact the town's
n radio stations to send out the alarm—only
d that there was no one actually working in
f them. They were simply relaying a satellite
from Clear Channel headquarters in Texas—
e was plenty of country music and golden
es and Top 40 and right-wing chat, but no one
arn about the toxic cloud drifting overhead.

rue that you can hear any-
g from anywhere at any
, but, oddly, it's gotten a
harder to hear much about
immediate vicinity. All
talk radio covered the fine
nts of the California recall
obsessive detail—did
old grope all those women?
try spinning the dial to
out about, say, the extent
omestic abuse in your own
nty. That's one reason
ple rose up last summer to
t the FCC when it moved
nake the world even safer
the Clear Channels. It was
posed to be a quiet back-
m deal, but pretty soon ac-
sts of every stripe were
ting the regulation: When
nie Sanders held a hearing
Vermont, for instance, there
en't enough seats for all the
ple who wanted to testify;
ngress got so many emails that the Senate ac-
lly tried to reject the new regulations. Michael
well, the shocked and peeved chairman of the
C, whined to the *New York Times* in Septem-
that "there was a concerted grassroots effort to
ack" the new regulation. "I've never seen that,"
added.

Here's another way of saying it. A couple of
cks up the dial from WDEV, you come to a
ear Channel Vermont station, one of a half-
en area signals controlled by the $8 billion
poration. It styles itself The Zone, and it car-
ries Rush. After Rush, it carries the Don and Mike show. A few days ago, I listened to Don and Mike for an hour. They tried to fry an egg on the sidewalk because it was so incredibly hot (in Washington, D.C., where they're located; in Vermont it was raining). They also had a big discussion about a porno film they'd recently watched on a cable channel and whether or not it was gross that the male actor had an uncircumcised penis. This turned disputatious, and either Don or Mike told either Mike or Don to kiss his ass. "Kiss the inside of my ass. Kiss the eye. Kiss the eye!" Then a woman came into the studio who had tanned the words "Don" and "Mike" onto her breasts in order to win a hundred dollars. There was more dispute, this time about whether or not she'd tanned them low enough, "across the round part, the aureole."

An economist would argue that we've chosen this world—that if we didn't want the Sysco truck unloading frozen dinners into the back door of the family-casual chain dining house, we wouldn't go there. That if we wanted to listen to local radio, local radio would ipso facto exist. And there's plenty of truth in all that—by and large we have picked (with the assistance of immense quantities of advertising) the cheapest, the easiest, the saltiest, the greasiest. Something in dirty talk appeals to many of us, and community has often seemed like more work than it's worth. Our choices *have* in some ways built our world. On the other hand, it's hard to test whether these are the choices we really, or *still*, want to make. If most every radio station in your town is owned by some big broadcaster, you need many millions of dollars to buy a frequency, if indeed one is even open. If your choice of restaurants is confined to twenty places with a loading ramp at the back for the tractor trailer, then it's harder to make a statement of your desires.



In other words, if you wanted to find out whether, in the early twenty-first century, local "works," or whether it's simply a romantic fantasy, you'd need to have some test cases, some examples to look at. A few places that exist slightly outside the conventional economy. Like the Farmer's Diner, or like WDEV.

One way to have such a place is to inherit it from your father, which is how Ken Squier

came by his radio station. "This was a print shop in 1930," he said, waving his arm around the small suite of offices in downtown Waterbury where WDEV still operates. "They published the Waterbury *Record*. My father was working here for Harry Whitehill, who was also the customs collector for northern Vermont. In those days that meant chasing liquor, and Mr. Whitehill spent quite a bit of time up at St. Albans near the Canadian border, where they happened to have the first commercial station in the state. And one day he came home and said to my dad, 'Lloyd, more people can hear than can read. I think we ought to have a radio station too.'"

The Pony Boys, and Beedie's Troubadours, and Doc Kenyon of the Moonlight Ramblers—they stayed up night after night, playing away as Squier Sr. tested the signal. By July 6, 1931, all was ready. Miss Kate Lyons, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Lyons of Waterbury Center, sang "The Rose in the Garden," followed by Stanley Nevin singing "The Hoot Owl." Mrs. Beryl Thibuilt played the first instrumental solo—a violin rendition of Fritz Kreisler's "Liebesfreud." The president of the local bank spoke, as did the general manager of the Eastern Magnesium Talc plant and a number of preachers. The state's poet laureate, Dan Cady, offered a poem:

> Vermont now goes upon that screen
> That wondrous screen, the air:
> We'll show that things can happen here
> As well as anywhere:
> We'll give the world the news it needs
> And still have news to spare.

Soon the station was on the air three hours a day; soon it was carrying live chats from the governor's office and broadcasting the state basketball championship. But the bread and butter was country music. "Dance pavilions were the social activity in those days. There were six or seven really fine local bands, and all through the 1930s each band would come in and play for half an hour, talk about where they were performing that night. They'd take requests and sell their pictures over the air. Texas Slim and the Northern Ridge Runners. Bud Bailey and the Down Easters." And the local towns got an hour a week—the Morrisville hour, the Montpelier hour. "My father met my mother because she came for the Hardwick hour," Squier said. "A the towns took it very seriously."



WDEV offered full-service radio in part be cause it paid off nicely, and in part because White hill and Squier Sr. saw it as their responsibility. I fact, the idea of businessmen owning radio statio was controversial. In the 1920s, as the medium g off the ground, licenses went mostly to college to labor unions, and to groups like them—the seemed the obvious rightful custodians of the pu lic airwaves. But in the 1930s, as it became cle what a commercial gold mine broadcasting coul be, business managed to convince Congress th their "well-rounded" programming should get th edge over "narrow special in terest." Washington did d mand, however, a certai modicum of accountabilit "Right from the very begi ning, from like 1934, yo were supposed to assess yo community," Squier sai "The government told y to assess the needs, and s how you were going to fulf them, and if you didn't th would take your license aw from you."

So at the time, there w nothing in the least unus al about WDEV—every r dio station on the dial w busy trying to entertain ar inform local audiences. B by simply doing pretty muc the same thing for seventy years, the station h turned into a kind of relic; there are others li it, mostly scattered around rural parts of th country, but the landscape of the medium h changed dramatically. With the advent of tel vision, radio turned more and more into a me music box; then, in the eighties and ninetie big companies discovered they could knit t gether huge networks and feed them the same f matted top hits, the same nationwide talk show The cost of a frequency skyrocketed—any s nal in a major metro area now brings in tens millions of dollars—but the opportunities to sa money were also enormous. Instead of a staff forty, like the one Squier maintains, you could r a radio station for next to nothing, enabling y to pay off the cost of acquiring the license and st make lots of money. The same ad salesmen c pitch all of Clear Channel's local stations, and i simpler for advertisers to buy their package.

"Literally now, if you can prove you haven been busted for drugs and you've got the mon you get a place on the dial," Squier said. "Th pay lip service to need and necessity, but tha horse pucky." Indeed, Clear Channel brags

d deal about its "public service," which most-
nvolves running those free ads from the Ad
ncil. That's different from the idea that the
o station is there to actually *serve* a commu-
. "A few years ago a big flood hit Montpelier,"
ier said, "and after a couple of days they asked
vernor Dean how he was keeping track of
at was happening. And he said, 'Well, I'm lis-
ing to WDEV.' We took all our sales staff and
ned them into reporters for that period. We
pped all our commercials for three days. We
l someone on the scene when the railroad
lge down here moved on its moorings. That's
at we're supposed to do."

As radio and TV grew less and less interested
education and service, Congress responded
by reining them in but by setting aside a lit-
cash to create public broadcasting. Vermont
a considerably better than average public-
io service. Along with all the NPR shows, it
ers a twice-a-week hour-long call-in on local
ics, three five-minute commentaries every day
local residents, and an unparalleled weather
ecast. But there's a sense in which it manages
appeal to a certain market segment, just like
Clear Channel stations. The only time that
rts come up is on Saturday mornings between
en and eight, in a national broadcast origi-
ting in Boston; rock and roll gets a (remarkably
id) hour on Saturday evening. You aren't go-
g to hear stock-car racing, and you're not go-
g to get a twenty-minute interview with the ed-
r of the Addison County *Independent* about
at's going on in his paper that week.

Squier insists that if Congress had maintained
igil on commercial broadcasting, "there nev-
would have been the need to set up what some
e as an elitist network." But he understands
t how far out of the barn and out to pasture that
rticular horse is. So he's left listening to pub-
radio with a kind of rueful vengefulness, be-
use so much of it sounds like what he wants
DEV to sound like. He loves jazz, for instance.
e spent his college years in Boston, working at
ubs run by the great promoter George Wein.
he best education I ever had. Miles, Coltrane,
la, Sara Vaughn, I saw them all, five or six
ghts a week. Brubeck, Errol Garner." And hence
runs *Dinner Jazz*, right before the Red Sox. He
so loves classical music—in fact, he runs his
vn small classical station. "I tried to give Ver-
ont Public Radio money," he said. "I sent them
check for $1,700 and asked that they say, 'Sup-
rt for this programming is coming from WCVT,
lassic Vermont, 101.7.' But they sent it back and
id they wouldn't accept it because I'm a com-
etitor. Competitor! They pay no taxes, they get
300,000 a year from the government. So on the
ne hand I'm up against Clear Channel. And on
ne other hand I'm up against this group that
claims they're public." He would settle, he said with a laugh, for the chance to run *Prairie Home Companion* on his air. "I begged for that show," he said. "But they just laughed at me."

Some years WDEV makes money, though Squier is not about to say how much, and some years it doesn't. If Squier had to buy it now, though, he couldn't. "No Vermonter will ever hold a radio station license again," he said. "They'll go to the big companies with the liquidity." Who will pay the capital costs by not using the sales staff to cover the three-day Montpelier flood, and not broadcasting back-to-back high school girls' basketball games, and not mounting a microphone on a bicycle to cover the local marathon, and not going live to the woods on the opening day of deer-hunting season.

Lots of conversations in Vermont get around to milk, which has been the state's agricultural staple since the decline of the wool trade in the nineteenth century. But Vermont has lost 80 percent of its dairy farms in the last forty years—they're competing with the megafarms of the Midwest and California, which have driven prices through the floor. A few dairymen have emulated the competition and gotten very big, but many more have gotten Florida license plates. So it was a relief when one day Tod Murphy drove me out to visit the Strafford Organic Creamery, a small dairy that actually seems to be almost making it. Earl Ransom was born on the farm in 1972, and he's been running it since he was twenty-three; his milk comes in big glass bottles, from apparently happy cows who spend their time out on pasture, at least until it gets cold. (Or until something else happens. "That's Stu with the horns over there," explained Earl as he flipped burgers on his grill. "Stu's going in the freezer on Tuesday.") Anyway, Earl lives the life of a dairy farmer—which means that his property taxes have gone up 38 percent since 2001 as the land gets more and more desirable, and which means that he spends $2,000 a month on electricity to run his small farm. "It's highly unlikely we could survive at our scale without being organic," Earl said. The premium price underwrites an ecologically sensible farm.

A FEW VERMONT DAIRYMEN HAVE EMULATED THE COMPETITION AND GOTTEN VERY BIG, BUT MANY MORE HAVE GOTTEN FLORIDA LICENSE PLATES

But the milk mostly goes to natural-food stores—that is, to people who can afford, and are

willing to pay $3.50 a half-gallon instead of $2. It's a niche market, the public radio of dairying. The exception is the Farmer's Diner, which buys most of its dairy products from Ransom. "I've had to educate folks that whipping cream is not supposed to be white," Murphy said. "When the cows went out of the barn and into the pasture in the spring, the half-and-half changed color noticeably. The waitresses were afraid people would freak."



It's operations like Ransom's that Murphy wants badly to support. But he didn't inherit his business. If he's going to spread it around the country, it will be on other people's money, money that's looking for a good return. A good way to lose that money would be to go entirely warm and fuzzy. So while Murphy decorates the diner with slogans from Wendell Berry ("Eating is an Agricultural Act"), he resists the urge to hire on the basis of ideology. "My first manager, he wanted the kitchen to be a Darwinian, organic, evolving system. No. You have to be God in the kitchen, lay down how it will be, impose some divine intelligence on the primordial soup. Chaos theory is great, but you need some pretty powerful computers to see the patterns, the pretty fractals. Customers are the observers in this system, and to them it just looks like chaos."

By contrast, Murphy has evolved a careful plan for the diner, a plan that at the moment is making the rounds of investors. His Barre operation has indisputably proved people will line up to eat local food—but it's also indisputably proved, Murphy said, that you need a certain degree of economy of scale to make the idea really work. He's making two or three cents on the dollar now. Not many investors are going to sign on for a 2 or 3 percent return. So, *to a degree*, Murphy has no choice but to expand—once started, the competitive logic of globalism is hard to derail. His scheme goes like this: Murphy will build clusters of diners—maybe five or six in Vermont, perhaps fifteen in a metro area like Boston—and service each cluster from a central kitchen. "If we have a central commissary supplying four or five other places, we go from making three cents on the dollar to nine cents on the dollar. We can go from one guy with a knife cutting home fries to a machine that cuts home fries and coleslaw and everything else. In the same time it now takes him to prep one hundred pounds of home fries, he can do all the vegetables for three diners."

That's the way that Denny's thinks too, o course—and once you've started down that pat it would be easy to just keep going. Doubtles there's a bigger machine that cuts French fries f 3,000 restaurants at once. "That's why we hav to have a stake in the ground. The food has t come from within sixty miles—that's where ph losophy overrides the busi ness model," Murphy sai "Because there's some poin at which you're not loc anymore, and then you' Applebee's. I contend it the sixty-mile radius—tha allows people to recogniz the names of the towns th food comes from. Wende Berry wrote me and said six ty miles is too far awa Well, he's right. I'd like it a within a buggy ride, too. B since we're playing in 1,500-mile game, sixty mil is pretty good."

The aim, eventually, is for locals across th nation to invest in their own clusters of diners- the parent company will provide the busine model and technological expertise, collecting percentage from the franchises. "We want to h a vertically integrated company, which is ev and awful," Murphy said. "But a *decentralized* ve tically integrated company. I don't think there a model of that anywhere."

The biggest problem with this vision is th globalism has long since eviscerated the infr structure needed for it to happen. As the foo system nationalized, all the slaughterhouses co centrated around the big Midwest feedlots. A fe potato-producing regions—Maine, Idaho—hav enormous French fry factories, but if you want t produce a French fry anywhere else, you need a gu with a knife. Vermont literally doesn't produc pork anymore—to get a supply of bacon, Mu phy has a fifteen-year-old named Andrew raisi pigs on his parents' small dairy farm.

And so, in order to open even the Barre di er, Murphy had to buy or build his own miniatu supply chain. His smokehouse, Vermont Smok and Cure, is located in the back of a Texaco st tion a couple of miles from the restaurant. "Th is the raw room. This is a pickler—we can inje brine into hams and bacons. This is the vacuu stuffer, for sausage making. It's a great machin but the drawback is all the directions are in Ge man. I have to get my uncle down from the Can dian border to read them for me."

In essence, by setting his sixty-mile limit, Mu phy has thrown a handful of grit into his busine plan. He's agreed to cook with one hand tied b hind his back. In return, he gets a story to tell, o

hopes will draw customers. "I keep comparing
ith Starbucks. Latte is in the culture now,
it wasn't ten years ago. Right now people are
starting to care about local food. We're
in the right place at the right time."

The nation's liberals are forever talking
ut launching some kind of left-of-center ra-
network—Al Franken going head-on
inst Rush Limbaugh. But Anthony Pollina,
ner gubernatorial candidate on the Progres-
Party ticket, has already been doing the job,
k in and week out, for half a year on WDEV.
e guests are mill workers laid off as Vermont's
nufacturing base contracts, and other mill
kers who have restarted their old factory to
locally marketed production. They're dairy
ners fighting for higher milk prices from the
marketers. Pollina's show is wildly different
n almost anything else you hear anywhere—
rking-class Americans voicing their re-
tment not of feminazis and gay people and
lfare queens and so on but of their actual
ersaries in corporate America.

WDEV charges both Pollina and local con-
vative talkmeister Laurie Morrow for their
ur a day of airtime—it's a mercenary propo-
on for the station. But the shows fit pretty
atly with Squier's own politics, a kind of pop-
sm that has very little to do with party. His
eners often seem cut from the same mold.
fact, it makes you wonder if a gradual return
more local economies might bring with it a
idual change in the lines that divide our po-
ical life. We're used to imagining local com-
nities as hopelessly parochial and conserva-
e, but in fact it's the national culture that
s grown right-wing and intolerant—all those
nters thrive because in the nation as a whole
ere are enough bigots to make up an audi-
ce. But local communities are maybe more
terested in finding out what works than they
e in venting. Less interested in left versus right
an in big versus small.

Tod Murphy, for instance, wears his hair in a
nytail and is driven by an intense concern
r the environment. He also averages twenty-
e hours a month filling out federal and state
perwork for the restaurant and the smoke-
use—the USDA inspector, by law, gets his
vn room and his own bathroom in the back of
e Texaco station. Is he for big government?
ot exactly.

Or consider this. Last summer a Vermont state
ooper named Michael Johnson was trying to
op a car driven by a suspected drug dealer. He
as putting a spike strip down on the interstate to
ncture the car's tires when the dealer drove
to the median and ran him over. A few nights
ter Squier ran the main feature at Thunder Road
in his honor—state troopers driving the pace car, jugs going through the grandstand to collect money for Johnson's three kids. And the next morning Squier was on the radio fulminating about the need to start executing heroin dealers. Red meat stuff—understandable in the circumstances, but red meat. What you expect from radio.

Ten minutes later, though, he was interviewing a local author, Thom Hartmann, who had written a book called *Unequal Protection*, an account of "the rise of corporate dominance and the theft of human rights." All summer, in fact, Squier kept returning to the book, urging that his listeners go out and buy a copy so they could understand how corporate campaign contributions came to have such power. The day after the great eastern blackout, he was fulminating again—this time about the way that utility lobbyists had left the nation vulnerable. It's as if Rush Limbaugh and Al Franken shared a brain.

With one big difference. When you're local, it's harder to be a complete jerk. The day after he raged on about lining heroin dealers up against the wall and shooting them, Squier invited a local lawyer onto his program to argue against the death penalty. "If you ever saw someone get executed, you wouldn't be so glib about it," he told Squier.

"I don't think you're right about that," Squier said. "But maybe you are." There's a phrase you'll wait a long time to hear on the national shows.

If you look hard enough, you can see a strain of this populism in Vermont's current contribution to national politics, the Howard Dean campaign. Against gun control, for the death penalty, against tax cuts for the rich, for restrictions on



global trade. And funded by $50 donations from around the country. Small, not big. The Bush campaign is reportedly counting on "NASCAR dads" to carry the day, but the view from Thunder Road is a little different.

If you took a poll and asked people if they wanted more "community" in their lives, a huge majority would say yes. Left, right, and center, it's

a lack we profess to feel. But it's not at all clear that we mean it in anything other than a wistful, sentimental way—that, given the choice, we have any real interest in community, or in the institutions (like WDEV or the Farmer's Diner) that might build it.

That's because a local community is in some ways an exercise in inefficiency. Take the modern radio industry as an example. It's the furthest thing from local, but it's incredibly focused on *you*. It's entirely set up around the idea that you are a part of a predictable demographic whose tastes can be reliably commodified. If you walk into the headquarters of, say, Kansas City's Entercom Broadcasting, a Clear Channel wanna-be, it looks like you're in a food court. In the center, ad salesmen work from a line of cubicles. Around them, a ring of small sound booths house each of the company's stations—there's a country, a classical, a smooth jazz, a news, a rock, a classic rock, an alternative rock, and a continuous soft rock (KUDL) geared toward women. If that kind of segmentation isn't enough for you, you can sign up for satellite radio—on XM's 101 channels, rock and roll comes in an endless variety of flavors, including "stadium rock" and "hair bands." And of course the whole premise of talk radio is that you can go all day long without hearing an opinion you disagree with—Limbaugh's fans, after all, call themselves "dittoheads."

Whereas on WDEV, if you listen regularly, you hear Ann Coulter decrying the treason of the American left, but you also hear the American left, or at least the Vermont version of it, decrying plant closings and failing dairy farms, demanding national health insurance and dissing the president. You hear jazz in the evening, and you hear stock-car racing. You hear, in other words, things that *other people* are interested in. Which is pretty much the definition of community. If you're a senior citizen you find out what's going on in the schools, and if you're a jazz fan you hear some bluegrass, and everyone gets the Norwich ice-hockey scores. Television, of course, is so expensive it has to chase the largest possible audience, and the Internet, by virtue of its design, splits people off into narrow avenues of interest. Radio is the ideal community vehicle, its signal confined by the hills and mountains to a narrow area—or was, until big money figured out how to buy up those local stations and turn them into ghost repeaters.

Now there are just survivor stations like WDEV hanging on, for who knows how long. I was in the studio one morning when Squier was interviewing his grandchildren about the new Harry Potter book. Their mother, Squier's daughter Ashley Jane, squeezed into the booth too, and when she started talking it was with the practiced air of a radio pro. She'd grown up in the studio, hosting the Green Mountain Ballroom, a dance program for kids. But she took up religion instead—she's an Episcopal priest in Chicago, and her brother's the sound man for the California band the Smokin' Armadillos. Monthly, Squier said, one or another of the big outfits makes an offer for the station. "The value probably went up another forty percent when the FCC passed the last deregulation." It's a little hard to see how the station will outlast him.

The barriers to entry in the restaurant business are a lot lower than they are in broadcasting—the most important license comes from the local health department. Still, the Farmer's Diner is another difficult example of embracing a certain kind of inefficiency. Since it's always summer somewhere and we know how to fly tomatoes around the planet for next to nothing, why bother seeking out blemished local hydroponic tomatoes to top your burgers in mid-winter? Lettuce is a commodity item, and it comes at $18 a box; why bother paying $21 a box simply because the local farmers say that's what they need to make a profit? Murphy took me to Thistle Hill Farm in Pomfret, where they make a stunning Tarentaise cheese; it costs $10 a pound wholesale, however, and it would be a lot easier not to use it in your version of a Ploughman's Lunch. Why bother with ice cream from the small organic herd in nearby Strafford when you know, based on experience, that they're going to run out a few times in the course of the summer and your whole menu is going to be screwed up? It's so much easier just to take it all out of the back of the tractor trailer and serve it up.

All you get in return for the effort is a story, the story that the food comes from your neighbors, that by eating it you're helping local agriculture. It's possible that the story is worth a buck—people might pay Murphy $6 for a hamburger lunch even though Denny's would serve them the same number of calories for $5 (especially since Murphy's hamburger, from beef raised on the western side of the Green Mountains in Starksboro, is really, really good). It's possible that by cutting out the middleman and using prefab diner buildings and finding investors who think it's a good idea as well as a good scheme, Murphy can make it work.

Look—we live in a world where Wal-Mart and McDonald's, with their unbelievable efficiency, have managed to erode away most of what were once local economies—"Low Prices Always" might as well replace "In God We Trust." So it's a stretch to imagine that a really good hot turkey sandwich might matter—that the pendulum might be poised to swing back the other way. But it's sweet to imagine it too.



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THE PLACE WITHOUT ROADS

Russia paves the Trans-Siberian gap

By Alexander Blakely

Milkovo, the village my wife grew up in, has a single paved road through it. This short stretch of asphalt interrupts an otherwise desolate gravel rut that barely connects Milkovo to the rest of Kamchatka, a wild and frozen peninsula that is itself barely attached to Russia's eastern shore. The place is so cold and remote it humbles even Siberians. That smooth pavement, though, promises warmth and at least the rudiments of civilization.

My mother-in-law, Lyubov, was for many years the director of finance for the local branch of the Russian highway department, Rosavtodor. When Milkovo's collective farm collapsed along with the Soviet Union, Rosavtodor became its main enterprise, which made Lyubov one of the few people with a salary. Without the plowing and maintenance done by her colleagues, the road would disappear under winter blizzards or wash away during spring floods. Without the Moscow funds she accounted, Milkovo itself probably would have disappeared. Lyubov did fine. Her neighbor, however, lost three guard dogs one winter because the animals weren't fierce enough to fend off hungry villagers.

Alexander Blakely is the author of Siberia Bound.

Milkovo's other food source is the Kamchatka River, which, when it is not frozen, offers up a bounty of salmon, trout, and grayling. My late father-in-law, like many of his neighbors, relied on the river for sustenance, particularly after Lyubov divorced him. One summer, he and his friend Savich picked me up an hour before dawn in an old Zaporozhets, a Ukrainian car so small that most owners, Savich included, rip out the front passenger seat to free up space. In return for some of the fish we would catch, Savich had agreed to drive us out to a point on the river from which my father-in-law and I could float back to town in the inflatable rubber boat then riding shotgun. Savich drove us south at the car's top speed, about 40 mph. The pavement ended. We continued on for another thirty minutes, Savich yelling questions to me about American cars over the engine's wail and the occasional *ting* of gravel hitting the wheel wells. Then he abruptly slowed down, searching the unbroken wall of tall grass on the side of the road. Without comment, he plunged the car into the verdant barrier, all vision obscured by the sudden wash of green reeds. Pinching the wheel with just his thumb and forefinger, he seemed to be feeling his way along. The steering wheel jerked. "There she is," Savich said, letting go of the wheel and moving his left foot onto the gas pedal so that he could turn around in his seat, light a cigarette, and return to his inquiry on American cars. The steering wheel turned one direction and then the other, as if the car itself knew the way. Acknowledging my look of concern, Savich assured me that the tires were in ruts made by hundreds of previous fishing trips. He couldn't alter our course if he tried.



Russians have a much-used word—*bezdorozhye*—that means "place without roads." In Russia, *bezdorozhye* [illegible] the exception. The United States has 4 million miles of roadway, most of it made of relatively smooth, highly

Photographs by Heidi Bradner/Panos Pictures

engineered asphalt and concrete. There are more than 400,000 miles of roads within National Forest lands alone. By contrast, in all of Russia, the largest country on Earth, there are only 365,000 miles of roads, most of them former horse trails that, depending on the time of year, alternate between muddy, dusty, and icy. Winter actually improves many Russian roads by filling in potholes.

Russia also has the Trans-Siberian Highway, which is, with one caveat, the longest road in the world. In places the highway is several lanes wide and is covered in blacktop painted with bright, reflective lane lines. In other places it is just a meandering single-lane road with an uneven, severely pocked surface. The caveat is that, despite its name, the Trans-Siberian Highway doesn't actually transverse Siberia. It has a gap wider than most roads are long. That is, you can drive the Trans-Siberian east from Moscow, where the highway begins, for about 3,500 miles before the road peters out past Lake Baikal. Then for about a thousand miles there is pretty much nothing but trees. The road picks up again above what used to be Manchuria and wends the remaining thousand miles or so to Vladivostok, on Russia's far eastern shore. You can think of the Trans-Siberian as two finished highways with a thousand miles of forest between them, or you can think of it as a single unfinished highway that is a quarter the circumference of the Earth. Either way, though, you can't drive from Moscow to Vladivostok.

The gap says more about Russia than the highway does. In 1959, Dwight Eisenhower took Nikita Khrushchev on a high-speed ride through the Maryland countryside to show off the nascent Interstate Highway System, the largest public-works project in history. Khrushchev was unimpressed. The engineering was fine, but to what end? "He said," Eisenhower later recalled, "that in his country there was little need for this type of road because the Soviet people lived close together, did not care for automobiles, had slight interest in driving around the countryside on a Sunday afternoon, and rarely changed their residences from one city to another. To this he added to my amusement: 'Your people do not seem to like the place where they live and always want to be on the move going someplace else.'"

Khrushchev sounds defensive in this account, but in fact Russians have had bad experiences with good roads. The Mongols, the last superpower to promote good roads in Russia, found them an efficient means of enslaving Russians. A Mongol courier could carry demands for tribute, news of sedition, and orders for repression 210 miles in twenty-four hours by strapping himself to each of his successive mounts and sleeping while the horse galloped faithfully, unavoidably, to the next post. Lesson learned. When the Mongols left, the Russians kept many of the Mongol words associated with transportation, but they let the roads themselves fall into disrepair. By the late 1800s, Russian postal riders could manage little better than fifty miles in a day.

Whereas Eisenhower found it useful to move arms rapidly around the United States—and thus the Pentagon's request that interstate overpasses be at least seventeen feet high, enough to let pass a fully loaded Minuteman ICBM transport—the Russians preferred immobility. Napoleon and Hitler crossed the Russian border with ease. Then the roads worsened, thinned, or vanished altogether. Supplies struggled to reach the front lines. When the Russian armies rallied, the invaders struggled to get back out. Millions died. Soviet maps were intentionally made inaccurate to baffle would-be intruders. In this light, a giant gap in the world's longest highway seems perfectly rational. (Given that the gap runs roughly parallel to the Great Wall of China, it's pretty clear which people the Russians didn't want using it.)

Although I had once lived in Siberia, I learned about the gap only last year, when my mother-in-law, contrary to Khrushchev's vision of the Russian peasantry, informed us that she wasn't happy where she was. She had given notice at the road department and put her house up for sale. She wanted to move back to her hometown of Novosibirsk, smack in the center of Siberia. I offered to help.

My first instinct was to drive her. There was, however, a problem. My mother-in-law lived on the east side of the gap. Novosibirsk was on the west side of the gap. A Siberian truck driver with whom I'd once traveled across Kazakhstan told me that I could take Lyubov and her possessions the 3,000 miles to Novosibirsk if I waited a few months and drove across Siberia's "winter roads"—a euphemism for frozen rivers. He had traveled them many times. On one occasion his front tire broke through a thin patch of ice. He said he was lucky the rest of the truck hadn't broken through. I decided instead to fly to Novosibirsk an



re an apartment for her. Then
ov would fly out herself.
ill, I couldn't forget about the
And so I went exploring. From
Russian Ministry of Transporta-
's website I downloaded a ninety-
e-page document—*Modernizing*
sia's Transportation System

ter an unsuccessful attempt to cross the concrete island that separated two lanes. A few miles down the road the cab driver pointed with voyeur's delight, and then a little concern, to a Land Cruiser parked on the median. Only the hood was visible; its rear end was completely submerged

see the place where the Siberian tiger roams. I also wanted to see earth-moving equipment moving earth. Stepping toward the map, Griznov ran his finger along the multicolored line that meandered through mountain ranges, Montana-size swamps, and the largest pine forests on the planet.



02–10)—that, with un-Soviet
dor, detailed the sorry state of
ssia's roads. It also highlighted
ambitious construction project
improve and expand them,
luding, first and foremost, the
npletion of the Trans-Siberian
ghway by 2004. It would cost at
st $1.4 billion. I called my Siber-
friends, but they had heard
hing about it. There was patchy
ecdotal evidence on the Internet
out heavy equipment seen head-
g east on the Trans-Siberian
ilroad, and sightings of bulldozer
ets in the Russian Far East. But
ether or not the road was really
ing built, I couldn't be sure.
nce getting to Novosibirsk always
quires a layover in Moscow, I
cided I would simply ask some-
one at the Ministry of
Transportation.

When I got to Moscow, huge un-
ground peat fires were smoldering
erywhere, choking the capital in
id smoke. But the free-for-all traf-
quickly wrested my attention from
e stench and eerie haze. Even be-
e I'd left the airport, I saw a Lada
ttomed out, spinning its wheels af-

in a deep hole. My driver recounted stories he'd been hearing lately. The earth, hollowed out by the underground fires, was swallowing cars, along with their doomed drivers, into fiery pits of burning peat.

From a Muscovite friend's apartment, I made a call to the Ministry of Transportation that yielded Alexander Konstantinovich Griznov, the director of the press center. He invited me to come over to his office right away. "Take the subway," he said. "It's impossible to get anywhere in this city by car."

Before my arrival, Griznov had unfurled a map that spanned his desk and spilled off the edge and onto two adjacent chairs. It was about seven feet long. This was a map of the gap itself, which I now learned had a name: the Amur, for the remote region in which it did or did not exist.

When I asked Griznov if the rumors were true, if they really were closing the gap, he smiled proudly, wordlessly both forgiving and answering my question. The idea thrilled me. There was unconquered frontier left in the world. That this frontier was being conquered, I admit, also thrilled me. I wanted to go there. I wanted to

Black represented where the road was complete, he said, pointing with both hands like a game-show assistant to a few inches of black ink at either end of the map. Red, he said, was where they had built the road to stage one, which meant that everything was done except for the asphalt. He paused to let me see that there were a dozen separate stretches of red road, some quite long, some just dashes. Green was where construction was currently most active. "As you can see, we *are* building the road," he said, then added a platitude contrary to Russia's past: "Without roads, Russia has no future."

I asked what the white line at the center of the map meant. "*Bezdorozhye*," he said, "but not for long." He said that they had recently completed the pioneer road, a narrow path cut through the forest to enable the heavy equipment to travel from one side of the white zone to the other. So, in theory, he said, it was already possible to drive all the way across Russia, but only in a bulldozer. "It is construction on a colossal [illegible] see it with your own eyes to believe it." I told [illegible] do just that.

you can get to Khabarovsk, I'll see [illegible] white zone."

Khabarovsk is about 5,000 miles east of Moscow, on the far eastern side of the Amur. An easy flight.



From there I'd drive back west several hundred miles to where the Trans-Siberian ends, and then keep driving—past red lines and green lines—all the way to the heart of the gap. *Bezdorozhye*.

Griznov walked me out of his office, but, rather than parting with me there, he continued to regale me with mottoes. "Russia needs roads like a person needs air," he said. "We're uniting Russia!" He escorted me past the front guard and onto the noisy street. Still he couldn't rein in his enthusiasm. He bought two ice-cream cones from a kiosk, handed one to me, and, as the ice cream melted in his hand, told me about how he'd love nothing more than to see the colossal construction project with his own eyes.

At the Khabarovsk offices of Rosavtodor, I met the director, Valentine Ivanenko. With his slightly distended belly, bull legs, and average-Ivan smile, he reminded me of John Wayne, simultaneously heroic and comic. On a table in a corner of his office were a dozen miniature road-building vehicles: little cranes, tiny bulldozers, a diminutive dump truck. Ivanenko walked across his large office and flicked a light switch, revealing a floor-to-ceiling map of the Russian Far East behind his desk. Colored tape indicated the varying stages of the Amur's construction. The wall map had more red (all done but the asphalt) than Griznov's map back in Moscow. It seemed that, at least on paper, construction really was progressing quickly. Standing in front of the wall, Ivanenko silently scanned the space yet to be conquered. He'd been building roads for decades, two of them in Yakutia, near the Arctic Circle, where temperatures routinely reached into the negative fifties. Each truck, bulldozer, and crane had to remain running throughout the winter or it would freeze up and wouldn't start again until spring. For the Amur project, Ivanenko hired military logistics specialists to prevent any vehicles from running out of fuel. Indeed, the whole project was like a massive military campaign, including tons of explosives, brigades of men, and fleets of treaded machines.

In a baritone voice softened by a slight Ukrainian accent, Ivanenko instructed me on how America had pulled itself out of the Great Depression with public works—roads in particular—and then catapulted itself into prosperity by building the interstates. For him, it was an indisputable lesson of history that superhighways made superpower economies. And since Russia had just endured ten years of economic devastation similar to the Great Depression, it seemed only fitting to Ivanenko that Russia should repeat American history by paving its way to prosperity. Knowing what had to be done, however, didn't make doing it easier. Just to close the gap, the first step in the national road-modernization program, the road-building army had to construct 257 bridges across streams that became surging rivers laden with crushing ice floes in the spring. They had to pull the road over—or tunnel it through—seven mountain ranges. They had to stretch it across swamps darkened by vast clouds of mosquitoes.

Ivanenko told me that although the Amur was still more than a year away from being covered with gravel and maybe a decade away from being covered in asphalt, there were already numerous convoys making the long, rugged trip from Vladivostok west to Siberia and beyond. They consisted of enterprising Russians driving used Japanese cars intended for Russian buyers looking for an improvement on the Zaporozhets. This trickle of commerce, it was hoped, would become a torrent when the completed road offered a competitive alternative for shipping goods to and from Asia and Europe. First cars, then computers, then containers of cell phones. A new silk road.

I asked Ivanenko if he was afraid that Russia might repeat America's history too well, that his road would soon be just as congested as America's roads. That Russia would go from being dependent on oil exports to being dependent on oil imports. He breathed out a windy laugh, turned off the wall map's light, and said, "It's time for you to see the Amur."

He was flying to Moscow the following day to give a progress report on the Amur. I could use his Land Cruiser while he was gone. He arranged for his chauffeur to drive me from Khabarovsk across the Jewish Autonomous Region to the border of the Amurskaya oblast, which was only a third of the way to the heart of the gap. Another Land Cruiser would pick me up at the border and take me the rest of the

The journey, a thousand miles
l, would take two full days if we
drove fast and avoided
an accident.

e drove fast, but only three
s into the trip we crashed head-on
another car, the only other car
he road. Both vehicles were to-
d. There was much swearing im-
liately after the crash, though more
elief than in rage. Nobody was se-
sly hurt. Looking at the car parts
wn about and the dark, paisley pud-
spotting the road hundreds of feet
k to the point of impact, we all felt
ty fortunate. Ivanenko, not having
for the airport yet, was notified of
accident by satellite phone. He
unmoved. It's just metal, he said.
dispatched another, slightly older
d Cruiser to take me the rest of
way to the Amurskaya border.
There I met Sergei Romanov,
uty director of the Amur branch
Rosavtodor, a small, fit man who
e dark aviator sunglasses. Instead of
hing on into the night to make up
the time lost to the accident, Sergei
gested that we take a small (two-
ur) detour to Blagoveshchensk and
some rest at his apartment.
We arrived after midnight. His wife,
accountant for Rosavtodor, made
sages and eggs. Despite my polite
tests, I was given one of their kids'
oms. The kid slept on the couch.
e sheets on the bed read, in mis-
lled English, "Happy to Neet You."
e tag on the sheets read, "Made in
ina." I had heard many Siberians
ietly express concern about, and
any Muscovites loudly decry, a pos-
le invasion by Chinese, but, of
urse, the Chinese were already in
e Russian Far East, some legally,
me not. The Russians I met there
emed to appreciate their presence, as
ell as the ancillary benefits: cheap
electronics, cheap clothes,
cheap food, cheap labor.

Early the next morning, the air
as hazy from the smoldering forest
res that lay to the west, the direction
e would be heading all day. A few
inutes outside of town, slender tama-
ack and birch trees in autumn blush
rmed a narrow canyon. Sergei and I
rove for six or seven uneventful hours.
I fell into a daze. I had all but forgotten why I was there and where we were going when the trees on either side of the road vanished, replaced by what seemed to be a massive, dry riverbed, an endless swath, improbably smooth and indifferent to the tortured topography. This was the Amur.

We slowed a bit as we made the transition from the asphalt of the Trans-Siberian to the rock surface of the unfinished road. We were on one of the red parts of the map. Even without asphalt or traffic, the road induced déjà vu. It was unmistakably a superhighway, wide enough to make the distant trees on either side look like an architect's arboreal miniatures.

After a few miles, we began to pass occasional parking lots big enough for two dozen cars, though there was nothing there that might entice a driver to stop. The road builders were making room for future roadside services—what Sergei, whose home was surrounded by thousands of miles of forests, referred to as camping. "Restaurants. Gas stations. Hotels," Sergei said. "You know, camping."

We bounced through mile after mile of smoldering forest, occasionally swerving around bulldozers that loomed suddenly out of the smoke. We slowed, but only slightly, when crossing temporary wooden bridges that were in the shadows of giant concrete beams soon to support massive bridges spanning rivers, some with Russian names, others with names given by tribes native to Siberia: Tu, Taldan, and Never. There were signs for other disparate settlements that bore equally exotic names: Tygda, Ushumun, Chalgany, Gonzha. But we never actually saw any of them. The highway didn't go from one village to the next. It was just a thousand miles of rocks and trees.

Every four or five miles, a feeder road shot off to a quarry. We stopped at one so Sergei could show me the basics of road building, which consisted of finding, gathering, and spreading rocks. The road crew lived off the land, culling the resources they needed through controlled violence. Treaded drilling rigs—a tangle of hydraulic hoses and long drill bits with sharp, diamond-tipped points—noisily spat up clouds of pulverized rock as they skewered the ground. When the drilling was complete, explosives were poured down the cylindrical shafts. In a thunderous instant, the solid ground shattered into boulders that one-armed excavators scooped up and dropped into giant dump trucks. The trucks dumped the boulders into a monstrous, insect-queen of a machine that took in big boulders, smashed them together, and spat out small rocks. The rock crusher emitted a loud, deep, and surprisingly soothing whoosh whoosh sound from inside its metal hull.



Sergei, who [illegible] actually pre[illegible] ors sent the path of the road through

rather than around, mountains. In such cases, there was no need for side quarries. The road builders, rather than tunneling through, gradually shaved the mountain down and, at the same time, produced enough rocks for many more miles of road. Cut and fill.

The farther we drove along the Amur, the more machines we encountered. The equipment was divided into groups called excavator complexes. Each complex consisted of a large one-armed excavator, ten to fifteen massive dump trucks, a roller, a grader, two light bulldozers, and a heavy bulldozer so massive that its metal treads crushed small rocks into shiny glass dust. There were 173 excavator complexes working the Amur, a diesel-powered armada spread 200 feet wide and 1,000 miles long. The workers themselves, all 3,852 of them, were divided into brigades of 22 men. Sergei said the members of each brigade were intensely loyal to one another. They worked fifteen-day shifts followed by one week off. They always worked with the same people. A person leaving or joining a brigade was rare, and, Sergei assured me, traumatic for everybody. There were also the specialized groups, such as the drillers and the explosives experts. The explosives experts drove in large red trucks with flashing lights and armed escorts. Everybody, including us, got out of the way when they lumbered down the road.

After the forest was cleared, the low parts raised up and the high parts laid low, the stone culled, crushed, and cast, the road was still considered naked. The top layer of evenly ground gravel is what the road builders call clothes. Dump trucks put the clothes into piles, the bulldozers spread them out, the graters evened things up, and the rollers ironed out any wrinkles. Asphalt was nice but not necessary. Without the clothes, though, the road really was no better than a dry river bottom. With clothes, the road became a highway. As we drove along, black-and-white pheasants came out of the woods to peck the road's new clothes. The gravel, Sergei said, helped their gizzards digest food.

The next morning, I met Pyotr Vladimirovich Volkov, a long-time road builder currently in charge of constructing a forty-two-mile stretch of the Amur. He'd moved from a town called Prokhladni, near Chechnya. He said that he would have liked to stay there, but this is where the road is being built, so this is where he belonged. He said that he would stay out here until the end, of him or the road. He didn't seem to be joking. We piled into the Land Cruiser again and drove slowly along the narrow, naked pioneer road toward a place that Pyotr promised would impress me.

We soon reached a mountain in the process of being sliced in half. Dozens of drilling rigs had latched themselves to the ground, like ticks on a dog's neck, boring deeper and deeper. Dump trucks big enough to flatten our Land Cruiser under a single tire were themselves dwarfed by the mountain, which was itself humbled by the wide horizon. I watched one truck, its cargo bed filled to the top with boulders by the toothed arm of a Swedish-built excavator, pull away with a puff of blue diesel smoke. Another was already moving in reverse to take the place of the first. The excavator operated in a steady rhythm: scoop, swivel, dump, swivel. If a truck lagged behind, the excavator operator just reached out a bit farther than usual and dumped the boulders into the moving hopper. A caravan of Japanese sedans, with cardboard taped to the hoods and headlights for protection from dings and cracks, slowly crawled through the work site, the larger rocks scraping the vehicles' tender metal underbellies.

Pyotr, respectably into his fifties, led us on foot into the woods, snapping the branches of saplings as we went. After a few minutes, the sounds of road construction faded. A few minutes more and we were at the base of a strange twenty-foot pile of cylindrical rocks, stacked like petrified cordwood. He said he'd been to this wall dozens of times since the road crew had discovered it. Each time he came, he said, it amazed him that nature could build something so improbably symmetrical.

As Sergei and I scrutinized the wall for some indisputable signs of ancient human craft, Pyotr again spoke up. "I can't imagine doing this fifteen years ago." Pyotr was the first road builder I'd met who talked about things other than roads. "I mean, the troubles we have gone through in order to take a foreign writer, an American writer, to a construction site of national significance. The KGB would have interviewed us for weeks before and after and watched us closely during. They would have interviewed our families, of course." He paused for a moment of silent recollection, then said. "Years ago, they taught me a lesson about the dangers of associating with foreigners. The local party leaders were tired of the bumpy dirt road leading to their dachas, so they told me that if I could lay asphalt on the road in early spring they'd reward me with a trip to Paris. So I pulled it off, despite all the shortages of material, equipment, and men willing to work."

Sergei nodded, duly impressed.

"But when I," Pyotr said, pointing at his heart with his thumb, "full of pride at my accomplishment, went to the party boss to collect my reward, he congratulated me and said that I'd be going to Varna, Bulgaria, not Paris, France. I was furious and knew why too. My dad, during the war, had married a German woman. He brought her back to the Soviet Union, but her relatives were still living in the West. That made him, and me suspect in the party eyes. But I had been promised Paris. So I told him that I wanted what was promised to me."

"Way to go," Sergei said. "That took guts."

Pyotr twitched a brief smile. "The party boss uttered a single sentence that made my entire back sweat and forgot about France. He said, 'Do you have any complaints about the party?'"

Sergei frowned. Pyotr then got to the moral of his story. "Freedom to travel, that's what this road represents. Future Russians won't be forced to take a train or a plane just to move within their own country. They'll be able to move wherever and whenever they want. They won't even need to actually move. The knowledge that they can, that's all it takes."

After three weeks of travel across Russia, I returned to Moscow. A final journey to the airport remained. My driver steered the car onto Moscow's ring road, which

rast to most of the roads in
cow is one of the best-
neered driving surfaces on Earth.
motion stopped. According to
adio, there was an accident sev-
miles ahead. It took us twenty
ites to travel the hundred feet
the cloverleaf's entrance to its
My driver decided we would
the city streets. He revved the
e Ford's engine till it sounded
a flag snapping in the wind. We
med through traffic fearlessly,
as the minutes ticked away, in-
ction by intersection, we didn't
to be getting any closer to the
rt. After countless lurches and
from jackrabbit starts and sud-
braking, we turned onto a road
enough for a Soviet-era parade,
ly every inch of it occupied by
utomobile.

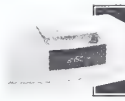
he exception was a strip of land
n the center where a brigade of
builders was busy constructing a
median to prevent passing cars
slamming into each other. The
kers themselves were protected
temporary series of concrete Jer-
barriers. We merged with the
vy traffic and managed to get up
bout thirty-five miles an hour.
driver looked at his watch, shook
head, and darted through a gap
the barriers. Our car dipped
uptly into the ad hoc HOV lane.
ivy machinery had scraped away
layers of the road's hard surface
vn to its clothes, leaving us a
gh runway strewn with road-
lding detritus. We rapidly closed
und on the distant brigade. These
d builders were working to make
roads safer for Russian drivers,
my Russian driver was not recip-
ating. His foot pressed down on
gas pedal. The closely but un-
nly spaced white barriers on both
es of us marked our acceleration,
hing in my peripheral vision with
reasing frequency, first like Morse
le, then like strobe lights, then a
y whir. As the workers dashed for
er, my driver jerked the steering
eel. We swerved right, miracu-
sly slipped through a narrow gap
the Jersey barriers into an even
hter space between a moving bus
d a Mercedes SUV, and off we
ve, into Russia's future. ■

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WHAT WE CANNOT SPEAK ABOUT WE MUST PASS OVER IN SILENCE

By John Edgar Wideman

I have a friend with a son in prison. bout once a year he visits his son. ince the prison is in Arizona and my iend lives here on the East Coast, vising isn't easy. He's told me ıe planning, the expense, ıe long day spent flying ıere and longer day flying ack are the least of it. The ıoment that's not easy, hat's impossible, he said, is fter three days six hours ach of visiting are over and ıe passes through the sliding ate of the steel-fenced outloor holding pen between he prison-visitation comound and visitors' parking ot and steps onto the asphalt that squirms beneath your feet, oozing hot like it ust might burn through your shoe soles before you reach the rental car and fling open its doors and blast the air conditioner so the car's interior won't fry your skin, it's then, he said, taking his first steps away from the prison, first steps back into the world, when he almost comes apart, almost loses it completely out there in the desert, emptiness stretching as far as the eye can see, very far usually,



ahead to a horizon ironed flat by the weight of blue sky, zigzag mountain peaks to the right and left, marking the edges of the earth, nothing moving but hot air wiggling above the highway, the scrub brush and sand, then, for an unending instant, it's very hard to be alive, he says, and he thinks he doesn't want to live a minute longer and would not make it to the car, the airport, back to this city, if he didn't pause and remind himself it's worse, far worse for the son behind him still trapped inside the prison, so for the son's sake he manages a first step away, then another and another. In these faltering moments he must prepare himself for the turnaround, the jarring transition into a world where he has no access to his son except for rare ten-minute phone calls, a blighted world he must make sense of again, beginning with the first step away and back through the boiling cauldron of parking lot, first step of the trip that will return him in a year to the desert prison.

Now he won't have it to worry about anymore. When I learned of the friend's death, I'd just finished fixing a peanut-butter sandwich. Living alone means you tend to let yourself run out of things. Milk, dishwasher detergent, napkins, toothpaste—staples you must regularly [illegible] me. In this late bachelorhood with no live-in [illegible] bility for remembering to stock [illegible]

John Edgar Wideman is a novelist and a professor of English at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. He is the author, most recently, of The Island: Martinique *(National Geographic). His essay "Whose War" appeared in the March 2002 issue.*

Illustration by Daniel Zezelj

needful things. Peanut butter probably my only choice that evening so I'd fixed one sandwich, or two, more likely since they'd be serving as dinner. In the mail I'd ignored till I sat down to my sorry-assed meal, a letter from a lawyer announcing the death of the friend with a son in prison, and inside the legal-sized manila envelope, a sealed white envelope the friend had addressed to me.

I was surprised on numerous counts. First, to learn the friend was gone. Second, to find he'd considered me significant enough to have me informed of his passing. Third, the personal note. Fourth, and now it's time to stop numbering, no point since you could say every event following the lawyer's letter both a surprise and no surprise, so numbering them as arbitrary as including the sluggish detail of peanut-butter sandwiches, "sluggish" because I'd become intrigued by the contents of the manila envelope and stopped masticating the wad in my jaw until I recalled the friend's description of exiting prison, and the sludge became a mouthful of scalding tar.

What's surprising about death anyway, except how doggedly we insist on being surprised by what we know very well's inevitable, and of course, after a while, this insistence itself unsurprising. So I was (a) surprised and (b) not surprised by the death of a friend who wasn't much of a friend, after all, more acquaintance than intimate cut-buddy, a guy I'd met somewhere through someone and weeks later we'd recognized each other in a line at a movie or a bank and nodded and then run into each other again one morning in a busy coffee shop, and since I'm partial to the coffee there, I did something I never do, asked if it was okay to share his table, and he smiled and said sure so we became in this sense friends. I never knew very much about him and hadn't known him very long. He never visited my apartment nor I his. A couple years of casual bump-ins, tables shared for coffee while we read our newspapers, a meal, a movie or two, a play-off game in a bar once, two middle-aged men who live alone and inhabit a small, self-sufficient corner of a large city and take time-outs here and there from living alone so being alone at this stage in our careers doesn't feel too depressingly like loneliness. He was the kind of person you could see occasionally, enjoy his company more or less, and walk away with no further expectations, no plan to meet again. Like the occasional woman who consents to share my bed. If he'd moved to another city, months might have passed before I'd notice him missing. If we'd lost contact for good, I'm sure I wouldn't have regretted not seeing him again. A smidgen of curiosity perhaps. Perhaps a slight bit of vexation, like when I discover I haven't restocked paper towels or Tabasco sauce. Less, since his absence wouldn't leave a gap I'd be obliged to fill. My usual flat response at this stage in my life to losing things I have no power to hold on to. Most of the world fits into this category now, so what I'm trying to say is something about the manila envelope and its contents bothered me more than I'm used to allowing things to bother me, though I'm not sure why. Was it the son in prison. The friend had told me no one else visited. The son's mother dead of cancer. Her people, like the friend's, like mine, old, scattered, gone. Another son, whereabouts unknown, who'd disowned his father and half-brother, started a new life somewhere else. I wondered if the lawyer who wrote me had been instructed to inform the son in prison of his father's passing. How were such matters handled. A phone call. A registered letter. Maybe a visit from the prison chaplain. I hoped my friend had arranged things to run smoothly, with as little distress as possible for the son. Any alternatives I imagined seemed cruel. Cruel for different reasons, but all equally difficult for the son. Was he even now opening his manila envelope, a second envelope tucked inside with its personal message. I guess I do know why I was upset—the death of the man who'd been my acquaintance for nearly two years moved me not a bit, but I grieved to the point of tears for a son I'd never seen, never spoken to,

who probably wasn't aware
of my grief or my existence.

I could barely recall the dead friend's face. Once I twisted on the light over the mirror above the bathroom sink, thinking I might milk his features from mine. Had we been vaguely similar in age and color. If I studied hard, maybe the absence in my face of some distinctive trait the friend possessed would trigger my memory, or a trait I both would recall its absence in the friend's features and *bingo* his whole face would appear.

Seeing a stranger in the mirror was afraid I might be suffering from the odd neurological deficit that prevents some people from recognizing faces. Who in God's name was this person staring at me. Who'd been punished with those cracks, blemishes, the mottled complexion, eyes sunken in deep hollows, frightened eyes crying out for acknowledgment for help, then receding, surrendering, staring blankly, bewildered and exhausted, asking me the same questions I was asking them.

How long had I been losing track of myself. Not really looking when I brushed my teeth or combed my hair, letting the image in the mirror soften and blur, become familiar and invisible as faces on money. Easier to imagine the son than deal with how my father had turned out, the splotched puffy flesh, lines incised in forehead and cheeks, strings dragging down the corners of the mouth. I switched off the light, let the merciful hood drop over the prisoner's face.

Empathy with the son not surprising, even logical, under the circumstances, you might say. Why worry about the father. He's gone. No more tiptoeing across burning coals. Why not sympathize with a young man suddenly severed from his last living contact with the world this side of prison bars. Did he know his father wouldn't be visiting. Had he phoned. Listened to the ring-ring-ring and ring. How would the son find out. How would he bear the news.

No doubt a bit of self-pity colored my response. On the other hand I'm not a brooder. I quickly become bored when a mood's too intense or lasts too long. Luckily, I have the capacity to step back, step away, escape into a book, a movie, a vigorous walk, and if these distractions don't do the trick, then very soon I discover myself smiling, perhaps even quietly chuckling at the ridiculous antics of the

son who's lost control, who's tak- himself and his commonplace mmas far too seriously.

Dear Attorney Koppleman,

I was a friend of the late Mr. Donald Whittaker. You wrote to inform me of Mr. Whittaker's death. Thank you. I'm trying to reach Mr. Whittaker's imprisoned son to offer my belated condolences. If you possess the son's mailing address, could you pass it on to me, please. I appreciate in advance your attention to this matter.

In response to your inquiry of 6/24/99: This office did execute Mr. Donald K. Whittaker's will. The relevant documents have been filed in Probate Court and, as such, are part of the public record you may consult at your convenience.

(P.S.) Wish I could be more helpful, but in our very limited dealings with Mr. Whittaker he never mentioned a son in or out of prison.

I learned there are many prisons Arizona. Large and small. Local, te, federal. Jails for short stays, nitentiaries for lifers. Perhaps it's hot, dry climate. Perhaps space is eap. Perhaps a desert state's econ- ıy, with limited employment op- rtunities for its citizens, relies on isons. Perhaps corporate-friendly als make prisons lucrative busi- sses. Whatever the reasons, the ison industry seems to flourish in izona. Many people also end up in izona retirement communities. Do e skills accumulated in managing nior citizens who come to the state die readily translate to prison ad- inistration. Or vice versa.

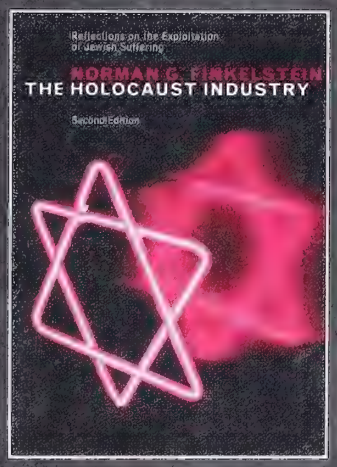
Fortunately, the state employs ople to keep track of prisoners. m not referring to uniformed ards charged with hands-on moni- ring of the inmates' flesh and ood. I mean computer people who ow how to punch in and retrieve formation. Are they one of the re- urces attracting prisons to Ari- na. Vast emptiness plus a vast le- on of specialists adept at ocessing a steady stream of bodies ross borders, orchestrating the ance of dead and living so vacan- ies are filled and fees collected romptly. Was it the dead friend ho told me the downtown streets f Phoenix are eerily vacant during eatstroke daylight hours. People who do the counting must be sequestered in air-conditioned towers or busy as bees underground in offices honeycombed beneath the asphalt, their terminals regulating traffic in and out of hospices, prisons, old folks' homes, juvenile-detention centers, cemeteries, their screens displaying Arizona's archipelago of incarceral facilities, diagrams of individual gulags where a single speck with its unique, identifying tag can be pinpointed at any moment of the day. Thanks to such a highly organized system, after much digging I located the son.

Why did I search. While I searched, I never asked why. Most likely because I possessed no answer. Still don't. Won't fake one now except to suggest (a) curiosity and (b) anger. Curiosity since I had no particular agenda beyond maybe sending a card or note. The curiosity that killed the cat till satisfaction brought it back. My search pure in this sense, an experiment, driven by the simple urge to know. Anger because I learned how perversely the system functions, how slim your chances of winning if you challenge it.

Anger because the system's insatiable clockwork innards had the information I sought and refused to divulge it. Refused fiercely, mindlessly, as only a mindless machine created to do a single, repetitive, mindless task can mindlessly refuse. The prison system assumes an adversarial stance the instant an inquiry attempts to sidestep the prerecorded labyrinth of logical menus that protect its irrational core. When and if you ever reach a human voice, its hostile tone insinuates you've done something stupid or morally suspect by pursuing it to its lair. As punishment for your trespass, the voice will do its best to mimic the tone and manner of the recorded messages you've been compelled to suffer in order to reach it.

Anger because I couldn't help taking the hassle personally. Hated bland bureaucratic sympathy or disdain or deafness or defensiveness or raw, aggressive antagonism, the multiplicity of attitudes and accents live and recorded transmitting exactly the same bottom-line message: yes, what you want we have, but we're not parting with it easily.

The Holocaust Industry [illegible] the Chutzpah of Elie Wiesel, the controversial basis of the way [illegible] it was originally published [illegible] greatly expand it, Norman G. Finkelstein documents how Burt Neuborne, chief attorney for the Holocaust industry, and Edward Korman, presiding judge in the Swiss banks case, have attempted to cover up the Holocaust industry's blackmail of Swiss banks. And in a tour de force, Finkelstein takes apart the shameless apologetics of Stuart Eizenstat, the Clinton administration's point man in the Swiss shakedown.



When I read Finkelstein's book, The Holocaust Industry, *at the time of its appearance, I was in the middle of my own investigations of these matters, and I came to the conclusion that he was on the right track. I refer now to the part of the book that deals with the claims against the Swiss banks, and the other claims pertaining to forced labor. I would now say in retrospect that he was actually conservative, moderate and that his conclusions are trustworthy. I am by no means the only one who, in the coming months or years, will totally agree with Finkelstein's breakthrough.*
—Raul Hilberg

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I won't bore you or myself by [illegible] how many times I was put on hold or switched or switched back or the line went dead after hours of Muzak or I weathered various catch-22 routines. I'll just say I didn't let it get the best of me. Swallowed my anger, and with the help of a friend persevered, till one day—accidentally I'm sure—the information I'd been trying to pry from the system's grip collapsed like an escaping hostage into my arms.

Some mornings when I awaken I look out my window and pretend to understand. I reside in a building in the bottom of somebody's pocket. Sunlight never touches its bricks. Any drawer or cabinet or closet shut tight for a day will exude a gust of moldy funk when you open it. The building's neither run-down nor cheap. Just dark, dank, and drab. Drab as the grown-ups children are browbeaten into accepting as their masters. The building, my seventh-floor apartment, languish in the shadow of something fallen, leaning down, leaning over. Water, when you turn on a faucet first thing in the morning, gags on itself, spits, then gushes like a bloody jailbreak from the pipes. In a certain compartment of my heart compassion's supposed to lodge, but there's never enough space in cramped urban dwellings so I store niggling self-pity there too, try to find room for all the millions of poor souls who have less than I have, who would howl for joy if they could occupy as their own one corner of my dreary little flat. I pack them into the compartment for a visit, pack till it's full far beyond capacity and weep with them, share with them my scanty bit of good fortune, tell them I care, tell them be patient, tell them I'm on their side, tell them an old acquaintance of mine who happens to be a poet recently hit the lottery big time, a cool million, and wish them similar luck, wish them clear sailing and swift, painless deaths, tell them it's good to be alive, whatever, good to have been living as long as I've managed and still eating every day, fucking now and then, finding a roof over my head in the morning after finding a bed to lie in at night, grateful to live on even though the pocket's deep and black and a hand may dig in any moment and crush me.

I'm writing to express my condolences sympathies upon the death of your father at the death of your father your father's passing though I was barely acquainted only superficially I'm writing to you because I was a friend of your father by now prison officials must have informed you of his death his demise the bad news I assume I don't want to intrude on your grief sorrow privacy if in fact hadn't known your sorrow and the circumstances of our lives known him very long only a few years permitted allowed only limited opportunities to become acquainted and the circumstances of our lives I considered your father a friend I can't claim to know him your father well but our paths crossed often frequently I considered him a good valuable friend fine man I was very sorry to hear learn of his death spoke often of you on many occasions his words much good love affection admiration I feel almost as if I you know you though I'm a complete stranger his moving words heartfelt about son compelled me to write this note if I can be helpful in any fashion manner if I can be of assistance in this matter at this difficult time place don't hesitate to let me know please don't

I was sorry to hear of your father's death. We were friends. Please accept my heartfelt regrets on this sad occasion.

Sir,

Some man must have fucked my mother. All I knew about him until your note said he's dead. Thanks.

It could have ended there. A case of mistaken identity. Or a lie. Or numerous lies. Or a hallucination. Or fabrication. Had I been duped. By whom. Father, son, both. Did they know each other or not. What did I know for sure about either one. What stake did I have in either man's story. If I connected the dots, would a picture emerge. One man dead, the other good as dead locked up two thousand miles away in an Arizona prison.

Was any of it my business.

Anybody's business.

I dress lightly, relying upon the pretty weather lady's promises.

A woman greets me and introduces herself as Suh Jung, Attorney Koppleman's paralegal assistant. She's a tiny, pleasant Asian woman with jet-black hair brutally cropped above h[illegible] ears, a helmet, she'll explain late[r] necessary to protect herself from th[e] cliche of submissiveness, the chin[a] doll stereotype people immediate[ly] had applied when they saw a thic[k] rope of hair hanging past her wai[st] hair that her father insisted must b[e] uncut and worn twisted into a sing[le] braid in public, her mother combin[g] brushing, oiling her hair endlessly t[o] shiny pounds of it lopped off the d[ay] the father died, and then, strangel[y] she'd wanted to save the hair she ha[d] hated, wanted to glue it back toget[h]er strand by strand and drape it ov[er] one of those pedestalled heads you s[ee] in beauty shops so she and her moth[er] could continue forever the groom[ing] rituals that had been one of th[e] few ways they could relate in a hous[e]hold her father relentlessly, metic[u]lously hammered into an exquisite[ly] lifelike, flawless representation of h[is] will, like those sailing ships in bottl[es] or glass butterflies in the museum, [so] close to the real thing you stare an[d] stare waiting for them to flutter awa[y]. a household the father shattered in[to] fit of pique or rage or boredom the d[ay] she opened the garage door aft[er] school and found him barefoot, shirt[less] pantsed, dangling from a rafter, b[e]side the green family Buick.

In the lawyer's office she listen[ed] to my story about father and so[n] took notes carefully it seeme[d] though her eyes were cool, a som[e]where else distracted cool while s[he] performed her legal-assistant duti[es]. Black, distant eyes framed in roun[d] metal-rimmed old-lady spectacles b[e]lying the youthful freshness of h[er] skin. Later when she'd talk about h[er] dead father, I noticed the coolness [in] the first day, and was left to form [my] own impression of him since she vo[l]unteered few details, spoke inste[ad] about being a quiet, terrified girl tr[y]ing to swim through shark-infest[ed] water without making waves. [I] guessed she had wanted to imita[te] the father's impenetrable gaze, pra[c]ticing, practicing till she believ[ed] she'd gotten it right, but she didn[']t get it right, probably because sh[e] never understood the father's col[d]ness, never made her peace with t[he] blankness behind his eyes where s[he] yearned to see her image take shap[e]

ere it never did, never would. dually I came to pity her, her un- cessful theft of her father's eyes, transparent attempt to conceal timidity behind the father's stare, idity I despised because it remind- me of mine, my inadequacies and f-measures and compromises, beg- g and fearing to be seen, my lack directness, decisiveness, my defi- acy of enterprise and imagination, nifested in her case by the theatri- gesture of chopping off her hair en confronted by the grand truth her father's suicide. Timidity oming her to cliché—staring off crutably into space.

Behind a desk almost comically arfing her (seeing it now, its acres of lished, blond wood should have rted me to the limits, the impro- iety of any intimacy we'd establish) e had listened politely, eventually suaded me from what I'd anticipat- as the object of my visit—talking to torney Koppleman. She affirmed r postscript: no one in the office ew anything about a son in prison. hanked her, accepted the card she of- ed that substantiated her willing- ss to help in any way she could.

Would you like me to call around it in Arizona. At least save you me time, get you started in the ht direction.

Thanks. That's very kind of you. it I probably need to do some more inking on this. And then I realized ow stupidly wishy-washy I must ave sounded. It galled me because I ork hard to give just the opposite pression—appear as a man sure of mself. So perhaps that's why I flirt- l. Not flirting exactly, but asserting yself in the only way I could think at the moment, by plainly, abrupt- letting her see I was interested. In er. The woman part of her. A deci- ve act, yet suspect from the begin- ing, since it sprang from no particu- r spark of attraction. Still, a much ore decisive move than I'm usually apable of making—true or false. litting on her, so to speak, straight p, hard, asking for the home num- er she hastily scribbled on the back f her card, hurrying as if she sud- enly remembered a lineup of urgent asks awaiting our interview's termi- ation. Her way of attending to a

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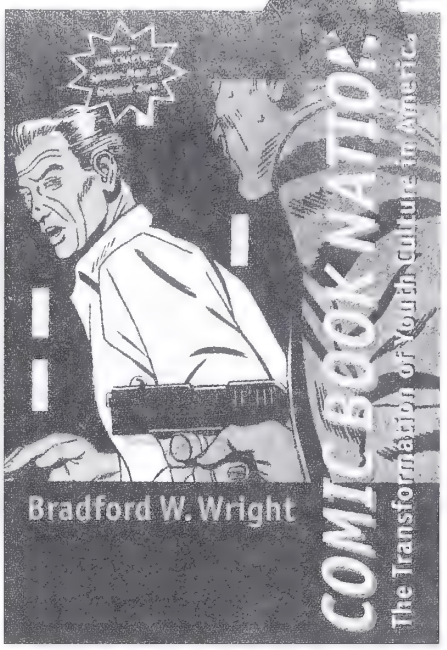
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I

I

, concerned some official would no-
my name didn't match the son's,
ı realized lots of inmates wouldn't
(or know) their father's name, so I
cked the family box, printed *father*
he space provided.
An official notice from the warden's
ce authorizing my visit took more
ı a month to reach me, and I began
egret lying on a form that had
ned me, under penalty of law, not
erjure myself. My misgivings soured
o mild paranoia. Had I compro-
ed myself, broken a law that might
d me too packing off to jail. Who
ds the applications. How carefully
prison officials check alleged facts.
ıat punishments could be levied
inst a person who falsifies informa-
ı. The form a perfunctory measure,
ad guessed, a form, properly exe-
ed and stamped, destined to gath-
lust in a file, retrievable just in case
ne official needed to cover her or
ass. Justify his or her existence. The
stence of the state. Of teeming pris-
s in the middle of the desert.
I finally calmed down after I figured
t that (a) without a DNA test no
e could prove I wasn't the prisoner's
her and (b) it wasn't a crime to be-
ve I was. If what the son had writ-
ı in his first letter was true, the prison
uld possess no record of his father.
ıe dead friend past proclaiming his
ternity. And even if he rose from
e dead to argue his case, why would
s claim, sans DNA confirmation, be
ore valid in the eyes of the law than
ne. So what if he had visited. So
ıat if he'd married the prisoner's
other. So what if he sincerely be-
ved his belief of paternity. Mama's
by, Daddy's maybe.
Psychologists say there's a stage
ıen a child doubts the adults raising
are its real family. How can parents
ove otherwise. And why would a kid
ant to trade in the glamorous fairy
les he dreams up about his origins
r a pair of ordinary, bumbling adults
ho impose stupid rules, stifling rou-
nes. Who needs their hostile world
ll of horrors and hate.
With Suh Jung's aid—why not use
er, wasn't it always about finding
ses for the people in your life, why
ould they be in your life if you had
o use for them, and if you're using
ıem, didn't that lend purpose to their lives, you're actually doing them a trickle-down favor, aren't you, allowing them to use you to feel themselves useful, and that's something, isn't it, better than nothing anyway, than being useless or used up—I gathered more information about the son in prison. Accumulated a file, biography, character sketch, rap sheet a.k.a. his criminal career.

Here's what the papers said: He's done lots of bad things, the worst kinds of things, and if we could kill him, we would, but we can't, so we'll never, never let him go.

Are you surprised, she'd asked.

I didn't know what to expect, I had replied. Not traveling out west to forgive him or bust him out or bring him back alive. Just visit. Just fill in for the dead father. Once. One time enough and it's finished.

You're going to wear out the words, she jokes as she glances over at me sitting beside her in her bed that occupies the same room with a pullman fridge and stove. Her jibe less joke than complaint: I'm sick and tired of your obsessive poring over a few dog-eared scraps of paper extracted from Arizona's bottomless pit of records is what she's saying with a slight curl of one side of her thin mouth, a grimace that could be construed as the beginning of a smirk she decides is not worth carrying full term.

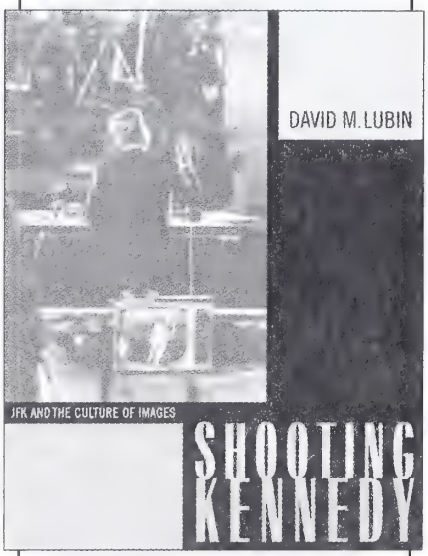
I keep on reading. Avoid the disappointment a peek at her naked body would trigger. The eroticism between us had dulled rather too quickly it seemed. An older man's childishness partly at fault. Why else would I be impatient after a few weeks because her hips didn't round and spread, the negligible mounds beneath her nipples swell. Her boyish look not a stage, it was what I was going to get, period, even if the business between us survives longer than I have any reason to expect. No, things aren't going to get better, and I'm wasting precious time. Given my age, how many more chances could I expect.

No matter how many times you read them, she says, the words won't change. Why read the same ugly facts over and over.

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(A) Because my willing, skilled accomplice gathered them for me. (B) Curiosity.

Her whole visiting business way over the top, you admit it yourself, so I don't pretend I can put myself in your shoes, but still, his crimes would affect any sane person's decision to go or not.

Is he guilty. How can you be certain based on a few sheets of paper.

Too much in the record for a case of mistaken identity. Huh-uh. Plus or minus a few felonies, the man's been busy. A real bad actor.

Are you casting the first stone.

A whole building's been dumped on the poor guy. And he's thrown his share of bricks at other folks. I'd hate to bump into him in a dark alley.

Maybe you already have, my friend. Maybe you have and maybe you've enjoyed it.

You're more than a little weird about this, you know. What the hell are you talking about.

Just that people wind up in situations there's no accounting for. Situations when innocence or guilt are extremely beside the point. Situations when nothing's for sure except some of us are on one side of the bars, some on the other side, and nobody knows which side is which.

Right. But I know I haven't robbed or kidnapped or murdered anyone. Have you.

Have I. Do you really want to know. Everyone has crimes to answer for, don't they. Even you. Suppose I said my crimes are more terrible than his. A string of victims. Many, many murders. Would you believe me. Is your heart beating a little faster.

(A) No. And (B) you're not scaring me. Put those damned papers away, and turn off the light, please. I have work tomorrow.

I will, if you listen to my confession. It might sound better in the dark.

Enough already. I'm tired. I need sleep. Stop acting stupidly because you can't make up your mind about Arizona.

My mind's made up. The prison said yes. I'm on my way.

I'll be fucking glad when it's over and done.

And me back in the arms of my love. Will you be faithful while your sweet, aging serial killer's away.

She tries to snatch the papers but misses. I drop them over the side of the pullout bed. Like the bed she is small and light. Easy to fold up and subdue even for an older fellow. When I wrap myself around her, my body's so much larger than hers, she almost vanishes. When we fuck, or now capturing her, punishing her, I see very little of her flesh. I'm aware of my size, my strength towering over her squirming, her thrashing, her gasps for breath. I am her father's stare, the steel gate dropping over the tiger pit in which she's trapped, naked, begging for food and water. Air. Light.

I arrive on Sunday. Two days late for reasons I can't explain to myself. I flew over mountains, then desert flatness that seemed to go on forever. It must have been Ohio, Illinois, Iowa, Nebraska, not actual desert but the nation's breadbasket, so they say, fruited plains, amber waves of grain, fields irrigated by giant machines day after day spreading water in the same pattern to create circles, squares, rectangles, below. Arable soil gradually giving way to sandy grit as the plane drones westward, through clouds, over another rugged seam of mountains, and then as I peer down at the undramatic nothingness beyond the far edge of wrinkled terrain, the surface of the earth flips over like a pancake. What's above ground buried, what's below ground suddenly exposed. Upside-down mountains are hollow shells, deep, deep gouges in the stony waste, their invisible peaks underground, pointing to hell.

A bit of confusion, bureaucratic stuttering and sputtering when confronted by my tardy arrival, a private calling his sergeant, sergeant phoning officer in charge of visitation, each searching for verification, for duplication, for assurance certified in black and white that she or he is off the hook, not guilty of disrupting the checks and balances of prison routine. I present myself hat in hand, remorseful, apologetic, *please, please, give me another chance please*, forgive me for missing day one and two of the scheduled three-day visit, for checking in the morning of day three instead of day one. Am I still eligible or will I be shooed away like a starving begga from the rich man's table.

I overhear two guards discussing coyote whose scavenging brought down out of the slightly elevate wilderness of rock and brush beginnir a few miles or so from the prison's stee fenced perimeter. I learn how patien ly guards in the tower spied on the co ote's cautious trespass, a blip at firs up and back along the horizon, then discernible shape—skinny legs, lor pointed ears, bushy tail—a scragg critter drawn by easy prey or coyo curiosity closer and closer to the pris until it's within rifle range and t guards take turns profiling it throu their sharpshooting sniper scopes, sad-faced, cartoon coyote they christ whatever guards would christen a cre ture they will kill one day, a spook mirage, so quick on its feet, bolder as i allowed to approach nearer witho being challenged, does it believe can't be seen, flitting from shadow shadow, camouflaged by hovering da ness, by mottled fur, a shadow itse instantly freezing, sniffing the air, th trotting again back and forth along t skyline, skittish through coverless spa up and back, parry, thrust, and retre ears pricked to attention when the r service vehicle enters or leaves t prison parking lot before dawn, mur predawn the coyote's time, the darkn divulging it, a drop from a leaky pi a phantom prowling nearer and ne er as if the electrified steel fence is o boundary of its cage, an easy shot n the guards forbear taking, too easy, perhaps it's more fun to observe th mascot play, watch it pounce o mouse and pummel it in swift paws b bat-bat before its jaws snap the rode neck, or maybe the name they nan it a kind of protection for a while somebody comes on duty one mo ing or pre-morning really when the shift after the night shift has to haul self out of bed, out of prefab homes ing the road to the prison entra shitty box houses, a few with bri patches of something growing in b es beside the front steps, boxes can't see at that black hour from pickup, eyes locked in the tunnel headlights carve, a bad-head, b attitude morning, thinking about q ting this stinking job, getting the f out before you're caught Kilroying

olded in the town's one swinging
, cussed out, serving pussy pro-
n till further notice, cancer eat-
is mamma, daddy long gone, kids
r fighting or crazy on pot or dead
prison so he draws a bead and
blood seeps into the sand, the
te buzzard bait by the time I
sdrop on two guards badmouthing
assassin colleague, laughing at
at the coyote's surprise, the dead
al still serving time as a conver-
n piece, recycled in this desert
eness, desert of extremes, of keep-
nd kept, silence and screams, cold
hot, thirst and drunkenness, no
, too much time.

spiffy, spit-and-polished platinum-
de guard whose name tag I read
promptly forget, *Lieutenant*, an-
r guard addresses her, Lieutenant,
breast under her white blouse as
as poor Suh Jung's head, smiles
t me from the counter where she's
alled, hands me the document
s stamped, slides me a tray for un-
ling everything in my pockets,
es it when I'm finished. Now that
n't so bad, was it, sir. Gives me a
ipt and a green ticket with match-
numbers. Points me toward a met-
detector standing stark and
square as a guillotine whose eye I
t pass through before I'm allowed
nter the prison.

Beyond the detector one more
ked door I must be buzzed
ough and I'm outside again, in an
n-air, tunnel-like enclosure of cy-
ne fencing bristling on sides and
with razor wire, a corridor or
te or funnel or maze I must nego-
e while someone somewhere at a
chine measures and records my
ry step, false move, heartbeat,
am, drop of sweat, of blood when
hands tear at the razor wire.

pass all the way through the tun-
to a last checkpoint, a small cinder-
ck hut squatting beside the final
ling gate guarding the visiting yard.
irty yards away, across the yard, at
identical gated entranceway facing
s one, guards are mustering inmates
ssed in orange jumpsuits.

In a slot at the bottom of the hut's
ndow you must surrender your num-
red green ticket to receive a red one.
o groups of women and children
ead of me in line require a few min-
utes each for this procedure. Then I hold up the works. Feel on my back the helplessness and irritation of visits stalled. Five, ten minutes in the wire bullpen beside the hut, long enough to register a miraculous change in temperature. Less than an hour before, crossing the parking lot, I'd wondered if I'd dressed warmly enough. Now Arizona sun bakes my neck. I'm wishing for shade, for the sunglasses not permitted inside. My throat's parched. Will I be able to speak if spoken to. Through the hut's thick glass, bullet-proof I'm guessing, I watch two officers talking. One steps away to a wall phone. The other plops down at a shelflike mini-desk, shuffles papers, punches buttons on a console. A dumb show since I couldn't hear a thing through the slab of greenish glass.

Did I stand in the cage five minutes or ten or twenty. What I recall is mounting heat, sweat spiders crawling inside my clothes, my eyes blinking, losing track of time, not caring about time, shakiness, numbness, mumbling to myself, stiffening rage, morphing combinations of all the above, yet overriding each sensation, the urge to flee, to be elsewhere, anywhere other than stalled at that gate, waiting to be snatched inside or driven away or, worse, pinned there forever. I dream of coolness, far, far away where I could bury my throbbing head, coolness miles deep below the sand, so deep you can hear the subterranean chortle of rivers on the opposite face of the planet.

At last someone exits the concrete hut from a door I hadn't noticed, addressing me, I think.

Sorry, sir. Computer says your visit's canceled. Try the warden's office after 9 A.M. Monday. Sorry about the mix-up. Now stand back please. ◻

Answers to the November Quiz, "Running Wild"

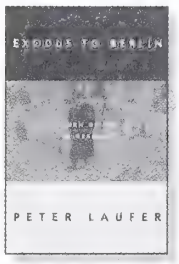
1 Marcus Tullius Cicero; **2** George Washington; **3** Elbridge Gerry; **4** Nine; **5** No one; **6** George H. Gallup; **7** Eleanor Roosevelt; **8** Teddy Roosevelt; **9** Thomas Jefferson; **10** John Quincy Adams; **11** William McKinley; **12** Robert F. Kennedy; **13** Jimmy Carter; **14** Adlai Stevenson.

PETER S. TEMES
The Just War



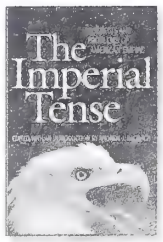
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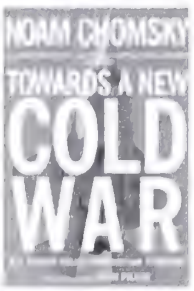
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CHRISTMAS AT THE ROTHSCHILDS'

Success, longing, and the aberrations of privilege

By Frederic Morton

Coughing, I blink my eyes ake. To see . . . Is this reality? On my night table, three tissue xes to select from and cough into. iis might be reality because I re- ember them from last night—men- olated tissue, rose-scented tissue, ain tissue, all three encased in sky- ue velvet patterned with golden urs-de-lis. Next to them, this morn- g's papers—*Le Figaro, Internation- Herald Tribune*, London *Times*. ie door opens and in pads barefoot is pretty one in tapered slacks and m-tailored jacket, sunburst of hair ll voluptuously unkempt, waving a ir of boots.

"Think I can wear these in a olls?"

I stare at her. Marcia, my wife, scussing Rolls-Royce attire. This indeed reality. Château Mouton. /e Mortons are spending Christ- as 1960 with the Rothschilds.

"I mean, mud boots on that Per- an rug Sire's got in the car? He id we'd be tramping through the ineyard in the rain."

God! The Christmas wine tasting!



The thought makes me grasp for clothes. "I completely forgot!"

She stops my hand. "You're going nowhere. Not in this freezing rain. You're still coughing."

"But it's a great experience, for the book—"

"So I'm going for you. Got to get ready for Sire."

"Sire" is our code word for Baron Philippe de Rothschild. When we're by ourselves we play duh—two punks in the palace. We're resolutely (if covertly) irreverent in order not to be thrilled by the deluge of opulence here.

She bends down to kiss.

"You'll catch my cold."

"Your common cold, peasant? Classy broad like me in a swank joint like this, I don't stoop to such bugs."

"Yeah, but you're embarrassed about the boots."

"Just for that I'm gonna wear them. Let 'em ruin that carpet! Oh, and since I'm going, you'll have to wrap our gifts."

"Me? I'm so inept at these things."

"So make it charmingly inept. And drink lots of fluids!"

Like a good boy I drink up all the juice on my breakfast tray, butler-borne (how else?) to my bed. Then off to my bathroom, to use a select few of its myriad marmoreal facilities. Then I walk into Marcia's room, *bonjour* the two maids implausibly ironing the fresh silk sheets spread on her bed, find the blue gift box in her big suitcase, return to my room of our guest apartment where another pair of implausible [illegible] on my bed. I *bonjour* them, stutter in my pitiable [illegible]

Yawk to [illegible]

rederic Morton is the author of thirteen ooks, including The Rothschilds: Portrait f a Dynasty, *a National Book Award fi- alist. "A Delivery for Fred Astaire," a pre- ious chapter of his forthcoming memoir, ap- eared in the November 2002 issue of* Harper's Magazine.

lustration by Steven Dana

cent always breaks up Marcia) to assume [illegible]

They do carry on, undisturbingly, their very vacuum muffled pranksterism. [illegible] down at the empire desk, red lacquer and gold scrolls. The gifts are our attempt to cope with a [illegible] what can one possibly bring a Rothschild for Christmas?

Well, one brings a seven-franc gift certificate from Le Hallay [illegible] blue-plate special of pot-au-feu. That's for Sire: he once mentioned that as a child he'd been tantalized by the smell of pot-au-feu coming from the gatekeeper's house but never tasted even a spoonful since no Rothschild child would condescend to such a plebeian stew. And as another Christmas present one brings to Château Mouton the Upper East Side section of the Manhattan subway map, laminated and framed like a historic plaque. That's for the baroness because she'd let it drop that during her New York years as Hattie Carnegie's top designer she'd always meant "to adventure" into the subway but never managed to encounter a station when she had the time.

Joke presents for people who already own everything serious. Presents with an egalitarian innuendo; a bow, however subtle, to one's social conscience. Important, because of this queer turn in my career. Who would have thought that national magazine editors would be just fascinated when I ask for a Lipton tea bag to go with the rarefied Brie at La Côte Basque? Would suspect that my frayed pants cuffs might be an esoteric fashion statement? Would overlook my pinko novels together with all other expressions of a prole soul? It's the combination of continental background and fancy prose style that hornswoggles them. Suddenly I've become the man to unlock the mysteries of *raffiné* high life for their readers. The dear idiots have been throwing champagne jobs at seltzer me, which seltzer me has fielded, baroque expense accounts and all, as a sort of wicked joke. As a silken lucrative peccadillo to fund my return to seriousness.

So here I am in the château, wrapping our Christmas presents to the Rothschilds, struggling with Santa Claus paper, not even too ineptly. But not too happily either. Why? A pang in the prole soul? Yes, but there's also something else. There's a longing, a downright pining for my parents. Curiously, not the Vienna *Papa und Mutti* of my dreams but my current parents in New York, in fact, my precisely current parents on Christmas Eve.

Or maybe that's not too curious after all. Wrapping presents now in Mouton naturally conjures last Christmas Eve when I was also wrapping presents, not for any Rothschilds but, on my parents' behalf, for Ramona, Juanita, Anna, Ophelia, Carmen, et alia—Papa's Hispanic crew in his workshop at 800 Eighth Avenue. But why this sudden yen to be there with them now? I didn't enjoy it all that much at the time. In fact, I remember that I resented being shanghaied into this wrapping thing by my brother. Usually that's his Christmas Eve choice, Henry being junior to me and much handier. But last year he called, please, big favor, sub for him at 800 Eighth, force majeure, Christmas party invitation from his Queens College dean, as fledgling instructor he couldn't ignore the summons.

I also had better things to do with my time than cover gewgaws with gaudy paper. My summons was to my daily labors, which haven't gone entirely unrecognized in the world of letters. But Henry is such a damnably nice bright guy. Hard to pull rank on him, nor could I last year. So, instead of refining nuances in my manuscript, I was squirming behind Papa's desk embroiled with scissors and tape. And to me, now similarly occupied at Château Mouton, those hours last year take on such a wistful warmth. What I was wrapping then, gifts for Papa's señoritas—those things were really jokes nicer and better than the subway map or the seven-franc gift certificate. Those things were napkin rings shipped to Papa from Vienna—part of the decimated inventory of his factory commandeered by the Nazis and restituted in shambles after the war. Of course napkin rings are not optimal presents for barrio girls innocent of dinner parties. But exile has taught Papa to improvise. Buying, on top of nine Christmas bonuses, nine Christmas gifts substantial enough to come from the boss—*viel zu teuer*. Much too expensive. Yet each Christmas his paternalism demands a gesture beyond extra bills in the pay envelope. So last year he reinvented the napkin rings as nine bracelets for the girls. By day's end nine bright braided brass hoops gleamed on nine dusky wrists. And the fact that all hoops were identical made nine faces glow with a sense of privileged membership in an exclusive club.

And now, twelve months later, I find myself wishing I'd be part of it that again, in Room 211 of 800 Eighth Avenue, wrapping away at Papa's current reinventions; hearing from across the narrow hall, muted, mystically obscure, the German of my parents' voices as they fix up the stockroom for the big Christmas lunch; hearing behind me, on the other side of the workshop partition, the girls whispering in Spanish while they thread nylon filament through the little holes in fake pearls. And if, say, Juanita would come out from behind the partition on her way to the rest room (the only excuse Papa accepts) what fun to slam shut the open desk drawer on which I would to hide the nature of this year's gift. And how I'd love to see again today the other objects rattling in the desk drawer, those buttons declaring I LOVE ELVIS or SINATRA FOREVER or TITO PUENTE! confiscated by Papa every morning to be returned at the end of the workday, Papa's precaution against fan arguments disrupting attention to the job.

This year my brother will once more sit at that desk. And me, four thousand miles away at Château Mouton, I wonder what in hell is now rattling in the desk drawer in Room 211, what new Elvis button Henry will be guarding, what Christmas ingenuities of Papa's he might be wrapping. But at least I do know exactly what other largesse he'll dispense in Papa's name: those lovely bundles of silver-foiled Belgian pralines in gold nets, heaped on Papa's desk. This never changes from year to year, having become a traditional sweets to be handed out to a rather prodigious parade of neighbors. Nothing like Christmas in this New York—nutty, marvelously dissolute building where Papa runs his comic little Middle European boot camp.

ake Akinu, the Japanese glass-
er, who'll be dropping up from
ground-floor store. His specialty
ny gossamer figurines. But admire
n closely—they turn into Kama-
a couples in full hump. A hot
et with the Madison Square Gar-
crowd from across the street, the
kies and scalpers who like to
gle these diaphanous fornications
ve the dashboard to warm up
tever doll they're taking on a
. For us, at Frank Morton Cos-
e Jewelry, however, Akinu has a
erent offering at Christmastide.
ll bring a little translucent Star of
hlehem, receiving in return his
gian pralines.

nd dear Mrs. Laseur from upstairs
make her Christmas appearance,
ding out a delightfully aromatic sa-
t my mother will exclaim over and
to scent her clothes closet and
ch will confirm her brave belief
t the young ladies of the Laseur
ss Shop on the third floor really
sew blouses. Papa, who sometimes
ks late, long after Mutti has gone
ne to cook, knows better; so do I.
d maybe just because of that I'd
e to see Mrs. Laseur hold on to her
urn wig as she bends down to kiss
cheek for the pralines.

'd even love to see again the pock-
rked smirk of Lou the Cop, usually
king in potbellied uniform in the
by, rocking while swapping boxing
ls with Garden touts, rocking his
ir between the grizzled potted palm
l the "Raided Premises" sign. He'll
g his hulk upstairs to bring us noth-
but a hearty bad-breath "Have a
rry!" He'll collect his pralines be-
e heading a floor higher to Mrs.
seur, where a much more substan-
l bounty awaits him in legal tender.
yuletide lagniappe, keeping the
emises un-reraided for another year.
Last but not least there's Bix, Bix of
x's Swing Shop next to our glass-
ower on the ground floor. Actually he
ould be first because he provides the
achine crucial to the celebration as
ll as the hiding place for the gifts to
y parents, the anniversary gifts—no
atter that my parents' wedding an-
versary is not today, December 24,
t yesterday, the twenty-third—gifts
dden in Bix's shop which include al-
ys the presents from the girls, Hen-



SOLUTION TO THE NOVEMBER PUZZLE

G	T	C	H	I	O	E	F
C	L	N	O	R	T	D	T
O	F	T	U	M	E	I	W
E	E	T	R	F	S	T	A
S	P	C	T	R	O	S	H
F	E	S	T	H	E	Y	O
N	I	O	A	M	E	T	N
R	E	O	V	E	A	B	L

NOTES FOR "IT WAS A DARK AND STORMY KNIGHT":

The knight moves spell out READING FROM BOTTOM TO TOP, NOTE THE FIFTH LETTER OF EACH ANSWER SUCCESSIVELY, which leads to the name of the knight of mystery, SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE.

Puzzle editing by Dan Asimov.

Anagrams are indicated with an asterisk (*)

ANSWERS: A. anthem*-ic(e); B. t.-a(ssassins)-t-tle*; C. st-a(f)ry; D. to-m(urder)-to-m(urder); E. no-body, pun; F. live*-Ness; G. pot-tag(ers) crooner, coroner; I. show-off, pun; J. infecter*; K. the-orem*; L. virtue(') a fetching, two mngs.; N. s-hatte*-(murde)r; O. d-e-t-e-r, initial c-0-h-orts*; R. specie*; S. fewest, hidden.

ry's lilies, and the roses from me. Good old Bix, he'll come up no matter how crazy-hectic Christmas Eve is for him; no matter how many strung-out jazz cats converge on his place to rent (*specify size, color, rates*) practically undamaged saxes, traps, trombones, for holiday gigs. Forget all that. Bix will take time out to stagger up all those steps, clutching a gramophone; panting, he'll emerge on our floor with his haggard cheeks and hallucinated eyes; he'll stagger on to my parents in the stockroom. And from there my brother will hear (as I did last year) Papa's and Mutti's smilingly protesting voices. Once more they'll lose the arguments they've lost on Christmases past. They haven't won since Bix discovered that Mutti's mother vanished at Theresienstadt where Bix's granduncle also disappeared. No, Bix won't accept a penny for loan of the gramophone, though he will accept the pralines. And how I'd love to press them into his hand again and to sniff what he'll leave behind—a mixed mist of pot and sweat.

In fact, I'd also love to hear again the dubious compliment Papa paid me last year when he came in from across the corridor later in the morning. Ostensibly he was checking on the girls, to make sure they remained work-focused right up to the Christmas lunch at noon sharp. In truth he was quite sure of them, having trained them well. He was less sure of less trainable me. So he came in, cast a quick eye on the seven napkin rings I'd already wrapped.

"Good—good how you do this. I appreciate, because this is abnormal hours for you."

By breathing those words in English, Papa imposed a certain formal distance between us, a stiff space, a withholding of our familial German by way of rebuke. He always does that when referring, however indirectly, to the unnatural ways I've fallen into after a promising start as a teenage baker's-apprentice. "Abnormal hours for you" expressed his doubt that I can do any work, including napkin-ring wrapping, at a time of day normal for my brother or for the rest of regular humanity. It was a dig at my clacking away at the typewriter far beyond midnight, pecking out polysyllabic, subversive, decadent whimsies my agent will peddle after I rise at noon; it was a frown at my sticking to nocturnal baker hours while practicing a much less solid trade than baking. My aberrations exceeding even those Papa might try to find understandable in an aberrant New World at an aberrantly newfangled time.

All this and more simmered in Papa's "abnormal hours" last Christmas. But if I were there today I wouldn't resent it. And I wouldn't answer Papa, as I did last year, with "Abnormal hours? Maybe I should charge you overtime." I would not say that. Or, if I did say it, I'd add, with a smile, "Daddy." That at least made him feel American, and he'd smile back.

Only now I'm at Château Mouton and it's not Papa who enters after a knock at the door. It's Pauline de Rothschild herself, and since I hadn't expected her I may have been a moment too late shoving her half-wrapped subway-map gift under the *International Herald Tribune*.

Did she notice? If so, it didn't break the stride of long-legged faux blue jeans that are probably haute-coutured Levi's of blue velvet.

"Frederic! Good morning."

"Good morning, Baroness."

"No, no—'Pauline.' Please. Make me feel younger. How is your cold?"

"Just a little cough. Mostly gone, Pauline."

"It's not any allergy? We can't have another Dali disaster."

"A Dali disaster?"

"Three years ago, still a trauma. The poor man came to design a Mouton wine label. My luck to choose a Jacquard linen for a tablecloth. He nearly wheezed to death over soup."

"I have no allergy. Just a measly cold."

"Good. I want you well and functioning"—she cocks her head mischievously—"for the kind of advantage I plan to take of you."

A wispy butler who has materialized by her side hands her a thick tome. She puts it down in front of me, on top of the London *Times* (luckily not on the *Herald Tribune*).

"My scheme all along," she says, "has been to pick your brains. On this."

This, the tome, is *The Oxford Book of Sixteenth Century Verse*, of all thin

"I'll be damned," I say. "I used teach that. How did you know?"

"Johns Hopkins. I tracked y down in *Who's Who*. We're having go at a definitive French translati You see, the Elizabethans have been done justice to, in French. A here's Philippe who's already don lovely Christopher Fry, used by the Paris productions. Of course can't do the whole *Oxford*—we s haven't finished the wine muse here, a madness in itself, it's thre ening to dwarf the Louvre. So—I checked off in red the poems we picked. Could you possibly l through sometime and comme Approve our choices? Disappro Reprove? Laugh us out of court?"

She draws her head in, betwe her cashmered shoulders, in hum ous timidity.

"Happy to," I say. "Not that opinion is definitive. But I'm flatter

"And me—I'm relieved!" A v light, expert cheek kiss, subtly p fumed. "Shriven for Christmas! C fessed my ulterior motive!"

Laughing, trailed by the wispy b ler, she skips away.

I'm left coughing, in the wake her élan. Pretty goddamn clever é It comes to me that maybe, just ma she's just confessed one ulterior mo in the service of another yet more terior. Unmentioned in our little c the fact that I've been commissio by major publishers on both sides of Atlantic to do a Rothschild boo well as by *Holiday Magazine* to wri series of five articles on them. The son why I've been invited here in first place. Also omitted in our c versation but researched by me in vance: Mouton-Rothschild borders the rival family vineyard of La Rothschild, absentee-owned by a lective of French banker Rothsch Lafite ranks as *premier cru* above M ton's *deuxième*, though (as the baro let drop yesterday, in passing) M ton nevertheless tops Lafite in m wine auctions.

So wouldn't a chat like the one now help me, the invited writer, cover how very personally, idiosyncratically, culturally Mouton is inh ited by its sole proprietor, Ba Philippe, in tandem with a co

ly tangy? Wouldn't that make it
for the writer to decide which
two cousin estates will yield more
esting copy and so deserve superi-
ace in a Rothschild biography?
l that haute kinetic cunning
s me feel sluggish. Sabotages my
ping. The Christmas paper resists
My cough revives and unsteadies
and. How much easier were the
in rings at Papa's on Eighth Av-
enue! What balm to be
back there now!

Christmas dinner in the château's
g salon. Correction, in one of the
eau's dining salons, the Renais-
ey one. Ogive windows arching
een classic pilasters, quattrocen-
onces, candlelight glancing off
e butlers' gloves, discreet swarm-
f stewards and sommeliers, high-
ed choiring of French Christmas
s: children of Sire's *vignerons* ser-
ling us from the front hall. And all
particular cheer to me. Nose less
ed, cough under control, but soul
ping once more, smack in the mid-
of a paradisaical soiree.
can't seem to cope with my neigh-
in paradise. On my left, the lady
duced as principal stage designer
the Comédie-Française—smooth
th of iron-gray hair matching her
umable Balenciaga. Exudes the
ier cri in austerity, a chic abbess of
rsonage and monolingual to boot.
anglais," she apologized over hors
uvres of huîtres de Marennes.
ich would be all right if her *français*
ld not zoom past me, unintelligi-
at supersonic speed. Nor does she
down after hearing my snail-pace
ach, which of course fails to con-
t with her. Clueless but courteous,
nods before I come to the point
ny remarks. Soon we resign our-
es to mute industrious smiling as we
s the pepper mill.
On my right, the young, rather pret-
nd almond-eyed culture reporter
Bordeaux TV. Speaks almost Ox-
an Brit and has a ruby butterfly flut-
ng toward me across a scenic dé-
letage. Her game is golf, I'm still a
nis buff, and at first we have fun
sing each other about our sports.
t soon the jolliness founders on an
erging difference. She appreciates,
iously, each new exalted vintage

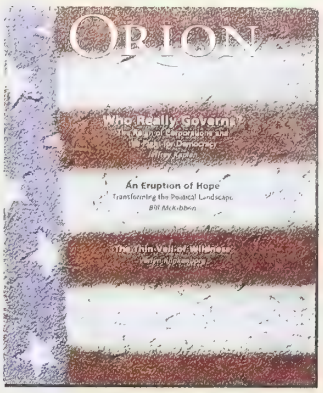
the nature of change

ORION
Culture, Creativity, and Change

In the November/December
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Who Really Governs?
The Reign of Corporations & the Fight for Democracy
Jeffrey Kaplan

The Thin Veil of Wildness
Verlyn Klinkenborg



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[illegible] dish. I [illegible] in token sips. She makes no direct comment but starts clinking glasses with me aggressively, followed by sharp side-glances at my feeble sips as she bottoms-up, then puts down her empty goblet with a glare at the barely lowered liquid level in mine. Does she feel that her overconsumption is pointed up by my under? At any rate she soon turns away to talk with the ruddy portly Comte de Whatever on her other side, and simply never turns back.

Okay, let her. Let her remain averted so that I can inspect with leisure the triangular mole at the top of her spine. Let the ruby butterfly flutter toward De Whatever. Let the chic abbess continue to ignore me, except when in need of the pepper mill. And let Pauline de Rothschild, Argus-eyed hostess of this superbly congenial *souper*, observe the depth of my pariahdom. Probably no surprise to her.

The baroness has actually taken some advance precautions to deal with my particular leprosy; i.e., my reverse drinking problem. That's why she must have seated the president des Chevaliers du Tastevin so far away, at the other end of the table. The minister of culture, however, is to her right, which is almost opposite, and he's begun knitting burly gray eyebrows at the varieties of preciousness left in the glasses before me, none of which the sommeliers will remove unless at least half-emptied.

"Frederic!" Pauline intones pleasantly. "Do share with my illustrious friend here what you have told me about T. S. Eliot. I would have never guessed!"

Obvious the subtext of that request. To make up for my slighting France's glorious viniculture, I am to laud the power of her literature.

"You mean Paul Verlaine?" I say, obediently. "That he was such an influence?"

"Exactly!" She turns to the minister. "Would you believe? Eliot, the greatest living poet in the English language—and his inspiration was a French writer!"

"Yes, I do believe this." The minister nods a brief smile at Pauline. "I was happy to learn of this years ago." Smile vanished, the burly brows resume knitting at my derelict goblets.

For all her bull's-eye flair, the baroness can miss, just like me. I don't even mind her second failure tonight, even if this one involves Sire's leching after Marcia.

Pauline must have a hard time controlling her baron—this smart handsome baldie, the sort of sovereign creature of impulse he is, headlong with smooth unpredictability. Clearly the baroness couldn't prevent the baron from sitting next to Marcia. Just as clear, her countermove, which did work for a little while: she placed on Marcia's other side the tall French general quite receptive to feminine charms. Bent toward her, he expressed amazement, in broken but stentorian English, at her resemblance to a young lady he met while military governor of Morocco, the king's niece—the same petite nose, the same large Mediterranean eyes. Yet he can't glom on to my Bronx princess for long. Sire reclaims her simply by pulling a bit on the tiny hairs of her arm, and then proceeds to whisper at length sweet nothings to her. Which doesn't bother me too much either because Marcia, though ostensibly listening, has extended her arm just an inch across the table toward me, her hand moving slightly, slowly, in an up-and-down motion, an unobtrusive "let him . . . let him" signal.

Yessirree and hot diggety, some *recherché mise-en-scène*. But, except for the big-shot stuff, a bash not too different in principle from the one at 800 Eighth Avenue where I'd ordinarily sit today, though I'd get a lot more conversation from my table neighbors. Indeed, I'd get it this very minute—owing to the time difference, the Mouton dinner synchronizes with my parents' famous Christmas lunch. Certainly I'd have arrived there by now and be sitting at the table.

At Mouton the gold-rimmed menu card by my place setting lists six courses: huîtres de Marennes, foie gras à la gelée, consommé girondin, filets de sole Dnieper, faisan rôtis, glace flamande. Eighth Avenue usually also features six gastronomic highlights. I remember them well: roast beef, pastrami, corned beef, bologna, Genoa salami, Swiss cheese, each displayed on its own paper serving plate, in slices lovingly arran[illegible] by Papa in fan shape.

And the potables. Okay, at Mou[illegible] the menu card tonight boasts Ve[illegible] Cliquot 1921, La Tour 1938, Heidsi[illegible] 1947, Mouton-Rothschild 19[illegible] Mouton-Rothschild 1880, Sigal[illegible] Rabaud 1919. On Eighth Avenue [illegible] feature Seven Up, Pepsi, Coke, S[illegible] gram's Ginger Ale, Doc's Root B[illegible] and Berger's two cents plain—all w[illegible] safely unexpired expiration dates.

Granted, on Eighth Avenue [illegible] have nothing like the Mout[illegible] Christmas tree, this towering Jud[illegible] Christian pine, with a hundred el[illegible] tric candles flickering artfully und[illegible] double pinnacle of silver star of Be[illegible] lehem and golden menorah. W[illegible] we do have on Eighth Avenue, h[illegible] ever, is an equivalent for Mouto[illegible] lush cornucopia of gift-wrapp[illegible] goodies heaped under the tree: w[illegible] we have are two tables standing[illegible] the corner of the stockroom. [illegible] table will hold this year's successo[illegible] the napkin rings, wrapped by [illegible] brother Henry. On the second r[illegible] the gramophone from Bix's Sw[illegible] Shop. Otherwise this big table (c[illegible] ered like the others by the pi[illegible] swirled paper tablecloth) will[illegible] empty, a temporary, fraught em[illegible] ness awaiting the climax of the c[illegible] bration with its anniv[illegible] sary offerings.

Fraught, too, on Eighth Avenue[illegible] the lunch table itself, as richly char[illegible] with undercurrents as this dinne[illegible] Mouton. As always, Papa will h[illegible] made sure that Hyacinth sits far a[illegible] from my mother. Underlying t[illegible] arrangement is a Byzantine reason c[illegible] tered on Hyacinth's gums. Seve[illegible] times a year these require treatm[illegible] to which Hyacinth will not submit[illegible] fear, apparently, that somehow she'l[illegible] decapitated in the process. Th[illegible] where Papa comes in. Without e[illegible] asking her he goes straight to [illegible] phone. The appointment he ma[illegible] with Dr. Mueller, our family den[illegible] (formerly the best in northwestern [illegible] enna), is of course after 5:00 P.M. s[illegible] not to conflict with working ho[illegible] Papa himself will firmly escort [illegible] acinth to Dr. Mueller's office on 15[illegible] Street, ignoring Hyacinth's whimpe[illegible] protests, which will diminish so[illegible]

after he buys her a chocolate ice
n on the way. And Papa will keep
by the chair, holding Hyacinth's
while Dr. Mueller wields Novo-
needle and periodontal probe. Af-
ne ordeal Papa will buy her a sec-
chocolate ice cream as painkiller
ake her home to Brooklyn by taxi
she might be too groggy for the
ay (and at the end of the week
deduct only half the fare from her
As a result he never gets home
e half past nine, delaying dinner
endously. This happens almost
y three months. But Mama would
forgive Hyacinth were she not
South Seas pretty with a passion-
er hairdo and a never confiscated
ic white carnation in her mid-
t locks. As such she constitutes
lutti's eyes an assault, however fu-
on Papa's fidelity.

ut even more fraught is the plac-
of Ramona, who presides facing
a at the opposite end of the table.
e, it's a prestigious spot, befitting
nona's dignity as forelady. Indeed,
l the year before last that chair
nged to my mother, who outranks
forelady as Mrs. Boss. Neverthe-
, she ceded the location to Ra-
na as a sop much needed this night.
at a certain juncture on Christ-
. Eve our forelady will be sorely
d by a ghostlike resurgence of her
l and predecessor, Lucia. Lucia was
y, and more than that. She was
r Lucy, even to Papa who doesn't
ly unbend. To Mutti she was Our
ve Lucy for all her many winning
s, like how she'd dug up at a Low-
ast Side flea market and brought to
parents' apartment the amazing
ster bust of the emperor Franz
eph, a surprise all the more en-
ring since the doors of the IRT
l sliced off the All-Highest's nose.
r co-workers clustered around Our
cy at lunch, giggling over Peter
wford's drunks or Ava Gardner's
nky-pankies—inside stuff straight
m Our Lucy's film-set carpenter
isin in Hollywood. Nobody has ever
istered around Ramona, her long-
bittered No. 2 in the 800 hierarchy,
itterness lingering even after Our
cy returned to San Juan to take over
r uncle's grocery store. Ramona as-
nded to forelady, but she never be-
me Our Ramona.

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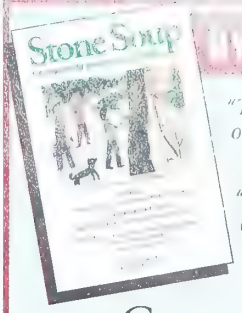
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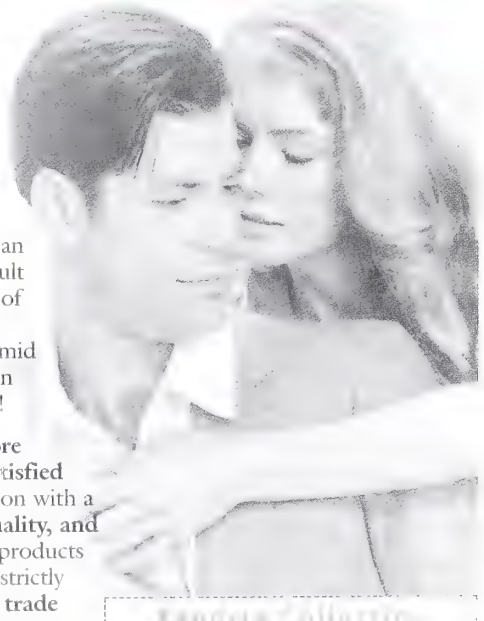
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Yet she deserves the anointment for her very solid qualities. She has the spinster's virtue of punctuality, often waiting for Papa mornings when he arrives to open the workshop. She is a Republican, which Papa, a Habsburg democrat, respects because it contrasts with the others' giddy ignorance of politics. (Her never confiscated button says I LIKE IKE.) Though she's a few years older than her colleagues, you could call her an almost pretty Republican, if you disregard the harsh fold down her forehead and her ramrod posture, which becomes even more pronounced when she sits down to work. A drastic straightness announcing that if Mr. Morton should absent himself for any reason, she'll be there to prevent chaos.

Papa's appreciation of all this shows whenever a new supply salesman calls. He'll introduce Ramona as "our good forelady, Miss Perez, she has the power from me to sign shipment receipts." A prerogative exercised de facto by Our Lucy but which she was never formally awarded.

Such are Ramona's consolations. They will all come to naught at a certain stage in our Eighth Avenue Christmas luncheon. When Papa sees that most of the cold cuts have been polished off, he will clap his hands twice, stopping the hubbub, rise, give a Central European bow, and point to the table loaded with gifts: "Please, over there, maybe you will find some little holiday mementos."

And there'll be a happy rush to over there (except for Ramona, who follows slowly, warily), a zestful tearing of wrapping paper, a crying of "Thank you, thank you, Mister and Missis Mortons!" for whatever might be this year's napkin rings. Ramona will go through these motions, too, but with eyes halfclosed against what happens next.

What happens next is that Our Lucy's best friend, Anya, who is still with us, this Anya will suddenly produce the plastic-enclosed disc Lucy mailed from Puerto Rico. She will present it to Papa in a formal gesture, using both hands. And Papa will throw his head back and let his jaw drop a little, in ritual surprise. Then, with ritual solemnity, he'll pull the disc out of its sheath to display the white label in the center on which will be scrawled in red crayon, "To Mr. and also Mrs. Morton, married cupple on their 37th aniversary, with sincere love, Lucy."

At this there'll be much ritual oohing and aahing (Ramona's eyes closing even more above her frozen smile). A circle will form around my parents. At its center, Papa, with somewhat stage-conscious, heightened emphasis, will place the disc on the gramophone's turntable and apply the needle. Shouts will go up: "Anniversary Waltz—dance, Mister and Missis Mortons! Dance!" And it won't matter a bit that the scratchy yodels emanating from the disc aren't from the Anniversary Waltz at all. Lucy sang that song only the first time. In each following year she's performed a different new operetta aria and continued the variation even after her return to Puerto Rico. God knows how she manages to dig up in San Juan yet another period Vienna love ballad complete with German lyrics. But manage she does. I have every confidence that this Christmas, too, 800 Eighth Avenue will resound to something like

Du bist mein ganzes Herz.
Wo du nicht bist, kann ich
nicht sein . . .

rendered by Our Lucy's thin, ardent soprano intermittently in tune. And my parents, still standing in the middle of their girls' circle, my parents will nod and smile at the smothering of German consonants by Hispanic passion. And all around them the shouts will continue: "Dance, Mister and Missis Mortons! Anniversary Waltz! Dance!" Papa will just smile, immobile, until Anya gives him a little nudge (in Lucy's name, so to speak), and that will do it.

He'll place his arm around Mutti's waist and take her hand into his. And, look, they're turning, slowly at first, but then faster, swaying, swerving, swiveling, as if it were still Vienna 1937.

Enormous applause crescendoing still further to the end of the number. Mutti will make Papa take a bow with her, kiss him theatrically, then rush to the eats table to lift her paper cup of ginger ale.

"To our Lucy!"

At this very point when Ramona can take it no more, she can legitimately remove herself from the C
Lucy delirium. Quietly she'll steal
the door together with my broth
(and if I were there, with me). T
fold down her forehead will smoo
with relief, she'll look downright ha
some as we hurry down the stairs
Bix's Swing Shop. Bix, of course, h
been expecting us. His store is alre
closed, everything locked away,
cept for the anniversary gifts waiti
for us on his counter.

Ramona will take the Mac
shopping bag for whose contents
the girls have chipped in: the
evitable embossed tie for Papa, a
for Mutti the inevitable shawl w
spectacular long fringes. This y
Ramona's role in the ceremony
once again terminate those C
Lucy sentimentalities. The only
ference this year is that my brot
will have to grab not only his b
quet of lilies but also mine of roses

My god! There'll be
roses!

In Mouton the realization ca
pults me to my feet.

Too abruptly. The waiter abou
serve *fromage* has the plate nea
knocked out of his hand.

"Sorry!" I say. "*Excusez-moi.*
cuse me for a minute."

When Marcia catches up with
I'm already in my room, by
phone.

"What's the matter? Are you
right?"

"Calling my brother in New Y
Do the operators here speak E
lish?" (So far they speak only be
in response to the "0" I've dialed.

"Why?" she says. "All of a sudde

"I meant to do it yesterday,
then my fever or whatever, I for
just totally forgot! I've got to ask
to buy a bouquet for me— Hello?

"Your parents' anniversary?"

"You knew! Why didn't you
mind me?"

"I just guessed. Remind you, o
people?"

"Yeah, mama's boy forgot! Hell

Her lips on my cheek.

"As long as you're all right. I'll
plain downstairs."

She's gone, replaced by our pers
al butler, summoned, apparently
the commotion. He's still chewing

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own dinner but already pulling on white gloves.

"Please!" I thrust the receiver into his hand. "Long distance, the international operator!"

"Yes, yes, monsieur." He nods vigorously even while swallowing. "You wish New York?"

"Please!"

"I 'av New York operator, monsieur. What number?"

What number? It sinks in—the uselessness of calling Henry. There's no phone in the stockroom where he is with the rest of them.

"Riverbloom Florists, in Manhattan. R-i-v— No. No, wait."

No point either. I've no charge account there. No charge account, no delivery. And anyway, by the time flowers get down there from 105th Street, too late. But then a place jumps into my mind, not far from Papa, a florist on Fifty-second Street with orchids in the window, down the block from "21." But what in the world is the name? I simply don't know the blasted name.

But I do know "21." By god, I even remember the club's number, having called there a few times just before this Rothschild trip, about a possible story for *Holiday Magazine*.

"Gotham 4-1000," I say to the butler. "A person-to-person call please, Frederic Morton at Château Mouton to Mr. Robert Kriendler at '21' restaurant. K-r-i-e . . ."

The butler repeats these imposing instructions with a *distingué* crispness, which, I hope and pray, will enhance their urgency. In fact, I wish that whatever switchboard he's addressing could somehow *hear* the white gloves holding the receiver.

And behold! That butlerian authority seems to have bestirred operators as well as electrons into high speed. Within seconds he nods at a voice in the earpiece.

"One moment please." He hands me the phone.

"Kriendler here."

"Bob, it's Frederic Morton, from *Holiday Magazine*. We talked about a '21' story last month."

"My god, Frederic, of course! You really at Mouton?"

"Yes, doing a Rothschild book and article series, hip-deep in deadlines, god help me."

"Not bad. Mouton-Rothschild! Going to send me a case of that stuff for Christmas?"

"I think I had better. Any florist near you— Would you have his name and number?"

"Aw, don't send me flowers. A case of that stuff will do."

"Seriously, it's for my parents, Bob, it's their wedding anniversary, and they're in their business place right now, near you, so I've got the gall to ask you, this florist down your block, if you'd lay out the amount—"

"Nothing doing."

"No? Two cases?"

"Nope. Mucho Mouton in the house already. We've got the classiest drunks in town. You'll see when you write your '21' story."

"Then I'm out of luck."

"Says who. We got tons of roses, vases full, standby for table decorations over the holidays."

"Bob, not *your* flowers, please—"

"Want me to start messing with a florist Christmas Eve? How many years your parents married?"

"Thirty-seven, but—"

"Thirty-seven roses. We'll send a busboy. What's the address?"

"Eight hundred Eighth Avenue. Between Forty-eighth and Forty-ninth. But listen—"

"And the room number please?"

"Second floor, room 211, Frank Morton Costume Jewelry, it says on the door. But they're all in an unmarked room directly opposite. Bob, I owe you a big one."

"Nah, just biggish. Okay, and I guess with a card saying, 'Love, Fred,' or something like that?"

"'With all my love, Fred' would be just great."

"Right. See, you're a much better writer than me. But I tell you, the busboy who's going to write it, bet he's got a better handwriting than you."

"Let me know which one, and I'll send him a case."

"Just wish him a Merry Christmas, and wish me one, too."

"And how, Bob! Merry Christmas! And—and Good Will toward '21.'"

"Hey, that's our Christmas card next year."

"You got the copyright, my compliments."

"See you in New York, my frien
And be kind to the Roth
schilds."

A moment's hush in the din
salon as I reappear.

"Hallelujah," Pauline says. "Our Fre
eric is well enough to join us again."

She clasps her hands. A small rou
of applause. I bow and sit down.

"Your madame," Baron Philippe sa
stroking Marcia's arm from wrist to
bow by way of identification, "she h
ordered therapy for your estomach."

There on my place setting is a go
ic teakettle and a teacup topped b
beveled tea sieve and five varieties
tea in little paisley tea tins and even
hot-water decanter—Marcia mu
have told them that I like to dilute

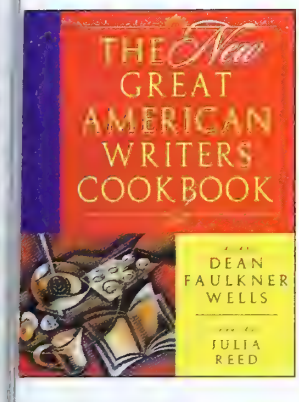
The chic abbess smiles at me. A
she of the cleavage butterfly is sudden
full of sympathy. "Myself also," she sa
"when I have a poor stomach, I cann
have wine. But perhaps you would li
a little of my cheese, very lean?"

And she cuts me a piece. And, b
of all, Marcia puts her forefinger to h
lips and then points it at me just lo
enough to hint a kiss.

Altogether, I have a right to f
pretty good. Her lovely secret ki
the table swindled into forgivene
the flowers delivered in the nick
time. The big-shot-to-big-shot lin
I performed pretty damn well w
Bob Kriendler.

Then what in hell is the probl
now? So I forgot my parents' flow
but remembered the "21" number. I
membering that number and know
Kriendler were what righted thi
again, right? No small feat to fulfill
Eighth Avenue anniversary obligat
from the stately remove of the Ro
schilds', right? My abnormal hours, a
the aberrations of privilege t
wrought, were what saved me, rig
Almost makes up for not seeing
parents' reaction to the gifts, wh
must be happening this instant. M
ti caressing the shawl's long fringe
emphasize her thrill to the girls wh
swooning to the perfume of her s
flowers, and Papa knotting the
bossed yellow-crimson tie—he'll n
er touch it again—directly on top of
plain brown one, all to enormous h
panic giggles. . . . It almost makes up
missing all that. Right?

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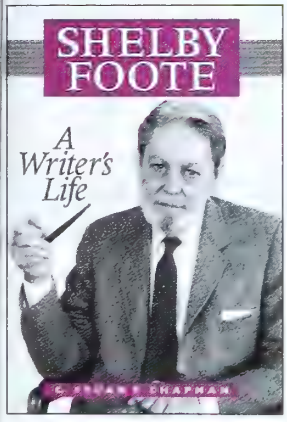


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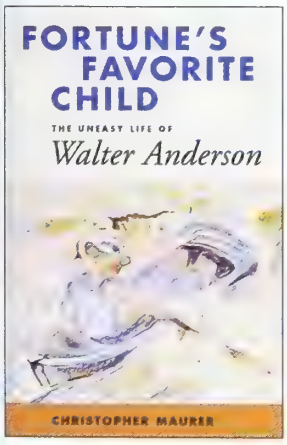
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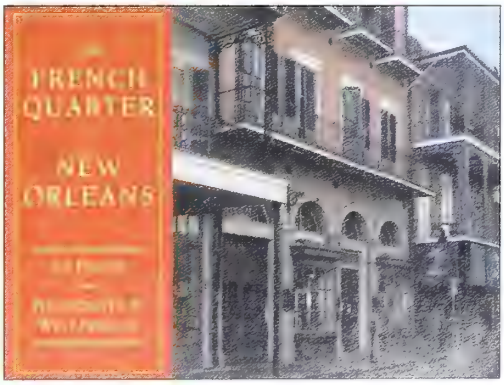
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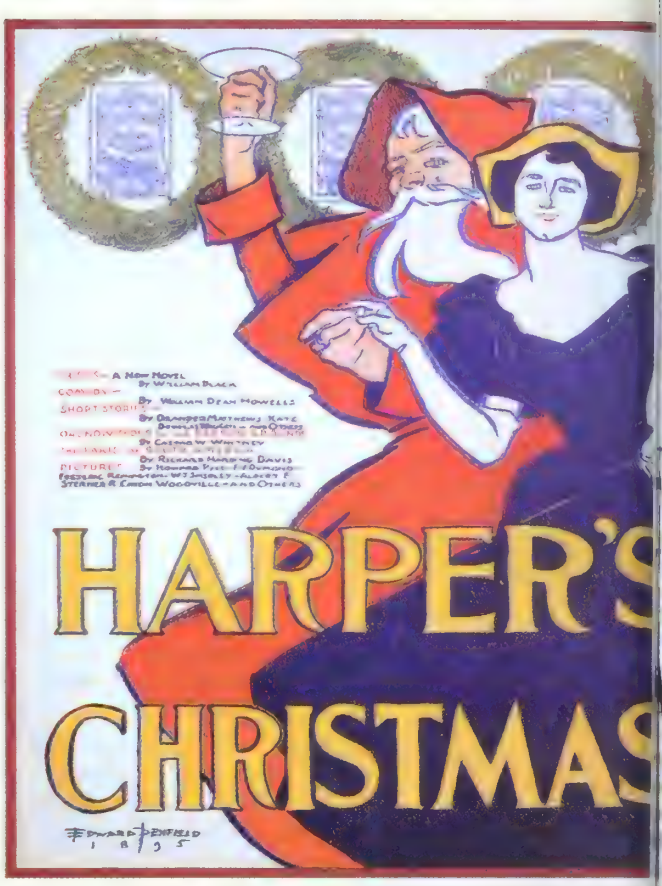
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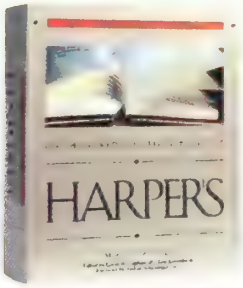
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EW BOOKS

John Leonard

t the Bogotá newspaper, a friendly editor told his twenty-six-year-old cub re-er: "Wring the neck of the swan." at he seems to have meant was: the facts, please; cut out the lyri-ourishes." Luckily for world liter-e, this advice was ignored by riel García Márquez, whose splen-nemoir of his first three decades, NG TO TELL THE TALE (Knopf, 95), is a swoon of swans, when it otherwise stewing goats, eating kets, ducking bats and plucking ots, running away from a bull in kitchen or following perverse Lu-nto an alley of toads.



l even this brief tour abo's animal, aviary, insect kingdoms omits ention the turkey buz-s, the drowned cows, the coffin-shaped ans of the Magdalena River snap-; their jaws on butterflies, or the eting of live crabs "whose shells ped like firecrackers under the soles ur shoes," or the curlews that peck the eyes of patrons at the haunted dello, or the rabbit too slow to es-e a landslide in Medellín.

esides birds of the air, beasts of the l, a lunatic house, and Dick Tracy Tarzan comics, he had *Treasure Is-l* and *The Count of Monte Cristo* to k about; William Faulkner and Vir-ia Woolf in Spanish; Homer's sses and Joyce's too; Lorca and Neru-Thomas Mann, Karl Marx, and z Kafka. (He tells us that *The Meta-morphosis* in a Borges translation "was Scheherazade all over again, not in her millenary world where every-thing was possible but in another ir-reparable world where everything had already been lost.") And music to inspire him: tangos, mambos, boleros. (Although he considers chamber music "the pinnacle of all arts," he wore out the Beatles' *A Hard Day's Night* while writing *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and listened "without mercy" to Bartók's Piano Concerto No. 3 during *The Autumn of the Patriarch*.) And women... Well, he has always been more comfortable with women than with men, but since *Living to Tell the Tale* ends with our foreign correspondent having just proposed marriage to Mercedes on his way out the door to report on an Ike/Bulganin summit conference in Geneva, let's not talk about the sailor's wife, or the policeman's, and especially not the madam with the "sidereal breasts and calabash cranium" who let him sleep in her open-air brothel on the beach whenever he was broke—which seems to have been most of the time, in spite of the fact that, from the start, friends, teachers, editors, and mentors did their best to help the mustached genius on his dreamy way.



Maybe you already knew that he was slow to learn how to read and still can't spell; that all his life he has been shy, terrified of telephones and airplanes and the lonely dark; that he loves accordions far too much, believes that writing radio soap operas was good for his narrative muscle tone, and was Colombia's very first newspaper film critic; and that if he hadn't been a reporter such books as *In Evil Hour*, *Leaf Storm*, *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*, and *The Story of a Shipwrecked Sailor* might never have occurred to him. Still, even if you knew all this, there is more. There is, for instance, violence, most of it political. But there is also joy, because Gabo and his friends were

and Butterflies Among Plants, by Melchior de Hondecoeter © National Gallery Collection, by permission of Trustees of the National Gallery, London/CORBIS; Woodcut of a grasshopper © Bettmann/CORBIS; *The rdion Players*, John Bellany © the artist and Bridgeman Art Library

Times [illegible] the mecca of rich [illegible] and literature [illegible] to call me he[illegible] at the office of [illegible] becoming everything that [illegible] and should be, not [illegible] my almost not taking a breath, and [illegible] without pause for fear that [illegible] would not last long enough for everything we still had to talk about." And then, for breakfast, those Magical Realist would order up new mirrors, magnets, and wind mill.

Of course, I am [illegible] to the rest of this month's book when I say that none was written by a Gabriel Márquez. Nobody ever accused the New York Times, the Gray Lady on West Forty-third Street about which all these books obsess, of in any way resembling Gabo's Macondo, with its bloody [illegible], golden salamanders, and [illegible] yellow flowers that they smothered the animal who left outside. Faye Dunaway and/or Bomarzo come more readily to mind.



But at least Arthur Gelb, after nearly half a century at the *Times*, has a tell-all or public-minded [illegible] to recall how much fun he had: from the copyboy who was there when Germany surrendered to the young reporter moving up from the police beat to public health to night rewrite to off-Broadway theater to interviewing Tennessee Williams and Edward Albee between his cabaret visits to Mort Sahl, Dick Gregory, Lenny Bruce, and Phyllis Diller, while simultaneously writing a true biography of Eugene O'Neill with his wife, Barbara. Then he [illegible] himself to the booster rocket of Abe Rosenthal's managerial career and ascended through the other to the precincts of [illegible] where I met him, in the late sixties, wayward bohemians like some recombinant Paul Bunyan and Johnny Appleseed.

Gelb gave me a start, and then he warmed me. At the time, like everybody else, I took that personally, as [illegible] does in MY LIFE IN ART (Crown/Tome Press, $16.95). Hess had covered European politics and culture from the Paris bureau of the *Times*, later served as the restaurant critic, and would never have written his prize-winning piece on the New York nursing home scandal if Gelb's mother hadn't suggested the story to a son who had a whole newsroom to boss around. But when Hess wanted to investigate other similar corruption in the museum world, he found that Gelb had turned elsewhere, perhaps preoccupied with the new Conspicuous Consumption supplement. So many necks, so little time. Hess, an enormously talented and ferocious reporter, left the paper and gives to Gelb many indignant pages—and gets from Gelb a couple of pat-on-the-back paragraphs.

The Hess we meet, not only in his memoir but also in the articles he attaches to it, is a man on a scorching mission. But from Gelb's much longer account we also understand that the metropolitan editor juggled lots of men—and a few women too, whose class-action unhappiness hurt his feelings—with many missions. Some of these men (Peter Kihss, Richard Shepherd) he liked more than others (Lester Markel, Scotty Reston), and not even his buddy Abe was always square with him. Yet Gelb from the beginning was a lifer, destined never to leave the building, from the atom bomb to John V. Lindsay to the Pentagon Papers. Those of us who quit on him, who jumped over the wall as if to escape the Catholic Church or the Communist Party or an abusive marriage, can still recall the look of injury in his eyes behind them horn-rimmed magnifying glasses.

Now that I've end my own swans, I find all this of prurient interest. I am even willing to reread Ken Auletta's essay on Howell Raines, Arthur Ochs Sulzberger Jr., and John McCandlish Phillips Jr., originally published in *The New Yorker* and reprinted in [illegible] (The Penguin Press, $24.95), along with his ar[illegible] on the *Los Angeles Times*, [illegible] *Chicago Tribune*. Powerful Me[illegible] and Inside.com, Don Imus and F[illegible] News, with updates, footnotes, a[illegible] postscripts to catch us up on me[illegible] ers, bankruptcies, and Jayson Bla[illegible] The Raines essay, in retrospect [illegible] particular, looks prescient. But ev[illegible] Raines's appointment looks stra[illegible] after Auletta has told us in an ea[illegible] er article that the new *Times* pu[illegible] lisher wanted a feel-good newsro[illegible] About the *Los Angeles Times*, wel[illegible] had a column in New York *News*[illegible] before the Cereal Killer what h[illegible] that feisty paper. About Inside c[illegible] it occurs to me that I never was [illegible] never will be as cool as any of th[illegible] people, but if I keep filing copy [illegible] email, maybe no one will ever kn[illegible] About Fox News, I hope they spe[illegible] a couple of sleepless minutes ev[illegible] night feeling ashamed of the[illegible] selves. But then Henry Kissin[illegible] told us in the first volume of [illegible] memoirs that the only sleepl[illegible] night he ever spent in all his y[illegible] of public service was on the ev[illegible] his first trip to China.

Gelb has forgotten that he [illegible] Rosenthal indulged their own p[illegible] tics of favoritism. Hess thinks [illegible] *Times* should be as Jacobin as he [illegible] are. Auletta seems to be more [illegible] terested in money than those o[illegible] toward the end of our story [illegible] again need to be. I'm glad Gelb [illegible] joyed himself as much as he did [illegible] fore newspapers turned into th[illegible] own branches of government, w[illegible] protocols and dress codes and forg[illegible] policies and official secrets, plus [illegible] anthem and maybe a beanie; and [illegible] fore their reporters turned into "co[illegible] tent" brokers in the information commodities racket, with plenty of downtime left over after they h[illegible] been cosseted, leaked upon, [illegible] perked, to stretch-limo themse[illegible] to Yankee Stadium, where [illegible] Steinbrenner will lift them up [illegible] then satari jacket epaulets to his [illegible] box to consort with such presbyt[illegible] of the Big Fix as Donald Trump [illegible] the late Roy Cohn—and where [illegible] can no longer tell the pearls f[illegible] the swine.

Photograph © Hulton Deutsch Collection/C[illegible]

TANDS TO REASON

e liberal responsibility of Raymond Aron

Mark Lilla

ssed in this essay:

Dawn of Universal History: Selected Essays from a Witness to the Twentieth entury, by Raymond Aron. Translated by Barbara Bray, with an introduction by Tony Judt. Basic Books, 2003. 518 pages. $22 (paper).

n a Saturday morning last May, Europeans opened their newspapers to find a manifesto writ- by two eminent philosophers, Jür- Habermas and Jacques Derrida. tled "Europe: A Plea for a Common ign Policy," the document was ac- panied by endorsements n other European and erican intellectuals of ying inclinations and ibilities, Umberto Eco Richard Rorty among n. They had decided to ık out in one voice about implications of the re- t Iraq war for a European ign policy in shambles. since the beginning of Cold War had there n a greater need to re- ık the foundations of Eu- ean diplomacy—the na- e of the external llenges it faces around world, the military and nomic resources at its posal, the domestic con- ints with which it must ıtend, and the risks and sibilities posed by Amer- n power. And now that e Cold War was over, never had re been a greater opportunity to an- ze these issues free from the ideolo- s of the past.

Or so one might think. But readers the "Plea" hoping to find a sober, realistic analysis of contemporary world politics were disappointed. Although its authors agreed "the war made Europeans recognize the shipwreck of their common foreign policy," they showed little interest in discussing the fundamentals of political power; indeed, the concept of power was studiously avoided, except in their criticisms of the United States. The bulk of the document was given over to a meandering, potted history of how the disasters of European civilization—"a civilization torn by conflict"—have ushered in a kinder, gentler continent devoted to the values of peace, international law, social solidarity, secularism, and multicultural understanding. The authors concluded that these values alone can and should dictate European foreign policy in its future confrontation with "the hegemonic unilateralism of the United States." And what of the fact that most countries in Eastern Europe supported the United States in Iraq? The philosophers offered a startling suggestion in response: Let Western Europe's "avant-garde core" establish the moral principles of the new foreign policy, to which East European candidate countries would be expected to subscribe if they wished to have the privilege of joining the E.U.

There is a good, old European word to describe this proposal: chutzpah. But it is chutzpah of a curious kind, brewed out of an odd mixture of moral idealism, historical anachronism, and studied indifference to the realities of world politics. Until the end of the Cold War, an intellectual intervention of this sort would have been more coherent, at least ideologically. Because of Emile Zola's heroic moral stand during the Dreyfus Affair at the turn of the twentieth century, a certain kind of European intellectual thought that all political issues demanded an exhortative response, and for the next eight decades proclamations rained down on politicians and the general public alike. No one cared particularly if these fatwas were uninformed, so long as they allowed author and reader to share a moment of moral and existential communion. In recent years, Europeans have been less inclined to invest their intellectuals with this priestly function, given the death of popular Marxism, the disappearance of a clear right-left divide, and a general awareness of the crimes that "committed" intellectuals justified throughout the twentieth century. It is little wonder, then, that the "Plea" of Professors Habermas and Derrida met with such a tepid response in the European press and has since had no discernible influence on public debate over foreign policy.



rk Lilla is Professor at the Committee on cial Thought, University of Chicago, and the hor of The Reckless Mind: Intellectuals Politics (*New York Review of Books*).

e habré equivocado de tiempo, o de viento? by Alfredo Castaneda Mary-Anne Martin/Fine Art, New York City

One European thinker who would have felt vindicated by the end to this story was the French essayist Raymond Aron, who died in Paris twenty years ago last October and whose *Dawn of Universal History* has recently been translated into English. Aron was a classic liberal in politics, dedicated to human liberty and suspicious of tyrannies masquerading as brave new orders; he was also a liberal in temperament—tolerant, reasonable, and skeptical. During the Cold War he was a much-honored professor at France's most prestigious academic institutions and a prolific journalist whose writings on politics, sociology, economics, strategy, and diplomacy earned him a loyal readership among the political and business elite. Yet the French intellectual literary establishment, which was busy flitting between Marxism, Stalinism, Maoism, anti-Americanism, and *tiers-mondisme* ("third-worldism") in those years, refused to accept Aron, who forswore those fleeting commitments. His reputation among his fellow writers began to recover in the mid-seventies, when Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago* and the revelations of the Cambodian massacres led to a reassessment of the legacy left by France's committed intellectuals. Only when his remarkable *Memoirs* were published in 1983, shortly before his death, did Aron finally experience the minor apotheosis he deserved: many of his former critics among the '68 generation had come around to see in his anti-totalitarianism and defense of human liberty an example worth following.

The kind of ideological fevers that Aron tried to calm have, mercifully, waned in Europe. Politics have been "normalized," including the politics of the intellectuals. One sees occasional gestures toward reviving the old style of heroic commitment, usually after some major exercise of American power, such as the war in Iraq. But the truth is that the problem to which all of Aron's writings were a direct or indirect response—the prostitution of the intellect to messianic ideological ends—is now less urgent. Whether his own approach to politics has survived the death of its adversary is an intriguing question.

Raymond Aron was born into a highly assimilated Jewish family in 1905 and, until the Second World War, seemed destined for a distinguished academic career. He graduated first in his class at the most selective school in France, the Ecole Normale Superieure, where he studied with Jean-Paul Sartre, and in 1930 he left for Germany to work on a doctoral thesis concerning the philosophy of history. Aron's four years in Germany changed his life; as an alert young man, he had no illusions about what Hitler and Nazism represented, and was distressed to see how ill-prepared was Europe to meet the coming challenge. When war finally did break out and France was occupied, Aron fled to London, where he spent four years in the circle around Charles de Gaulle and edited an émigré newspaper. He returned to France a devoted journalist, working first for Albert Camus's paper *Combat*, then moving to the conservative paper *Le Figaro*, where he remained for nearly thirty years. Only in the mid-fifties did he begin to teach sociology, to great acclaim, first at the Sorbonne and finally at the Collège de France. Yet in his books and his frequent editorials he remained an essayist at heart and what he called an "engaged spectator," which is also the title of a book of his interviews.

Aron's decision to devote himself to the political debates of the day was less a career move than an intellectual choice based on a certain reading of the modern European situation. On returning to Paris after the liberation, he joined his old schoolmate Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir in founding what would be the most influential journal of the period, *Les Temps Modernes*. Yet almost immediately it became apparent to Aron that his colleagues held views very different from his own, and he quit. The occasion of the quarrel was the magazine's position on Communism and, more specifically, Stalin, whom Sartre would support more or less blindly until the Hungarian Revolution in 1956. At a more fundamental level, however, Aron's experiences in Germany and during the war had given him a fresh perspective on modern European history and how intellectuals should comport themselves in relation to it. He became France's anti-Sartre, and thus a rather privileged pariah among fellow thinkers and writers. An apocryphal saying used to circulate: "Better wrong with Sartre than right with Aron."

In the essay that gives the volume its title, Aron reflects upon how, for more than a century, European intellectuals had been in thrall to deterministic and mechanical views about the course of modern history and the human capacity to anticipate it. Where nineteenth-century liberals saw steady, inevitable progress arising through science and culture, Marxists such as Sartre saw the dialectical forces of class struggle leading inevitably toward the dictatorship of the proletariat. But neither group of seers, Aron argued, could possibly be right. History is a highly contingent affair that reveals its inner workings only retrospectively; there is, and can be, no prospective science of history.

From that rather commonsensical observation Aron drew several important and distinctive conclusions. One was that politics matters: the choices of particular statesmen at particular times can decisively change the course of events. The modern French traditions of sociology and philosophy had never taken the autonomy of politics very seriously, and the twentieth-century vogue for various forms of social and economic determinism—Hegelian, Marxist, and later structuralist—only exacerbated the learned ignorance about high politics in France. Aron recognized the real social and economic limits placed on political decisions by history and agreed with Marx that the constraints of capitalism (which he preferred to call "industrial society") were tight. Nevertheless, he considered Marx's contemporary followers naive to think that two world wars, decolonization, and the Cold War were simply the predictable result of capitalism's inner laws, and not also the consequence of fateful political decisions.

Although Aron was a great admirer of Marx the social analyst, he viewed the intellectual and popular movement of Marxism as a "secular religion."

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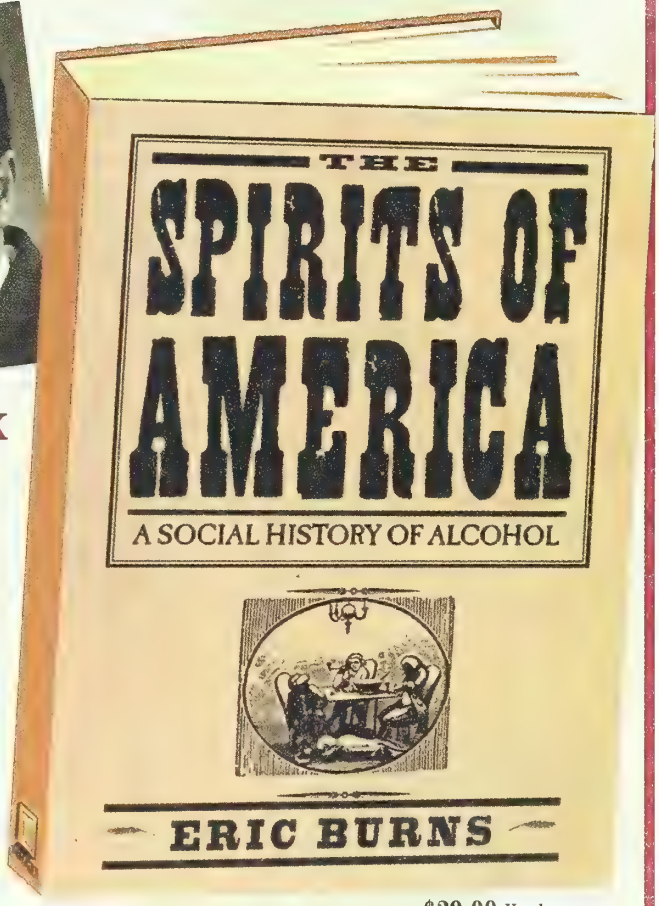
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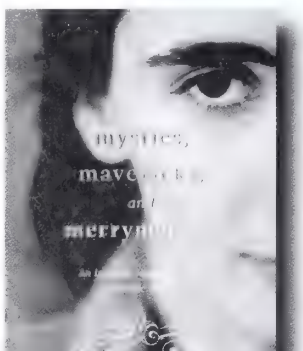
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World will be swallowed up. The contradictions of capitalist societies will inevitably bring about this fruitful catastrophe. The victims of today will be the victors of tomorrow.

Indeed, the birth of modern society had unleashed new political passions, which expressed themselves on both the left and the right as a yearning for redemption through history—even a historical apocalypse, if necessary. Aron's analysis here was very close to that of one of his intellectual heroes, the German sociologist Max Weber, but it was Aron's own experience in Germany in the thirties that first brought the uncomfortable lesson home to him. Wherever he looked throughout the twentieth century—whether at the rise of fascism, the romanticization of violent revolution, or the false prophets of liberation—he saw the same thing: self-destructive passions masquerading as serious politics. The rise of radical Islam, one surmises, would not have astonished him.

Regarding modern history, Aron had two, countervailing insights that contributed to his moderate liberalism. He was aware of historical contingency and the need for clearheaded, responsible political decisions in order to meet the challenges of particular situations; yet he also saw how human passions can corrupt politics and political thinking to such a degree that liberty, not to mention common human decency, can evaporate. The optimistic liberals of the nineteenth century took for granted the durability of the liberal order and its ability to satisfy human desires, but they were wrong to assume a happy end of history: liberalism is a fragile plant that can bear certain kinds of fruit only if it is tended.

For Sartre, however, history was a tale of bourgeois domination through capitalism and sham-liberalism, a simple story with an equally simple moral for intellectuals: Fight the power. Aron found this position absurd—and not only because Sartre followed it inconsistently, denouncing Western nations but remaining silent about many cruel exercises of Soviet power. "It isn't every day that a Dreyfus affair allows you to invoke truth against error," Aron reminded his fellow intellectuals, albeit to little effect. It is one thi speak of "resistance" to "power simple tyranny (and even tyra are not so simple); it is another those terms in a liberal-democrat der that has many conflicting c of power, procedures for legitimiz and institutions for limiting its ex through law. In such a society, wh actly, is resisting whom? And in name? Aron maintained tha watchword for intellectuals under conditions should not be blind tance but responsibility.

Responsibility was the key te Aron's political lexicon. Wha turbed him about the popular ex set by Sartre was that it romant a posture of commitment and contempt for those who actually to exercise power and make deci For Aron, placing oneself ima tively in the position of those in er was the sine qua non of resp bility. "For a half-century," he no his memoirs, "I have restricted m criticisms by posing this quest 'what would I do in their place?' swering that question demand only a change in perspective, on difficult for intellectuals who every issue as if it were as unam ous as the Dreyfus case. It also re mastery of the material that the s man himself must master, whethe is diplomatic history, strategy, economics, law, and the rest. In S fantasy world, it was the intellec independence from such compr ing data that gave him the mora spective needed to pass judgme history; in Aron's world, which i those who pronounce on polit democratic societies are obliged their homework. Following Sartre tain intellectuals showed the te cy to veil their ignorance in the r ically rich French language. made periodic attempts to cut th the poetry and jargon, devotin book to unraveling Sartre's *Criti Dialectical Reason* and anoth plumbing the writings of the s Marxist Louis Althusser, but th ercises were futile. Reading Sartr is tempted to repeat the re Leopold von Ranke is said to made about his fellow historian Michelet: He writes in a style in truth cannot be uttered.

The essays in *The Dawn of Universal History* were not written to inspire the kind of enthusi- Sartre's writings did; they were ises in intellectual hygiene meant flate the destructive enthusiasms ie time, to render the issues at l more complex than they ap- ed, to instruct and enlighten. And is why, unfortunately, they may e prosaic reading today for all but e with the most vivid historical ginations. Originally published in as *A History of the Twentieth Cen-*, this volume is little more than a ely connected assemblage of n's foreign-policy writings, main- om the 1950s, when the Cold War decolonization were the pressing es of the time. Much of the book athes a tired, dated air, relieved by Tony Judt's superb introduc-, which summarizes Aron's career importance in an admirably nar- compass.

There are, however, certain pleaes to be had and lessons to be ined from tracing the evolution of n's positions through these writ- s. On the eve of the Second World r, for example, while many Euro- ns still held out hope of appeasing ler or arresting the German war chine at the Maginot line, Aron ognized the scale of Hitler's ambi- ns and the mighty tools at his dis- al, and even foresaw the possibili- of a Hitler-Stalin pact, rejecting the umption that "it is for ideological sons that National Socialist Ger- ny is hostile to the USSR." And, like most historians in the postwar riod, Aron thought it futile to seek e roots of Nazism in the recesses of e German soul. "In order to see the o wars as part of a single whole, isodes in a single struggle, we need think not of an 'eternal Germany' t of the tragic chain of causes and ef- cts," he insisted. "All 'monistic' the- ies, those that accuse the German ition as well as those that blame cap- alism, are childish."

He brought a similar attitude to the old War, striking a tone different om that of the warriors on both the ft and the right. Against the apolo- sts of Stalin, Aron wrote forcefully out the despotic nature of the Soviet Union, its enslavement of the populations of Eastern Europe, and the intellectual corruption its ideology had spawned. Yet he also criticized the sanctimony and diplomatic clumsiness of the United States and refused to characterize the Cold War in eschatological terms. He looked on with regret as the United States became ensnared in the Vietnam War—a conflict that, in his view, it could not avoid, given the Communist bloc's ambitions, but one that was botched through half-measures and indefensible overreactions. His perspective on all these events was historical before it was moral: he saw them mainly in light of a confluence of forces that were unleashed at the beginning of the century and have constrained thereafter the actions of nations. "Ever since, under a July sun, bourgeois Europe entered the century of wars," he noted in a rare, wistful aside, "men have lost control of their history, swept away as they are in the contradictory logics of technology and passion."

The essays with the most contemporary ring are those on decolonization. Although Aron's political sympathies had always been with the non-Marxist left, the fact that he had broken with Sartre and wrote for the conservative paper *Le Figaro* meant that, in those polarized times, he was considered a man of the right. He surprised everyone, therefore, when he published two pamphlets in the late fifties in which he argued that France should abandon her North African colonies as soon as possible. By that time the simmering Algerian War had divided French opinion into two hostile camps: on the one side were those who saw French honor at stake in its colonies and worried about the fate of the pieds noirs, Frenchmen who had long since made their homes in Algeria; on the other were those who viewed decolonization as a simple matter of justice and self-determination and were repelled by the brutal means used to fight the war.

As was typical of him, Aron avoided terms like "honor" and "justice," and began with a cool historical analysis of the course of European colonialism and its unsustainability in the modern world. In an age of global politics and economics, remaining in Algeria would have necessitated either raising

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the standard of living in Algeria to that of France or tolerating massive immigration, options Aron considered economically impossible and culturally unwise. In an era ruled by nationalist and egalitarian ideologies, however, keeping Algeria in a dependent, servile state was equally untenable. Even if the Algerians, in terms of a crudely economic "standard of living," would be worse off after independence than they had been as colonial subjects, the fact that they had come to see themselves as a nation deserving of independence had to be acknowledged and respected. "It hardly matters whether this nationalism is the expression of a real or an imaginary nation," he remarked. "Nationalism is a passion, resolved to create the entity it invokes." Nor did Aron flinch at the prospect that Arab nationalism might take on a religious character, a possibility exploited by the right and ignored by the left: "So long as the human race is divided up into sovereign units, those units will need a dynastic, religious, or national principle, and that principle, whatever it is, may cause conflict and be condemned by those who know better. Everything that unites individuals also divides groups against one another." He then added a sentence that deserves to be pondered by those involved in the current reconstruction of Iraq: "A state that declines to be linked either to a religion or to an ideology is the work of centuries, not of a decision by the United Nations or by some imperial authority about to withdraw voluntarily or under compulsion."

By Aron's own account, his prescient Algeria pamphlets had no impact on either his nationalist or his left-wing contemporaries. There is some honor in that. He relished deflating the intellectual pretensions and misguided enthusiasms of his time, though he did not think it possible to rid modern politics of them: "It is a denial of the experience of our century to suppose that men will sacrifice their passions to their interests." Nor did he think it a worthy aim, given that certain passions, such as those for religion or the nation, could contribute to a healthy political order under the right circumstances. Given their potential destructiveness, Aron simply insisted that the intellectual's responsibility was always and everywhere to encourage a sober approach to political life—a principle captured in *The Opium of the Intellectuals*, his important and enduring book about modern ideology. It was no surprise that he was furious at his fellow writers and academics for joining students on the barricades in May 1968, in what he called a pointless "psychodrama." But he was also genuinely bewildered when some of those same students turned to him with enthusiasm a decade later, hailing him as a great defender of human rights.

And in that bewilderment lies a lesson. No one is capable of becoming an "engaged spectator" without passion, and Raymond Aron was no different in this regard. He loved France, hated cruelty, despised liars, and valued liberty. Following the example of Weber, however, Aron made a firm distinction between those who trafficked in their passions through a politics of commitment and those who soberly practiced the politics of responsibility, whatever their deeper feelings. In following the latter path, both men surveyed the political landscape with uncommon clarity, yet somehow they thought this meant renouncing any claim upon the hearts of those they wished to persuade. They ceded that territory to orators, politicians, and intellectuals—not all of them scrupulous—whose understanding of the real demands and constraints of contemporary politics was unsure. By drawing a strict line between himself and Sartre, Aron made his readers feel they must choose between a disenchanted assessment of political life and an inspiring vision of it, fueled by a sense of justice. And given Aron's own analysis of human nature, it was not surprising that so many readers during the Cold War chose to be wrong with Sartre.

The puzzle raised by reading Aron's essays in our own time is why a man so attentive to the role of political passions in modern history was so indifferent to inspiring his readers to pursue the ends he found worthy. For the truth is that his writings no longer inspire, certainly not in the way George Orwell's and Solzhenitsyn's still do. In part this is because he was so scrupulous about immersing himself in the issues of the day that his essays had, and were m to have, a short shelf-life. Yet also because he was never willing ly to assume the position of the sponsible politicians he so admi Upon deliberating among several ten unsatisfying options, a statesm must choose prudently, but he r also convince his fellow citizens of wisdom of his decision and someti inspire them to make sacrifices o account. And the same is true of intellectual who genuinely wishe adopt the position of responsibi he must know how to inspire.

For many of Aron's European American readers during the C War, among whom I include my his example was indeed inspiring a time when some of the most spected minds celebrated any ty who wrapped himself in the mant class struggle or national libera and heaped contempt on libe democratic nations resisting the r tary advances of a totalitarian em it was stirring to read someone co geously setting out on another path sisting upon liberty and simple de cy in the face of hostile intellec opinion. When ideological postu and moral blackmail were comm place, there was something in Ar dispassionate appeals to reason could provoke a passionate respo

Now those appeals are no lo enough. For two centuries Europ intellectual and political life was sh by the opposing ideologies spawne the French Revolution, and the flicts they generated consumed muc world politics throughout the twe eth century. Those ideologies are l ly exhausted now, as are the passion sociated with them; intellectuals no longer expected to lead us ou the wilderness with a well-tur phrase, and when they try they wi ignored, as Professors Habermas Derrida recently learned. Officials trained experts are expected to do t jobs in modern liberal democra and generally they manage to d with an acceptable level of con tence. Nonetheless, one cannot ign the sense of disquiet, a nagging pression that the public space is sedate, that political debate has a phied, and that no one—neither litical leaders nor intellectuals—

compelling, synthetic account of esent situation and how to ad- he new challenges of our time. ically this disquiet is expressed as gia for the age of Sartre or the of the sixties, a childish and fool- ish. Behind it, however, there a longing to render political life coherent, more just, more noble. And there is no shame in that. We cannot do without the kind of liberal responsibility Raymond Aron defended and incarnated; it is a necessary, if ultimately insufficient, condition of political sanity. We still have need of engaged spectators today, but ones who can move our hearts while convincing our minds. ■

HAT WAS LOST

n a biography of W. B. Yeats rely on torical fact alone?

Denis Donoghue

ssed in this essay:

3. Yeats: A Life. II. The Arch-Poet, by R. F. Foster. Oxford University Press, 003. 832 pages. $45.



R. F. Foster is one of the most formidable historians of modern Ireland and England. Universally and justly respected, his work nonetheless controversial. A self-declared revisionist, he has undertaken to question the common account of modern Irish history (which is the one I learned at the Christian Brothers School in Newry) that has presented our story as a holy war of nationalist revolution and derring-do to gain freedom and independence from Britain. Foster argues that the conflicts between Britain and Ireland could have been resolved without bloodshed, given good sense on one side and patience on the other. As W. B. Yeats wrote in "Easter 1916":

> Was it needless death after all?
> For England may keep faith
> For all that is done and said.

Some readers of Foster's *Modern Ireland* (1988) have been persuaded by his urbanity that the story of Ireland has been told more luridly than it has had to be. Other readers complain that, in dispelling the false glamour of Ireland, Foster has also removed the true.

The same concern arises again, now that Foster's biography of W. B. Yeats is complete. In 1997 he published *W. B. Yeats: A Life. I. The Apprentice Mage.* The subtitle refers to Foster's claim that William Blake, like Yeats's friend George Russell, "was a mystic, wrapped in obscurities; and WBY was an apprentice mage, determined to penetrate beyond them." The subtitle of the recently published second volume, *The Arch-Poet,* is taken from Oliver St. John Gogarty's toast to Yeats, on the occasion of his seventieth birthday, as "the arch-poet," a phrase that no one but Foster has cherished. The first volume narrates Yeats's life from his birth in Dublin on June 13, 1865, to the end of 1914; the second continues with the story to Yeats's death in a hotel on the French Riviera in 1939.

The life of Yeats has been recited by literary men—Joseph Hone, A. Norman Jeffares, Richard Ellmann, and Terence Brown. Foster, however, is a historian. His aim has been to write "a historically grounded biography," to restore "the sense of a man involved in life, and in history: notably in the history of his country, at a time of exceptional flux and achievement." There is a case, he maintains in the introduction to the second volume,

> for writing about [Yeats's] life in terms of ascertainable facts: the kind of biography, it should be remembered, which Samuel Beckett—of all people—thought most desirable. "What I want is the straws, flotsam, etc., names, dates, births and deaths, because that is all I can know . . . I want the old-fashioned history book of reference, not the fashionable monde romancé."

The trouble with this genial program is that Yeats had little interest in straws and flotsam; he did not submit to the tyranny of events. "I am no stickler for the fact," he claimed. Yeats was concerned with fact only for its bearing on the mind that perceived it. Nobody believes, on the evidence of "The Wild Swans at Coole," that Yeats counted the swans "upon the brimming water" and got the sum right. The swans numbered "nine and fifty" if you credit a man who had bad eyesight and no compelling inclination to be accurate. He might have said, as does the speaker of Wallace Stevens's "The Emperor of Ice-Cream," "Let be be finale of seem." Yeats looked at objects not to verify

is Donoghue is University Professor and ry James Professor of English and Amer- Letters at New York University. His most nt book is Speaking of Beauty *(Yale).*

tration by Joseph Adolphe

their existence but to appreciate their symbolic value. In Canto LXXXIII, Ezra Pound, who knew Yeats well and liked him, teased him for the subjective bias of his mind:

> and Uncle William dawdling around
> Notre Dame
> in search of whatever
> paused to admire the symbol
> with Notre Dame standing inside it

In "A General Introduction for My Work," Yeats declared that the poet is part of his own "phantasmagoria" and "has been reborn as an idea, something intended, complete": "he is never the bundle of accident and incoherence that sits down to breakfast." Foster, however, joins Yeats at the breakfast table, assumes that man and poet coincide there, and that nature is already intelligible. "Most biographical studies of WBY," he notes, "are principally about what he wrote; this one is principally about what he did." He assumes that what Yeats did is entirely ascertainable, given the vast archive of evidence available and a gifted historian's command of it. In Yeats's play *The Resurrection*, the Greek says to the Syrian: "You talk as if you wanted the barbarian back," and the Syrian answers: "What if there is always something that lies outside knowledge, outside order? What if at the moment when knowledge and order seem complete that something appears?... What if the irrational return? What if the circle begin again?" Positivist by temperament, Foster does not intuit, as Yeats did, events for which there is no producible evidence; Foster's imagination, unlike Yeats's, is insistently Greek, and he becomes impatient when the talk turns Syrian.

Foster takes his duty as a historian rather stringently. For the most part, he does not stray into literary criticism or philosophy. He is interested in Yeats's poems, but mainly as illustrations of the poet's daily life. He does not engage with each poem as an uncanny work of imagination; he prefers to see the poem and its context as seamlessly contiguous. When the time comes in the second volume to write about the major poems—"Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen," "Meditations in Time of Civil War," "Leda and the Swan," "Among School Children," "Sailing to Byzantium," "Byzantium," "The Circus Animals' Desertion," and "The Statues"—Foster paraphrases the argument of each, if there is one, and otherwise lets the poem speak for itself. The poems are set in their personal contexts, with whatever reverberation between them that entails, but the qualities that make a poem a poem, and not an essay or an editorial, are left to the reader's interpretation.

Sometimes Foster deals with an episode from his historian's sense of it, but he leaves it open to literary critics and other readers to develop their own sense of its ramification. He provides new and extremely cogent information about Yeats's reading of Nietzsche, for instance, but he doesn't pursue the question: What difference did the reading make to Yeats's poetry in *In the Seven Woods* and later volumes? This, apparently, is a matter for literary scholars. Another example is Yeats's sense of Shakespeare and its difference, if there is a difference, from literary critic Walter Pater's.* This, too, is an issue for literary scholars: it bears on Yeats's feeling for writers defeated in advance, poets who sought "new, pure beauty" and suffered from "the terrors that pass before shut eyes." Foster does not think the matter comes within his professional duty. Besides, he has his hands full with these two historical volumes, multiplicities of detail, and an acute problem of organization.

To make the work harder, there is an embarrassment that any biographer of Yeats must confront: the fact that Yeats not only lived his life but wrote it, and invented a further range of life in the writing. In letters, speeches, essays, diaries, poems, and plays, he obliquely wrote chapters of autobiography, and during his middle years he prescribed the terms by which the life he wrote would be construed. T. S. Eliot said that the great rhetoric in Shakespe plays occurs when characters see th selves in a dramatic light; Yeats al saw himself in a dramatic light, e as hero or as victim. He wrote hi on the understanding that it was interpreted in relation to the la forces of desire in its vicinity: the of the Irish nation, the founding o Abbey Theater, the history of d since Aeschylus, of poetry since D the mythic power of beauty beloved Maud Gonne and Hel Troy fulfilling the same type), the lish poetic generation of the 1890s as suffering a distinctive fate:

> What portion in the world can the
> have
> Who has awakened from the con
> dream
> But dissipation and despair?

The "common dream" is the rigm of mundane aims—money, success ting on in the world. Like his panions in the Rhymers' Club, despaired of reaching an audienc preoccupied with worldly immedia

Yeats thought of himself as a resentative figure, exemplifyi race, a generation, a secret doctr No biographer has managed t cape from this "authorized versio Yeats's life. Yeats was never con to coincide with his personal an cial self, as if that were the w story, beginning and ending at breakfast table. He told his sto peremptorily that biographers been limited, for the most par adding corroborative detail—a amount of it, in Foster's book, only occasional disclaimers. Y started writing chapters of a fo autobiography in 1914 at a tim memoirs, celebrations, and libels felt himself diminished by his fr Katherine Tynan's recollecti *Twenty-Five Years*, published in 1 His old familiar enemy, Ge Moore, had to be punished for lishing *Ave*, in which Moore m fun of Yeats's high talk and s strutting. He had to be punished, for an insolent account of Ye Lady Gregory, and J. M. Synge i *English Review*. Thinking himsel sulted, Yeats ended *Responsibili* his collection of poems, with th lordly rhymes:

* *John Butler Yeats's letters to Professor Edward Dowden and Pater's essay "Shakespeare's English Kings" convinced Yeats that Shakespeare's deepest sympathy went out to the defeated Richard II, "that unripened Hamlet," rather than to Henry V, "that ripened Fortinbras"; working for the Tudor cause, Shakespeare, according to Yeats, wrote surreptitiously against the official program, and loved the broken kings, if only for their being broken.*

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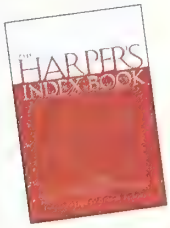
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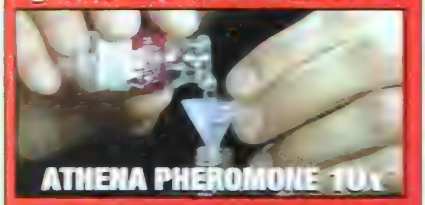
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Those undreamt accidents that have

Not even us, till all my priceless things
Are but a post the passing dogs defile.

diate record straight. Yeats determined to take possession of every territory he inhabited and to award prizes and impose punishments as his imagination ordained. Starting with *Reveries over Childhood and Youth* (1916), he wrote chapters of his life in *The Trembling of the Veil* (1922), *The Bounty of Sweden* (1925), *Estrangement* (1926), *The Death of Synge* (1928), *Dramatis Personae* (1935), and *Pages from a Diary Written in Nineteen Hundred and Thir-*

brought together in *Autobiographies* (1955) and *Explorations* (1962), it became clear that Yeats saw the argumentative chapters as two intermittent conversations, first with his father, J. B. Yeats, and then with the intolerable Moore.

Indeed, Yeats's autobiographical zeal

ves over Childhood and Youth. Foster notes that it was strong in the essay "J. M. Synge and the Ireland of his Time" (1911) and in several poems of *The Green Helmet* (1910) and earlier volumes. The persons and events that

most insistently on his memory, but nothing was merely transcribed. The particular quality of recall he trusted was what Pater called "the finer sort of memory," which brings "its object to mind with a great clearness, yet, as sometimes happens in dreams, raised a little above itself and above ordinary retrospect." Similarly, Yeats prescribed the cast of characters in his drama and presented each of them in a strongly realized pose, above ordinary retrospect. He had a gift for transcending himself and for seeing the possibility

themselves, as did the leaders of the Easter Rising, many of them commonplace men and women, who be-

This, that man I had dreamed

He had in me his mirror-work

Yet I number him in the song;
He, too, has resigned his part
In the casual comedy . . .

He also varied the tones of his re

calls the same people, as he often
he writes of them differently, follo
the formal bias of the chosen ger

Yeats was not even intimidate

ed, "until it takes fire in some
head and becomes freedom or vir
Epic values are dominant when
theme is Ireland and the work
done is cultural nationalism. Arte

Yeats's essay "Ireland After Par
mainly extended it and gave it
matic recognition. Imperative
summoned the Irish p

gav
Cathleen ni Houlihan." The demand
friends (John
Synge) and enough enemies to
him exasperated for years (Charle
van Duffy, D. P. Moran, Arthur
Catholic petite bourgeoisie.
in a greasy till"). Even in
poem as "Coole Park and Ba
1931," Yeats still spoke of the c
al project, however nostalgica

The book of the people: whatev

The mind of man or elevate a r

Though mounted in that saddle

is not to say that Homer rode
around Coole but that the epic
ion was still sufficiently alive that
ould speak of Homer, Lady Gre-
and Yeats in the same breath.
hen the theme was the occult
l, Yeats wrote according to the
of romance, which is tender to-
deliverances from the spiritual
he unconscious realms. In Fos-
biography we read of early psy-
al experiments in Dublin and
lon, esoteric associations, séances,
s's interpretation (with Edwin J.
) of *The Works of William Blake*
3), and dealings in London with
lame Blavatsky, MacGregor
ners, Florence Farr, W. T. Hor-
Annie Horniman, Maud Gonne,
other adepts. The compelling es-
are "Magic" (1901), "Sweden-
, Mediums, and the Desolate
es" (1914), and "Per Amica Silen-
unae" (1917). In these the air is
k with astrology, tarot cards, the
cation of spirits, "the revolt of the
against the intellect." In later
s the crucial medium is Yeats's
, Georgie Hyde Lees ("George"),
se "automatic writing"—which
ted during their honeymoon in
ober 1917 and continued in var-
forms till September 1922—gave
not only "metaphors for poetry"
the makings of his prophetic book,
ision, which he published in 1925
revised, radically, in 1937. Yeats's
ding of Plato, Plotinus, and the
-Platonic tradition is scholarship
t is omnivorously receptive to
rms and spells.

Having told with honorable patience
l immense distinction the story of
ats's dealings with the occult, Foster
nes to *A Vision* and his patience
aks down. He has no time for the
k, in either of its versions, as a philo-
hical system: it is defeated by "the
npletely internalized arguments and
entional obscurity." I am surprised by
severity. There is much to be said
A Vision, not as a systematic phi-
ophy but as an aesthetic, a poetics,
lefense of poetry, a theory of imagi-
tion, a treatise of human nature pred-
ated on the freedom of one's imagi-
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ace, and history. It is also a study of
ychological types, rejecting the ide-
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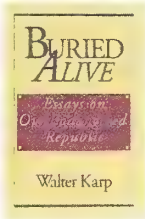
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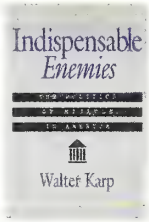


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[illegible] see page 97.

ment by invoking the *anima mundi* as a repository of images, perennial, invulnerable to rationalist irony. I don't doubt that writing the book helped Yeats, as he claimed, to "hold in a single thought reality and justice."

The main public events in the second volume are the Easter Week Rising in Dublin in 1916 and the execution of its leaders, the violence that followed, the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921, the establishment of the Irish Free State, the Civil War, the defeat of Eamon de Valera and the republican forces, De Valera's coming to elective power in 1932, the rise and fall of a neo-Fascist group commonly called the Blueshirts, the Constitution of 1937, and (carrying the story a little beyond Yeats's death) the neutrality of Ireland in World War II. Domestically, these were the years of Yeats's marriage to George, the birth of their children, Michael and Anne, Yeats's appointment to the Irish Senate in December 1922, the award of the Nobel Prize for Literature to him in November 1923, Yeats's declining health, which forced him to winter abroad, his recourse to sexual-regeneration treatment, his extramarital relations with Margot Ruddock, Ethel Mannin, and Edith Shackleton Heald, the survival of his marriage with the aid of a complaisant wife, and the publication of his greatest poems in *The Tower* and *The Winding Stair*.*

Foster deals with these and all other occasions as they arise. He is always his own man. Where Yeats trusts the prejudice of memory, Foster prefers the straightforward method of the historian: chronological, one thing at a time, and-then-and-then-and-then. Where Yeats is flamboyant, Foster is judicious, keeping his distance, attending the opera without leaping onto the stage. He accepts Yeats's list of characters and events, but he does not feel obliged to imitate his flourishes. This is reasonable. No respectable historian would follow where Yeats leads, as in these three notorious swipes at Moore:

> He had come to Paris straight from his father's racing stables, from a house where there was no culture, as Symons in Dublin understood that word. He quite forgot his inaccurate French sat among art students, young writers about to become famous, in some café, a man carved out of a turnip, looking out of astonished eyes.

Not that Yeats would have spotted the inaccuracies of Moore's French. Symons must have told him that they were there:

> He had wanted to be good as the mass of men understand goodness. In later life he wrote a long preface to prove that he had a mistress in Mayfair.

The malice is enforced by "mass," "long," and "prove." The last of the three passages is one of my favorite sentences, though I do not feel at ease in liking it:

> Moore's body was insinuating, upflowing, circulative, curvicular, pop-eyed.

No adjective has less than three syllables, till "pop-eyed" brings the absurd show to an end. The pomp is cut adrift from any quality in Moore that would justify it. Foster does not resort to such malice in this book (though in *Paddy & Mr. Punch* and other books I have seen him spiritedly dismissive).

The problem for Foster was this: How to tell Yeats's story, much of which Yeats has already told in prejudicial, theatrical terms, mythologizing his life while living it. The most resolute device would have been to displace some of the attention from Yeats, as did Ann Saddlemyer in *Becoming George: The Life of Mrs. W. B. Yeats* (2002), in which we see everything in George's context instead of her husband's. Foster's method of separating himself from Yeats's rhetoric is by disowning his style. Foster's procedure is linear, disinterested, distant. There are no operatic climaxes. When he narrates an event that was indeed dramatic for Yeats, he gives all the available details, but he does not get involved beyond the giving: he implies that this moment, too, will pass. Then he calls upon his own style to enforce the equable character of his judgments, which is not just intelligent in a positivist tradition but the refinement of Enlightenment values. This is a challenge for any biographer of Yeats, who

Continued on page 102

* *A facsimile edition of* The Tower *will be published by Scribner next month.*

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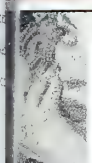
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REVIEWS

Continued from page 100

was hostile to the Enlightenment w
it meant Newton, Locke, and Hob
and cordial to it only in its Irish
sions—Berkeley and Swift, prec
nently, and later Burke.

Foster, however, is master of his
rhetoric of the measured style.
surprisingly, Yeats emerges from
ter's account of him as a man an
men—no saint, not even a sage
endlessly compelling. Foster speak
Yeats's reputation as "arguably the
tury's greatest poet writing in Engl
But that is an argument he doe
pursue: it involves, after all, a cor
eration of genius, which is hardly t
found among the ascertainable f
of a man's daily life.

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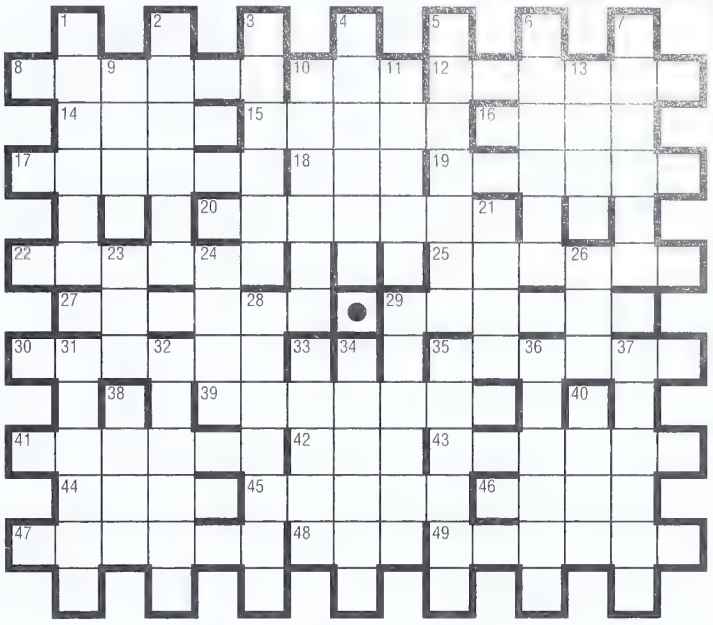
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Diametricode

By Richard E. Maltby Jr.
(with acknowledgments to Babs of The Listener*)*

The squares projecting from the perimeter of the diagram contain the 26 letters of the alphabet. Imaginary straight lines through the central dot join these into 13 pairs. The answers to clues in italics are to be encoded before entry into the diagram by substituting for each letter the opposite letter of its pair. For example, if A were opposite P, and J opposite Z, the answer JAZZ would be entered as ZPJJ.

Clue answers include eight proper names and one foreign word. As always, mental repunctuation of a clue is the key to its solution. The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 77.



ACROSS

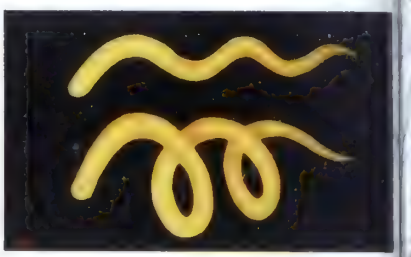
8. Bring back source of fur coat (6)
10. Bar hearing contained (3)
12. Intimates a girl almost takes light out (6)
14. Thousands in pursuit of one in military engagements (4)
15. I produce sparkling Zinfandel with no body, good drunk first (5)
16. European's bed! (4)
17. Clammy type acting as a pig (6)
18. In one case in Rome, egg on victims of leaders (3)
19. Passed out dead, given finger (6)
20. *One known for late rising uses mobile phone before nine (7)*
22. Hose largely left out in a tangle (6)
25. English novel covering love in a bathrobe (6)
27. *Hood's girl dressed as airman (6)*
29. *Character at the end hyper-ventilated, getting little wind (6)*
30. Cold carrier could make you anemic (6)
35. Not disturbed regarding going in two directions (6)
39. *One way to conserve what's superfluous? (7)*
41. Celebration will quickly, when in sound physical condition (6)
42. Height of nonsense, when taken the wrong way? (3)
43. Beginners at zoo-keeping—unreal! (6)
44. Routine opening is for many not well done (4)
45. Reggae lover makes a Russian leader go left (5)
46. Italian pastes some letters of citizenship over (4)
47. Bait, i.e., after being kicked in the shins (6)
48. *What's inside is what's on top (3)*
49. Nice guy leading school team (6)

DOWN

1. Namesake receives Spanish water wheels of great value (6)
2. Powerful and fit together, hit gym (6)
3. One thousand fifty in salary—makes you reel (6)
4. Early computer set up around five in University (6)
5. Back where wild things are concealed by alias, shoulder arm! (7)
6. Temperature dropping leaves six hundred one million and one damaged (6)
7. Powerful drink option after work is over (6)
9. *Works with bruised egos (4)*
10. *Statesman and Yankee Doodle Dandy blows his top, needs to take ten (6)*
11. *Funny, un-American drug-taking (5)*
13. *When upset, I'm very loud and . . . upset (4)*
21. Bad behavior from one who could succeed, when leading (4)
23. Go right after medical test is taken up (3)
24. Sounds like solo offering for just a while (4)
26. Ring you and I have to give (3)
28. One who gets into middle room in a hospital, about to leave (7)
29. Sound made by crystal containers (6)
31. Collared one from a criminal circle (6)
32. May tricks in audio die? (6)
33. Mortal flesh one left behind (5)
34. Like Jews from Korea? (6)
35. Erotic side kept within the limits of sanctity (6)
36. Revolt with surprising ending (6)
37. Catkin picked at Cape Cod town (6)
38. *European river ending in Old Faithful, e.g. (4)*
40. *Something that's funny only in country dialect? (4)*

Contest Rules: Send completed diagram with name and address to "Diametricode," *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Entries must be received by December 11. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive one-year subscriptions to *Harper's Magazine*. Winners' names will be printed in the February 2003 issue. Winners of the October puzzle, "Sixes and Sevens (and Twelves)," are A. Charles Catania, Columbia, Maryland; Carl Lee, Buffalo, New York; and Sara Stinson, Flushing, New York.





FINDINGS

Climatologists discovered that an accelerating Antarctic wind vortex has been sucking all the rain out of Australia; the phenomenon was attributed to global warming and the Antarctic ozone hole, which this year spanned a record 10.8 million square miles, and has created what could be a permanent Australian drought. A recent study found that Venus once had a climate similar to Earth's; after about 2 billion years, however, a runaway greenhouse effect led to the planet's current inhospitable environment. Scientists announced that the 3,000-year-old Ward Hunt Ice Shelf, the largest ice shelf in the Arctic, has broken up; it formerly covered 150 square miles. In China, a man was arrested for poisoning a reservoir of drinking water in order to boost sales of his water purifiers. Swiss researchers found that intelligence is not always an evolutionary asset. There were new reports of cannibalism in North Korea, and Cambodian officials were urging the people to eat stray dogs.

American hospitals were having a hard time meeting the growing demand for stomach-reduction surgery. British scientists were surprised to discover that low-calorie diets prolong the life of fruit flies no matter when the diet begins. "The system," said one professor, "has no memory." A giant star was observed eating three planets, and American astronomers speculated that a burst of gamma rays caused a mass extinction 440 million years ago. A ten-year galactic dust storm was expected to envelop the Earth, and astronomers concluded that the Milky Way galaxy is devouring Sagittarius. It was noticed that Pluto has been getting warmer even as it moves farther away from the sun, which would seem to violate the laws of physics. Research was ongoing. A giant "flyborg," an artificially intelligent robot balloon, escaped not long ago from a British "science adventure" center, and seventy pairs of shoes filled with butter were found on a mountaintop in Sweden. Female salmon and quail showed a strong preference for smaller mates, and frogs fell from the sky in Connecticut.

A fertility scientist named Panayiotis Zavos announced that he had created human-cow embryos that were theoretically viable, but denied that he planned to allow such a hybrid to be implanted in a woman's womb. "We are not trying to create monsters," he said. An American researcher has deliberately created human chimeras by taking cells from a three-day-old male embryo and adding them to female embryos. Israeli scientists were working on a technique for harvesting eggs from aborted human fetuses, which, if used to create a pregnancy, would turn the donor fetus into an "unborn" mother. "I am fully aware of the controversy about this," said Tal Biron-Shental, the lead researcher, when her study was announced, "but probably, in some places, it will be ethically acceptable." Swedish scientists have predicted that human womb transplants will be possible within three years. It was discovered that clown fish can change their sex to move up in social status, and that some women ovulate more than once a month. Researchers in Chile were refining the venom of black widow spiders into an anti-impotence drug that also works as a contraceptive. Japanese researchers succeeded in driving mice insane with a single viral protein, and a monkey moved a robot arm by means of electrodes implanted in its brain. In a preliminary discussion of the research, the director of the Pentagon's Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency was optimistic that the technology could eventually be used on people: "Imagine a warrior with the intellect of a human and the immortality of a machine—controlled by our thoughts." An Egyptian truck driver was arrested for trying to sell a 2,500-year-old mummy. ■

Findings is drawn from recent news reports and scientific journals.

Figure 24, Explosive Anger; Figure 27, Sudden Fright; *and* Figure 19, The Intention to Know, *from* Thought-Forms, *1905, by Annie Besant and C. W. Leadbeater* © *Mary Evans Picture Library.*



ld woman, one of countless civilian war victims, basement of her bombed-out Chechen home. tos

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